

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 6, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

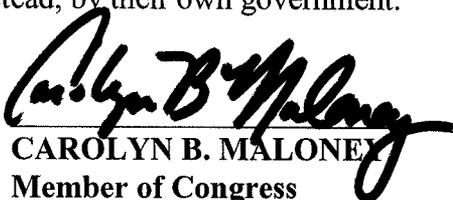
Every two hours, a woman is raped in Pakistan, and each day, two women die in honor killings. You have repeatedly praised President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan for being a leader "dedicated in the protection of his own people," yet these statistics do not equate to such dedication.

In 2002, Mukhtaran Bibi was gang-raped by four men from a rival village, and was then harassed by more than 300 jeering villagers who lined the roads as she walked home nearly naked – her clothes torn to pieces. Although many Pakistani women end up committing suicide after such violence, Ms. Mukhtaran pressed charges instead. Six men were convicted. In early June, Ms. Mukhtaran was invited to speak in the United States about her experience, but she was placed on the Exit Control List by the Pakistani government, which has prevented her travel. And when the Pakistan government indicated she had been removed from the Exit Control List, her passport was then confiscated. And now, while her passport finally has been returned, the convictions of the men who raped her have been overturned, allowing them to walk free while she was prevented from doing so. President Musharraf has admitted that the travel ban was in place because he wanted to protect Pakistan's image abroad, and he has repeatedly affirmed his decision to prevent her travel.

Mukhtaran Bibi has been the victim of oppressive behavior first by the men of a rival village, and now by her own government. And she is not alone. Shazia Khalid, a doctor in Pakistan, reported being gang-raped in a government-owned gas plant. Instead of being treated, she was drugged into unconsciousness for days, and then swept away to a psychiatric hospital so that she could not report the incident. Additionally, earlier this year, the two-year-old niece of a man was given to a 40-year-old man for marriage, to punish her uncle for having an affair. Also this year, an 11-year-old girl was rescued from her husband's family, which punished her for not working hard enough by beating her, breaking her arm, and stringing her up from the ceiling. And still, Pakistan has hudood laws in place, which imprison women for reporting rapes.

Mr. President, we should not be tolerating behavior from our friends that we certainly do not tolerate from our enemies. In the upcoming months, when you meet with President Pervez Musharraf and other Pakistani officials, we insist that you discuss the need to provide Pakistani women with basic human rights and freedom. Mukhtaran Bibi, and scores of other Pakistani women need your help and support. They are experiencing terror every day, not at the hands of Al Qaeda, but instead, by their own government.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress

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HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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