



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

Press Release

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UN Women strongly condemns “Honour Killings” of women and girls

Kabul, 1st April— Recently several cases of “Honour Killings” have been reported by the media and Afghan Women’s Network (AWN) recorded three cases of such killings across the country during the month of March. This includes a young girl buried alive by her brother and father in Kishim district of Badakhshan Province. In Heart Province a 14 year-old girl was killed when she rejected to marry her fiancé and in another case a brother killed his married sister as she insisted to join her husband in Iran. In Jawzjan Province a husband beheaded his wife.

These reports come at the same time as the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon expressed his concern in the Security Council about the 20 per cent increase in civilian casualties among women and girls in Afghanistan in 2012. “I welcome President Karzai’s speech on International Women’s Day- especially his focus on raising awareness of gender issues among men. But I remain deeply disturbed that despite some improvements in prosecuting cases of violence, there is still a pervasive climate of impunity in Afghanistan for abuses of women and girls. They have the inviolable right to live free of fear or attack, and women and girls are key to a better future for Afghanistan. Protecting them is central to peace, prosperity and stability for all people in the country,” said The Secretary-General.

Violence against women is pervasive and seems to be increasing. Over 4,000 cases of violence against women and girls were reported to the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) from 33 provinces of the country in 2010-2012. More than ever, Afghan women need protection from violence, the survivors of violence need support, and perpetrators have to be brought to justice. “UN Women is deeply concerned of the number of cases of so called “Honour Killings” in Afghanistan. In many parts of the country the government officials are implementing the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) law, but we are concerned that it is only in a small percentage of cases involving violence against women. Most cases are neither registered nor investigated,” said Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir, Representative of UN Women in Afghanistan.

In her statement at the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Dr. Hussn Banu Ghazanfar, Minister of Women Affairs, reaffirmed her government commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment in Afghanistan while she recognized that in some rural areas women are still deprived of their legal rights and their rights are being violated.

Since 2002 UN Women in Afghanistan has been working towards eliminating violence against women in close cooperation with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). UN Women calls upon the GoIRA to take a clear stand and ensure that all “Honour Killings” cases are properly registered and investigated. The Government must also ensure that the High Commission on Elimination of Violence Against Women improves its oversight of provincial commissions and strengthens their capacity. A long term awareness raising programme with participation and commitment from different ministries can be an important tool in highlighting the harmful effects of traditional practices that lead to violence against women and are against the tenets of Islam.

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. For more information, visit www.unwomen.org. UN Women, UNOCA Compound, Jalalabad Road, Kabul, Afghanistan Tel: +93 702 55 80 91, Email: shikib.dost@unwomen.org