

Indian woman, working for NGO, abducted in Kabul; MEA assures assistance

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New Delhi/Kolkata: An Indian woman has been abducted in Kabul by suspected militants right outside her office with Ministry of External Affairs saying that officials are in touch with Afghan authorities to seek her early release.

Judith Dsouza

The woman, identified as Judith D'Souza, a resident of Kolkata, was abducted from Taimani area along with two other persons on Thursday evening. The 40-year-old lady is a senior technical adviser with the Aga Khan Foundation, an international NGO, reports said, adding that she was scheduled to return to India next week.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said that the government was doing everything to rescue her. "Our embassy is in touch with senior Afghan authorities and the government is also in touch with her family in Kolkata. All efforts are being made by the Afghan authorities to secure her early release," an official source said.

Daniel D'Souza, father of Indian aid worker Judith D'Souza who has been abducted in Kabul, meets with the media at his residence in Kolkata on June 10, 2016.

The woman's father Daniel D'Souza said in Kolkata that the family received information that three persons -- Judith, a security guard and the driver of the vehicle, were abducted.

"I want my daughter back," said a Daniel D'Souza.

Judith D'Souza's mother spoke to ANI and said she only wanted the government to work towards bringing her daughter back home safely.

"External Affairs minister Sushma Swaraj rang up and spoke to me and assured that the government is making all-out efforts to bring her back," Judith's sister Agnes D'Souza said.

Repending to a tweet by one of the family members of Judith, Swaraj said, "She is your sister and India's daughter. We are doing everything to rescue her. Pl take care of your sick father."

A source said the woman was abducted by suspected militants. Chief Executive of Aga Khan Trust for Culture, India, Ratish Nanda said every effort is being made to secure her safe release.

"On Thursday, June 9, a staff member of the Aga Khan Foundation was abducted. An investigation by the authorities has been launched, in conjunction with security officials and various partners. Every effort is being made to secure the safe release of the staff member," he said in a statement in New Delhi.

The family, Agnes said, received information about the abduction in the early hours of the day.

"We received the news from the Indian embassy in Kabul at 1.30 AM. The embassy said we are doing our best. We shall inform you as soon as we get any information. We are now awaiting. We hope that the government does

something and gets my sister back," she said, adding the Afghanistan government should also take steps to trace her.

She said Judith was scheduled to return home Wednesday next and had rung up two days ago. "She did not express any apprehension," she said.

Agnes said, "We had asked her (Judith) not to go there but she did not listen."

He said his daughter was working for uplifting the condition of women and children there.

The Aga Khan Foundation is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network and has been working on restoration projects in the war-ravaged country.

"It will continue to work with local communities, the Government of Afghanistan and those in need to enhance the development of the country," said Nanda.

Abduction a month after the advisory

Last month, the Embassy of India had issued a security alert to all Indian citizens residing in Afghanistan. It had also warned Indians travelling to Afghanistan warning that a persistent volatile situation exists in the country. All Indians residing in Afghanistan and Indian travellers to Afghanistan are advised that the security situation in Afghanistan remains highly volatile.

"Terrorist attacks have taken place in many parts of the country against a variety of targets including foreigners and are expected to continue. There is also the risk of kidnapping and hostage taking throughout the Afghanistan," the advisory further read.

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