

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Verveer, Melanne S <VerveerMS@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 6, 2012 2:21 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Woman, children beheaded in Afghan "honour killing" (Reuters)

Perhaps you could raise the growing violence against women with Karzai. By all accounts, attacks on women are becoming more frequent, and this is also a negative indicator for development and security. Since Tokyo will focus on mutual accountability, Karzai needs to more accountable in taking violence against women more seriously --- from lack of enforcement of EVAW (law to eliminate violence against women) to threats that police have posed, to the recent statement of his Minister of Justice against shelters, to his own unhelpful statements and more.

I'll be meeting with the Afghan civil society reps who will be in Tokyo, thanks to the interventions of US and many other countries, incl early agreement by Japan to support their participation ---- 2 will speak at the ministerial. I'm sure they will raise the issue of growing violence against women ----- including attacks on girls schools by Taliban.

Nothing is easy when it comes to this issue.

Thx and travel well.

From: Elliott, Susan M
Sent: Wednesday, July 04, 2012 04:54 PM
To: Verveer, Melanne S
Subject: Fw: Woman, children beheaded in Afghan "honour killing" (Reuters)

Not good holiday news!

From: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 04, 2012 11:50 AM
To: NEWS-Afghanistan
Subject: Woman, children beheaded in Afghan "honour killing" (Reuters)

KABUL (Reuters) - A 30-year-old woman and two of her children were beheaded overnight in Afghanistan's east, police said, in what appeared to be the latest in a rapidly growing trend of so-called honour killings.

Police said they suspected the woman Serata's divorced husband of barging into her house in the capital of Ghazni province and murdering her, alongside their eight-year-old son and nine-year-old daughter.

"The children saw the killer take their mother's head off, so he killed them too," a local policeman told Reuters, adding that the attacker had spared Sereta's two-year-old daughter.

Activists say there has been a sharp rise in violent attacks on women in Afghanistan over the past year.

They blame President Hamid Karzai's waning attention to women's rights as his government prepares for the exit of most foreign troops in 2014 and seeks to negotiate with the Taliban, Afghanistan's former Islamist rulers.

Excluding Serata's beheading, there have been 16 cases of "honour killings" recorded across the country over March and April, the first two months of the Afghan new year, according to Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC).

This compares to the 20 cases recorded for all of last year, said commissioner Suraya Subhrang, blaming increased insecurity and weak rule of law for the sharp rise. Since AIHRC started recording such killings in 2001, there have never been more than 20 cases a year.

"And there are many that go unreported. Men make a quick decision in their own courts to kill a girl and hold a prayer for her the next day," Subhrang told Reuters.

Serata divorced her husband Mohammad Arif, 38, a year ago after enduring almost a decade of domestic abuse, said Shukria Wali, head of Ghazni's department of women's affairs, which is attached to the ministry in Kabul.

Police said they were still hunting for Arif. Violent crimes against women often go unpunished in Afghanistan, with activists blaming police carelessness, corruption and a growing atmosphere of impunity.

Officers investigating the case described it as an honour killing - a phrase used to describe the murder of mostly women and girls by people who accuse them of besmirching a family's reputation.

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