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His Excellency,
Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan
The Prime Minister
The State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir
Muzaffarabad

Sub: an appeal for protection of abducted Kashmir women and their family

Dear Sir,

Press for Peace (PFP) is a Kashmir based NGO and think tank, striving for the protection of human rights and civil liberties and prevalence of sustainable livelihood in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. On the behalf of members of the PFP I just want to draw your kind attention towards a very urgent matter which needs immediate action in order to save the lives of two innocent citizens of AJ&K.

Press For Peace (PFP) has received an urgent appeal from a Kashmiri girl Miss Ruhena, who is currently residing in the UK, that the abductors of her mother and sisters have warned the abductees would be killed if government is not able to arrange their release immediately.

According to details, Rashida and Rubina, residents of Lower Plate, Muzaffarabad were kidnapped by a local influential family on 29/06/09 when they were traveling in Muzaffarabad in Police custody. The kidnapers are furious about a marriage of one of girl from their family who willingly got married in April in a local court. Miss Ruhena insists that the couple got married with their own willingness and the family is not aware about their whereabouts as couple has run away from the city to any unknown place on 13/06/09, hence, the victimization of family of the couple is unjustified.

We are worried that some people are also threatening Miss. Ruhena and her sister who lives in Greece that they will kill their abducted mother and sister if newly married bride is not handed over to her parents, whereas the other members of family have also left their native homes after continued threats from the different circles, three of them in the lockup on a faked FIR.

The PFP belies that the above mentioned incident is a severe violation of basic human rights and police should ensure the release of the women from illegal detention. It is a fundamental human right of every citizen, guaranteed by the constitution, to choose the partner according to his/her consent; accordingly, the government should protect the safety and freedom of the couple as well.

Press For Peace (PFP) is extremely concern about the protection and survival of the besieged women. It belies the lives of two innocent citizens might face profound risk if law enforcing agencies not respond promptly. Owing to the sensitivity of the situation, we

sincerely appeal that the government should take immediate action against the culprits to release the women from illegal custody and ensure the protection of lives of endangered family in Muzaffarabad.

Here I would like to mention that Pakistan has rectified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which protects the rights of women and bounds all states and governments to take necessary measures in order to make sure the honourable existence of women. It is obligation of government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to enforce regulations and laws to protect the lives of woman and it must initiate concrete steps to guard the equal rights of women in terms of their family life and economic empowerment.

Sincerely regards
Zafar Iqbal
Executive Director
Press For Peace (PFP)

Bank Road, Muzaffarabad
Jammu and Kashmir

Ph: 0092-58810 45457
Ph: 00923015710575
Fax: 0092-58810-45437
Email: pressforpeace@gmail.com
www.pressforpeace.org/

CC:

- The Inspector General of Police, AJ&K
- Ministry of Kashmir affairs and Northern areas, Government of Pakistan,
- Human Rights Commission of Pakistan(HRCP), Lahore,
- Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong,
- *Shirkat Gah* Women Resource Centre, Lahore, Pakistan,
- Institute of Women Studies/ASR, Lahore, Pakistan,
- South Asian Forum for Human Rights(SAFHR) , Katmandu, Nepal
- Poonch Women Welfare Organization, Paniola, AJ&K
- Action Aid, Muzaffarabad, AJ&K
- Aurat Foundation, Islamabad, Pakistan
- Bedari, Islamabad, Pakistan,
- WAR, Islamabad , Pakistan,
- Women's Action Forum (WAF), Islamabad, Pakistan
- Ansar Burny Trust international
- To whom it may Concern