The Alliance For Peacebuilding and Peace Direct Call For The Immediate Release Of Gulalai Ismail’s Father

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 24, 2019

CONTACT

Mena Ayazi | (202) 822-2047x218 | mena@allianceforpeacebuilding.org

Washington, D.C., USA. –

The Alliance for Peacebuilding and Peace Direct express their deep concern over the detention of Professor Muhammad Ismail, the father of exiled peacebuilding leader Gulalai Ismail, in Peshawar, Pakistan, earlier today.

Professor Ismail’s detention comes in the context of a Pakistani government-led threat and intimidation campaign against his daughter, Gulalai, who has been a peaceful champion of tolerance and justice in Pakistan for over a decade and whose persecution by government authorities has been documented in the New York Times, NPR, PBS and other international media outlets.

“We urge the Pakistani authorities to protect Gulalai’s family members still in Pakistan from any forms of harassment and intimidation,” said Peace Direct CEO Dylan Mathews. Gulalai is co-founder of Aware Girls, our partner organization that
helps inform young women of their rights and helps foster peace in areas deeply affected by conflict.

“We urge the Pakistani authorities to protect Gulalai’s family members still in Pakistan from any forms of harassment and intimidation.”

Professor Ismail, a retired professor and human rights activist, and his wife are facing charges of financing terrorism, allegedly for directing money from their daughter to terrorist activities, which they deny. A case to dismiss the charges is currently before the Peshawar High Court. Professor Ismail was taken by unidentified men as he was leaving the court after the hearing was postponed. He was later presented in court and sent to jail for 14 days.

Professor Muhammad Ismail, father of Gulali Ismail

The parents have been placed on an Exit Control List and ordered not to leave Pakistan. Gulalai herself was only able to escape to the U.S. a few months ago.

Sadly, this case is emblematic of the closing space for civil society across the globe and the targeting of peaceful activists’ family members as a means of pressure.

We call upon the U.S State Department and U.S. Congress to raise Professor Ismail’s detention with Pakistani authorities and call for his immediate release and protection.
With over 110 member organizations, AfP brings together the largest development organizations, most innovative academic institutions, and influential humanitarian and faith-based groups to harness collective action for peace. We build coalitions in key areas of strategy and policy to elevate the entire peacebuilding field, tackling issues too large for any one organization to address alone.