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Pakistan: A girl is mauled by dogs and later killed on the pretext of an honour killing

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A Statement by the Asian Human Rights Commission

PAKISTAN: A girl is mauled by dogs and later killed on the pretext of an honour killing

In May of this year a Jirga, an illegal tribal court, was held against a girl of 17 years in which she was declared as Kari (having had an illicit relationship with someone). This was done, according to the tribal traditions, to justify her earlier murder by members of her own family. The Jirga was held at Hajna Shah Goth, Ahmedpur, Pir jo Goth, Khairpur Mirs District under the chairmanship of Mr. Sain Allad Dad Solangi, the head of the Solangi tribe of Sindh province.

According to the information, received only recently, after a land dispute, Ms. Taslim Solangi, age 17, was pressured to ask her parents to hand over all their property, including six acres of cultivated land and cattle farms to her uncle. On her refusal the perpetrators abducted her father, Gul Sher and detained him at his younger brother's house.

At the same location on March 7, 2008, Taslim was subjected to the cruellest possible ordeal. She was made to run before a pack of dogs that bit at her legs until, exhausted, she fell to the ground where they continued to maul her. She was subsequently shot by Zameer Solangi in the presence of her father in order to intimidate him. Also present were Mr. Karim Bux, who is also an uncle of the girl and a councillor in local bodies. It was due to the influence of these persons that the police took no action in the killing and land dispute. Later, in May Mr. Karim arranged a jirga in order to justify the killing and obtain impunity for all his brothers. The Jirga was conducted by Mr. Sain Allah Dad, a powerful land lord of the Pir Jo Goth. Furthermore, Mr. Abdul Qayum, a wealthy person of the area, was fined Rs. 400,000/= and threatened by the killers and the elders of the tribe to confess to the crime of having had an illicit relationship with Tasleem. He was threatened with death if he refused to do so.

In the absence of rule of law and a proper prosecution system the powerful people, who are at the same time representatives of people at different levels, are enjoying impunity and using their power against a very marginal section of the society. The family of Gul Sher has left their house and village and all his property is under the control of killers. However, as stated earlier, the police and people's representatives have taken no action in their support. The powerful people know that police and law can be purchased at any price so they enjoy the weaknesses of authorities.

The Asian Human Rights Commission urges the government to have a proper investigation into the horrific murder of Ms. Tasleem Solangi on the pretext of honor killing. The dreadful death of this

innocent girl was purely for the purpose of grabbing her father's land. This is yet another example of the use of honour killings in order to settle personal disputes.

The writ of the provincial governments is looking very weak before the powerful and political personalities. The political expediency to get more support from usurpers has weakened the legal systems of the country. The government of Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Gillani should take immediate action in this case.