

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

February 21, 2020

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We write as a diverse group of non-governmental organizations and individuals to raise concerns regarding the ongoing case of Huma Younus. We are scholars, religious leaders, human rights activists, and international religious freedom advocates and we ask that you join us in advocating for Huma, a young Pakistani girl who was kidnapped, forced to convert to Islam, and married to her abductor Abdul Jabbar.

We urge you to raise her case with the Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan as this particular case has received national and international attention and highlights the ongoing, systemic issue of forced conversion and forced marriage within Pakistan.

Huma's case is one of many. In fact, a 2014 study by the Movement for Solidarity and Peace Pakistan showed that as many as 1,000 Christian and Hindu women and girls are subjected to kidnapping, forced conversion, and forced marriage every year in Pakistan.[1]

Huma was 14 years old when she was abducted in October of 2019 by Abdul Jabbar, the family's driver. In subsequent days, Huma's parents, Younus and Nagila Masih, received messages via WhatsApp from Abdul's brother with documents indicating Huma's marriage to Abdul and her conversion to Islam. These documents were clearly falsified—a false date of birth claimed to show that she was 18 years old. Huma's parents continue to receive death threats and other threatening messages from unknown individuals saying that, should the parents continue to pursue legal action or attempt to bring Huma home, they will face serious repercussions.

Huma's parents filed legal action against Mr. Jabbar but have not had any success. In fact, the Sindh High Court in Karachi ruled on February 3, 2020 that the marriage was permissible because she had already had her first period.[2] Judges Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro and Irshad Ali Shah justified this finding on the basis of their interpretation of Sharia law, a finding which flies in the face of established statutory law such as the Sindh Child Marriage Restrain Act which forbids marriage below 18 and Section 365-B of the Pakistan Penal Code which invalidates any marriage which takes place between an abductor and abductee.

Huma has not been allowed to see her parents and no one has heard from her since her abduction.

We urge you to engage the Pakistani government regarding this issue and the broader issue of kidnappings, forced conversions and forced marriages that the religious minority community continues to experience on a regular basis. We ask:

First, that the U.S. begin pressuring Pakistan to ensure justice is served and that Huma's captors are held responsible for their illegal actions. The marriage is illegal and must be annulled, her conversion is illegitimate, and Huma must be allowed to return home to her family.

Second, we ask that the U.S. pressure Pakistan to begin a legitimate process of curbing forced conversions and forced marriages. This is an ongoing issue for religious minorities in the country and the issue must be dealt with directly. The majority religious community is able to operate with near complete impunity regarding these cases.

Third, we ask that the United States begin the process of leveraging aid and other economic tools to encourage meaningful change in Pakistan's systematic abuse of its religious and nonreligious minority communities.

We hope to see robust action from the United States government to counter the oppressive trends in Pakistan's political, cultural and societal life.

Respectfully,

International Christian Concern

American Islamic Congress

Anglical Persecuted Church Network

Bektashi Community in the Balkans

Christian Freedom International

Church of Scientology National Affairs Office

Common Ground Christian Network

Conscience Coalition

*Coordination des Associations et des
Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience*

Dr. Abby Abildness, Healing Tree International

*Dr. Fabong Jemchang, National Youth Council
of Nigeria*

*Dr. Jianli Yang, Citizen Power Initiatives for
China*

*Dr. Mike Mohamed Ghouse, Center for
Pluralism*

Dr. William T. Devlin, REDEEM!

Faith & Liberty

Family Research Council

*Father John Anderson, St. Nicholas Freedom
Group*

Florida Armenians

*Hamid Gharagozloo, International
Organization to Preserve Human Rights in Iran*

Hindu American Foundation

Human Rights Without Frontiers Belgium

Indian American Muslim Council

Institute in Religion and Democracy

*International Religious Freedom Roundtable,
Seoul Korea*

*Jenny Noyes, New Wineskins Missionary
Network*

Jubilee Campaign USA

Kelly Pomeranz, The Way to Happiness

Minh Van Foundation

*Nguyen Linh, Unified Buddhist Church of
Vietnam*

*Office of Ecumenical, Interfaith, and Global
Engagement, Diocese of the Eastern USA,
Independent Old Catholic Church*

*Puneet Ahluwalia, South Asia Minorities
Alliance Foundation*

Promising a Better Society

Religious Freedom Coalition

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CC: Ambassador Samuel Brownback

Satoshi Nishihata, Happy Science USA

Save the Persecuted Christians

Scott Morgan, Red Eagle Enterprise

Uyghur Human Rights Project

*William Wilberforce Center for Justice and
Human Rights*

[1] Movement for Solidarity and Peace, "Report on Forced Marriages & Forced Conversions in the Christian Community of Pakistan", 2014.

[2] <https://www.persecution.org/2020/02/06/high-court-pakistan-rules-favor-underage-marriages/>