

Police accused of kidnapping for ransom

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By Makia Munir

KANDAHAR CITY, Jan 16 (PAN): A number of elected public representative from the southern Kandahar province allege security forces are involved in crimes including abductions. But police officials reject the charge as unfounded.

Referring to complaints they received during a 45-day winter recess, legislators from Kandahar said residents were gravely concerned about crime and insecurity in the province, where kidnapping for ransom was used being used as a means of becoming rich.

Malali Ishaqzai told Pajhwok Afghan News police and their vehicles were sometimes used in kidnap cases. Her colleague Shakiba Hashmi also blasted low-paid policemen for kidnapping people to line their pockets. She said the practice had prompted the ambitious youth to join the force.

She pointed out a child was recently kidnapped from Kandahar City by men in police uniform. When chased, the lawmaker explained, the vehicle carrying the child disappeared near the police headquarters.

When contacted by the victim family, the law-enforcers explicitly said the child had been abducted for ransom, she continued, maintaining the kidnappers demanded \$100,000. But they later agreed to receive \$50,000 and released the minor.

Haji Obaidullah Achakzai confirmed the allegations against police. He took up the issue with police officials, who investigated 30 cops on criminal charges.

However, Fariba Ahmadi Kakar repudiated police involvement in abductions, suggesting outlaws could be using police uniforms while committing heinous acts.

Kandahar police chief Syed Agha Saqib, verifying the complicity of some policemen in robberies, torturing people receiving bribes, vehemently denied they were linked kidnapping incidents.

Rejecting claims about increasing kidnap incidents in the former Taliban stronghold, he argued: "Only four cases have been registered over the last seven months."

Faizullah Kakar, president of a construction company, also said outlaws clad in police uniforms looted shops in bright daylight.

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