

Wednesday, 01 July 2009

Commission set to visit Pakistan to investigate murder UN opens probe into murder of Pakistan's Bhutto



Probe into Bhutto's assassination launched almost two years later (File)

ISLAMABAD (Al Arabiya, AFP)

A United Nations commission appointed to investigate the assassination of Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto began work on Wednesday, a spokesman said, almost two years after the former prime minister was killed.

The panel, which has a six-month mandate, is being led by the Chilean ambassador to the U.N., Heraldo Munoz, and includes an Indonesian ex-attorney general and an Irish former police official.

Bhutto, the first woman to become prime minister of a Muslim country, was killed on December 27, 2007 in a gun and suicide attack after addressing an election rally in Rawalpindi, a garrison city near the capital Islamabad.

"The six-month mandate of the Benazir Bhutto commission of inquiry has begun today. The commission is expected to visit Pakistan but the dates are not determined yet," Hiro Ueki, a U.N. spokesman in Pakistan, told AFP.

The U.N. has said the panel will inquire into the facts and circumstances of the assassination, but have made clear it will be up to Pakistan to determine "the criminal responsibility of the perpetrators."

Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik said his government thought the murder was a "big international conspiracy."

"We want to know who was behind this, who had conspired it, who has financed it. And we think this was a big international conspiracy," Malik said in an interview with the BBC.

"Obviously, there might be some actors within Pakistan or within the region, but we want really to expose

the whole conspiracy, because we think that this was a kind of a beginning of an attempt to Balkanize Pakistan," he said.

It remains unclear who was behind Bhutto's killing but immediately after her murder, Pakistan blamed Qaeda and then the Taliban, both groups denied responsibility.