



**Alliance for  
Peacebuilding**

[PRESS RELEASE](#)

# Peace And Human Rights Activist Gulalai Ismail Is Safe In The U.S. After Threats To Her Life



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Washington, D.C., USA.** – The Alliance for Peacebuilding and Peace Direct can announce today that peace and human rights activist Gulalai Ismail is safe in the U.S. after facing threats and intimidation in her home country of Pakistan.

Gulalai was accused of inciting hate and violence against state institutions after she spoke at a protest over the lack of police action following the rape and killing of a 10-year-old girl in Islamabad in May. She went into hiding after being placed on a “Kill List” and receiving death threats.



## Alliance for Peacebuilding

Gulalai and her sister Saba Ismail founded Aware Girls, an organization in the northern tribal region of Pakistan that helps inform young women of their rights and helps foster peace in areas deeply affected by violent conflict. Saba is also in the United States, and like her sister is unable to return to Pakistan. Aware Girls is a long-time partner of Peace Direct.

“We’re relieved and thankful that Gulalai is safe, and we call on the Pakistani government to drop all charges against her. We also urge Pakistani authorities to immediately put in place measures to protect her family members still in Pakistan from any forms of harassment and intimidation,” said Peace Direct CEO Dylan Mathews.

“Gulalai Ismail is a fearless champion for women, youth, and tolerance in Pakistan. The Alliance for Peacebuilding is proud to count Gulalai and her organization, Aware Girls, as leaders within our global network. Frontline peacebuilders like Gulalai are integral to achieving just and inclusive societies and increasingly carry out their work at great personal risk, in the face of closing space for civil society worldwide,” said Uzra Zeya, CEO and president of Alliance for Peacebuilding.



*Aware Girls helps women in northern Pakistan learn about their rights and counter violent extremism.*



## Alliance for Peacebuilding

In July, the Alliance for Peacebuilding and Peace Direct sent a letter to Congress, signed by more than 40 peacebuilding and human rights organizations, supporting Gulalai and others. An [online petition](#) garnered more than 1,100 signatures.

After months in hiding, Gulalai said she was unaware of the growing international support for her. “One day, I got access to a phone” and found the petition and letter of support in an Internet search. “That was such a strong moment for me, because that was the moment I knew that I was not alone.”

“Gulalai has dedicated her life to being a voice for young women affected by violence and working for peace. We are so grateful that she is safe, and we will continue to support her however we can,” said Bridget Moix, U.S. executive director at Peace Direct.

What’s next for the sisters? Gulalai and Saba are launching a nonprofit called [Voices for Peace and Democracy](#) that will focus on building and strengthening protection mechanisms for women peacebuilders. The “aim is to bring women to the center of decision-making regarding conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes,” said Saba. “There’s a huge disconnect between international policy-making and grassroots peacebuilders. We aim to fill the gap.”

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