

FACT SHEET- GULALAI ISMAIL

1. Award Winning Human Rights Defender and Peace Activist

Gulalai Ismail is the founder of young women led Organization **AWARE GIRLS** (2002) working in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province for empowerment of young women and human rights. She is the founder of **Youth Peace Network (2009)** working for countering violent extremism among young people and building peace. From a young age of 16, she has worked for improving lives of girls and young people in Pakistan. Her work has been recognized both nationally and internationally.

National & International Awards:

- i. Madre-Millat Award (Fatima Jinnah Gold Medal) by Nazriya Pakistan Council, a Program of Interior Ministry of Pakistan in 2016.
- ii. In 2016, Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa awarded Gulalai Ismail twice for her performance as activist; one by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other by Meher Taj Roghani, the Deputy Speaker KP Assembly.
- iii. September 2017, Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, and Pakistan's UN Ambassador had a meeting with Gulalai Ismail and Malala Yousafzai and committed to increase education budget of Pakistan.
- iv. Awarded the United Kingdom's Anna Politkovskaya Award 2017 for her work on countering violent extremism and building peace.
- v. Awarded the Chirac Peace Prize by the President of France for her work with young people on promoting peace and conflict resolution.
- vi. Awarded the United Kingdom's Common Wealth Youth Award Democracy for her work on strengthening Democracy and political empowerment of young people.
- vii. Awarded the Humanist of the Year Award in 2014 by Humanists International in Oxford.
- viii. Awarded the Democracy Award in 2013 by National Endowment for Democracy.
- ix. Selected by Foreign Policy magazine as a World Leading Global Thinkers in 2013.

2. CRACKDOWN AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER GULALAI ISMAIL

Despite Gulalai Ismail being among the few young women of Pakistan who have gained international fame for work on human rights and have helped build a positive image of the Pashtun women in Pakistan, she had been the target of a Pakistani government crackdown and harassment for the past year. Gulalai, once known as the "Pride of Pakistan," is now routinely denounced by government sources as a "traitor". The following is a brief list of the harassment she faced for raising her voice and speaking out:

i. Banning Gulalai Ismail's NGO illegally

On May 14, 2018 Gulalai Ismail's NGO, Aware Girls, BoD (Board of Directors) was suspended by the Social Welfare Directorate without following the law and legal procedures. The accounts of the Organized were frozen, thus suspending their constitutional right of young women to association. Even after an appeal, the court ordered the Social Welfare Directorate to call a review board meeting for either reinstating the existing BoD of the organization or to ask organization for new elections within two months.

ii. Gulalai Named in F.I.R. for participating in PTM-Swabi Rally on August 12, 2018

Gulalai was among those in an F.I.R under sections 131, 123B, 153, 506, 147-149, and 188/341 for participating in PTM-Swabi rally and delivering a welcome speech. The report accused them of unlawful assembly, anti-state speeches, threatening state institutions and destroying national flag. **(FIR no. 695, Date: August 13, 2018, District Swabi).**

iii. Illegal Detention at Islamabad Airport on October 12, 2018

On October 12, 2018, upon arrival to the Islamabad Airport, Gulalai was detained by the Federal Investigative Agency (FIA) for 10 hours. She was informed that her name is on the Exit Control List (ECL) which restricts her to travel abroad. Gulalai was not informed about being on ECL prior to her detainment.

iv. Illegal Placement on Exit Control List (ECL) on October 12, 2018

After being detained at the Islamabad Airport, Gulalai was sent a letter informing her she was put on ECL on the recommendation of an intelligence agency. After appealing the decision to the Islamabad High Court (IHC), the Ministry of Interior (Mol) informed IHC that Gulalai was placed on ECL on the recommendation of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). After 6 months, the IHC declared the placement on ECL illegal and asked Mol to remove her from ECL and return her passport to her. However, Mol did not comply with the orders and, under pressure from ISI, the IHC dismissed her contempt of court appeal and sent her another letter on May 31, 2019 informing her that the Cabinet has placed her on ECL.

v. Vile Social Media Campaign

On October 27, 2018, a life-threatening Twitter campaign was run against her using screenshots of digitally created fake WhatsApp chat threads accusing her of financing PTM protests and anti-state video collections. She filed a complaint to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) against the accusations; however, no action was taken by FIA. **(Complaint No. ICT385/18 Dated: November 12, 2018)**

vi. Named in anti-state FIR for participating in PTM Bannu Rally October 28, 2018

On October 28, 2018 Gulalai Ismail was named in another FIR in Bannu District for participating in PTM Bannu rally earlier that day. She had not made any speech. The FIR was launched under section 120B, 124A, 500, 504, 506, 132, 189, 148, 149, 16 MPO. **(FIR # 861, Bannu Cantt. Dated: October 28, 2018)**

vii. Counter Terrorism Wing-Inquiry from December 2018 - April 2019

In December 2018 she was called by the Counter Terrorism Wing (CTW) to be informed that her name was added to a "Persons of Special Interest" list and she will be investigated for financing anti-state activities. For 5 months, she was harassed by phone calls for interviews, interrogations, and data collection. Gulalai was never given any written letter or information about the nature of inquiry. Even then she co-operated with CTW-FIA and provided the information she was asked.

viii. Enforced Disappearance from Protest against murder of Arman Luni on February 5, 2019

On February 5, 2019, Gulalai participated in a protest against the brutal murder of Arman Luni. After being arrested by the police, the police refused to acknowledge her arrest, did not present her to the judge, and did not provide any information about her whereabouts only to be released two days later.

ix. Harassment by Local Police from February 2019 - March 2019

Gulalai and her family were regularly visited by the police at odd hours and without any female police officers. The police claimed they were on the orders of multiple agencies to investigate about her social media use.

x. Terrorism and Sedation Charges Against Gulalai Ismail on May 21, 2019

On May 21, 2019, Gulalai gave a speech during a protest about the brutal rape and murder of 10-year-old girl, Farishta, and the lack of response from the police. Two FIRs were registered against Gulalai under the anti-terrorism act which accused her of terrorism, sedation, defaming state institutes, and promoting ethnic violence. One FIR was registered under 6/7 ATA **(FIR # 101/19, Shahzad Town, Islamabad Dated May 22, 2019)** other was registered under section 6/7 ATA, 124, 153 A, and 500 **(FIR # 215/19, Koral Islamabad Dated: May 23, 2019).**

xi. Blacklisted on May 28, 2019

xii. Continuous Harassment of Gulalai Ismail's Family and Relatives

Gulalai's family's home was raided four times in the middle of the night. Friends and relatives' homes have been raided, in addition to her driver being abducted and tortured for 8 hours along with another friend who was abducted for 13 hours and brutally tortured including electric shocks. Her friends are under surveillance and under pressure to act as informants.

xiii. Anti-Terrorism FIR against Gulalai and her Parents on July 12, 2019

The state file a FIR against Gulalai Ismail, her mother, and her father accusing three of them of working for a terrorist organization as well as providing financial support to terrorist organizations. They were charged under Section 11/N ATA. **(FIR # 47, Dated July 12, 2019, CTD Peshawar)**