

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Every Effort Needed to Protect Afghan Women MPs

Geneva 14 August 2013 – Afghan authorities must make every effort possible to ensure the release and safe return of abducted Afghan woman MP Fariba Ahmadi Kakar and to provide greater protection for all women parliamentarians in the country, says the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Kakar's abduction by an armed gang in Ghazni province together with her three children came just days after reports of an attack on a female senator, Rooh Gul Hirzad, which killed her daughter and left her and other family members injured.

Kakar's children have since been released in a military operation.

"The violent targeting of prominent, trailblazing women in Afghanistan, including parliamentarians, is totally unacceptable," says IPU President Abdelwahad Radi. "Their work to ensure millions of Afghan women have the same rights to basics such as good health, education and careers and not suffer violence and abuse as a daily reality, must not be impeded."

The Organization is calling for greater security for women MPs, who make up just over [27 per cent](#) of parliamentarians in both the lower and upper house of parliament.

"A strong presence of women in the Afghan parliament, addressing the concerns of their constituents, including women, is critical if the country is not to condemn half its population to third class citizenship," states Radi. "Their voice must not be diminished, but strengthened if they are to inspire a new generation of women to engage in politics to enact change."

IPU's Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians which works to redress human rights abuses against MPs across the world, is examining cases involving Afghan MPs who have been victims of repeated attacks and intimidation. This includes a woman MP highly active on women's rights issues.