Pakistan PM condemns public flogging

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani says he strongly condemns the public flogging of a girl in his country's Swat Valley.

The prime minister said he has asked for a full investigation and report into the Swat Valley incident that he insists went against Islamic principles and tarnished Pakistan's image, Pakistan's English-language newspaper, Dawn, said Friday.

Gilani also insists his government fully supports women's rights and does all it can to protect those rights.

A recently released video shows men who appear to be Taliban members holding down a girl and beating her with a strap, the BBC said. Local sources said the girl was accused of forbidden relations with a man.

The Register Supreme Court said Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry is seeking a report on the incident from the government of Pakistan's North-West Frontier province, Dawn said.

NWFP Information Minister Iftikhar Hussain said his provincial government will take action against those involved in the Jan. 3 flogging.

Sufi Muhammad, leader of a movement that seeks implementation of Islamic law, struck a deal with Pakistani authorities in February under which Taliban militants stop their violent campaign in return for religious courts -- and he is still waiting for the courts to be fully operational, The Guardian reported Friday.

Islamic religious law, called Shariah, is considered very strict and includes penalties such as flogging, chopping off hands and stoning.

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