

Woman who accused Taliban official of rape is arrested, will be sentenced

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ISLAMABAD, Pakistan –

The Taliban announced that it has arrested and will soon sentence an Afghan woman who appeared in a video on social media earlier this week accusing a senior Taliban official of forcing her into marriage and raping her repeatedly.

In the video, the woman, who identified herself only by her first name, Elaha, wept as she described being beaten and raped by former Taliban Interior Ministry spokesman Saeed Khosti. She said she was speaking from an apartment in Kabul where the Taliban had confined her after she tried to escape the country, and she pleaded for rescue.

“These may be my last words. He will kill me, but it is better to die once than to die every time,” she said. . . forced to “kiss his [Khosty’s] feet” at the prison to show her regret for the escape attempt and to beg forgiveness.

Late Wednesday, a day after the video surfaced, the Taliban-run Supreme Court said in a tweet that Elaha had been arrested for defamation on orders of Chief Justice Abdul Hakeem Haqqani. Without mentioning any trial taking place, the tweet said the woman would “soon be sentenced according to Sharia law. . . No one is allowed to harm the name of Mujahideen or defame the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the 20-years of holy jihad,” ...



Elaha identified herself as a medical student at Kabul University and the daughter of an intelligence service general under the former government. She said Khosti had forced her into marriage six months ago, when he still held the spokesman's post. Khosti tried to marry her sister to another Taliban official, but her family fled, she said. "Saeed

Khosti beat me a lot. Every night he raped me,"

After they brought her back, she heard a Taliban member telling Khosti that she had lived under the former government for 20 years and should be stoned to death as an infidel, she said.

In tweets Wednesday, Khosti confirmed that he had married Elaha, but he denied mistreating her. "I assure you that I have not done anything illegal," Khosti said he divorced Elaha after finding she "has a problem in her faith" and accused her of insulting Islam's holy book, the Quran. "I used my legal rights and divorced her. I deeply regret my ill-considered marriage and apologize to the Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirates [Taliban] and the Afghan people."

Elaha's video was widely shared on Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp groups, sparking a wave of calls for help and denunciations of the Taliban from women's-rights activists.