

URGENT ACTION

ABDUCTED POLITICAL ACTIVIST AT RISK OF DEATH

Zahid Baloch, Chairman of the Baloch Student Organisation-Azad (BSOA) was abducted in Quetta, Balochistan, on 18 March. His family do not know where he is or what has happened to him. He is at grave risk of ill-treatment, torture, or even death. Hundreds of other activists have suffered similar fates in the province over recent years.

Witnesses claim **Zahid Baloch** was taken at gunpoint in the Satellite Town area in Quetta, Balochistan on 18 March by personnel of the Frontier Corps, a federal paramilitary force. The authorities have not provided any information concerning his abduction and have failed to investigate it adequately. Zahid Baloch is the Chairman of BSOA, a student organization advocating the separation of Balochistan province from the state of Pakistan. It was banned by the Pakistan government in March 2013 because they claimed it was "involved in terrorism."

Zahid Baloch's abduction follows a pattern of enforced disappearances in Balochistan province whereby Baloch political activists, human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers and suspected insurgents have been picked up by state security forces, and never seen again. Across the province many of those subjected to enforced disappearance have been recovered dead, often bearing bullet wounds and marks of torture. Activists calling for greater autonomy for the Baloch population, seen by the Pakistani authorities as 'anti-state', are particularly vulnerable to these violations. Relatives and eyewitnesses frequently accuse the security forces, especially the Frontier Corps and intelligence services, for carrying out these violations.

Please write immediately in Urdu, English or your own language:

- Expressing concern to the authorities that Zahid Baloch has not been seen since 18 March when witnesses say he was abducted by the Frontier Corps;
- Urging them to order an immediate impartial investigation into this apparent enforced disappearance, publicly disclose its findings and bring those responsible to justice in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty;
- Insisting that if Zahid Baloch is in custody, he is immediately released or transferred to an official place of detention and charged promptly with an offence consistent with international human rights law;
- Urging them to ensuring that Zahid Baloch is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and is allowed immediate and regular access to his family, lawyers of his choice and any medical attention he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 JUNE 2014 TO:

Prime Minister

Mian Nawaz Sharif
Pakistan Secretariat
Constitution Avenue
Islamabad
Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 921 3780 / +92 51 922 0404

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Advisor / Minister for Interior

Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan
Room 404, 4th Floor, R Block,
Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 920 2624

Salutation: Dear Minister

Chief Minister of Balochistan

Dr Abdul Malik
Chief Minister House
Zargoan Road, Quetta
Balochistan, Pakistan
Fax: +92 81 920 2240

Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Political activists from the ethnic Baloch community have been subjected to abductions, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions in Pakistan's Balochistan province. Hundreds have reportedly been subjected to these violations, but the precise figures are impossible to verify given the secretive nature of the abductions and killings, and the general inaccessibility of Balochistan province. Lateef Johar, a member of the BSOA has been on hunger strike for the safe recovery of Zahid Baloch since 22 April at a protest camp in Karachi.

Activists, journalists, lawyers, and student leaders as well as members of armed groups are among those who have been targeted for enforced disappearance, abduction, torture and unlawful killing. The violence takes place in a context of increasing political unrest and state military operations in Balochistan. Straddling the border with Afghanistan and Iran, Balochistan is Pakistan's geographically largest, but most sparsely populated province. It has a history of insurgency, with local groups advocating greater autonomy and a bigger share of the revenue generated by the province's natural resources, principally natural gas, which they believe now disproportionately benefit other provinces.

The bullet-riddled bodies of those who have been abducted, many showing signs of torture, are frequently found across Balochistan and occasionally in the city of Karachi, capital of neighbouring Sindh province. Relatives and Baloch groups accuse Pakistani security forces, particularly the Frontier Corps and intelligence agencies, of perpetrating these abductions and killings. In December 2013 Balochistan Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik Baloch acknowledged that state "agencies" were responsible for "illegal confinement" of Baloch activists. Judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the highest judiciary in the country, including former Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, have also accused the Frontier Corps of being responsible for many enforced disappearances in the province.

The Frontiers Corps is the primary state security force responsible for maintaining law and order in Balochistan province. The confrontation between Baloch nationalists and the state is characterized by human rights abuses committed by both sides.

Name Zahid Baloch

Gender m/f: m

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