

PPP expresses concern over disappearance of JSQM activist

Islamabad June 22, 2006: Former Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto has expressed concern over the mysterious disappearance of Dr Safdar Sarki, a political activist of Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) a nationalist group who was kidnapped earlier this year reportedly by members of the intelligence.

In a statement today the former Prime Minister said that although PPP does not share the political views of JSQM, it believes that every individual is entitled to protection under the law.

She said that it was a matter of great concern that cases of mysterious disappearances were on the rise. No one must be incarcerated let alone tortured or killed for his or her political beliefs no matter what they might be, she said. Even those who have committed the most heinous crimes must be brought before the courts and no one held in habeas corpus, she said adding, "That is what the rule of law is all about".

The case of Dr. Sarki was brought to the attention of the PPP by Pak Origin Americans as Dr. Sarki is based in America.

Mohtarma Bhutto noted that a constitutional petition has been filed before the Sindh High Court but Dr Sarki has not been produced before the High Court, she said.

Recently two international human rights organizations, including the US State Department country report, mentioned that the Pakistani judiciary is susceptible to governmental pressure.

Reportedly several men in civilian clothes, one of whom is suspected of being a senior police officer kidnapped Dr Sarki from Karachi in the middle of the night. He was pushed into a van and he had been blindfolded.

The Pakistan Peoples Party called for the immediate release of Dr. Sarki and for following the due process of law, the former Prime Minister said.

For more information visit www.ppp.org.pk website

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