

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 33/004/2003

25 March 2003

UA 82/03      Fear for safety

PAKISTAN      Akhtar Baloch (m), local coordinator of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan  
(HRCP)

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of Akhtar Baloch, coordinator of the Hyderabad branch of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), an independent human rights organization. He has not been seen since 23 March.

On 23 March Akhtar Baloch was being driven home by an HRCP colleague after attending the HRCP's annual general meeting in Hyderabad in the Pakistani province of Sindh. According to eyewitnesses, their car was forced to stop by two men on a motorcycle. Three armed men then got out of a white car, put a gun to the HRCP driver's head and told him to leave. Akhtar Baloch was then forced into the white car and driven away. He has not been seen since.

The police have not acknowledged that they are holding Akhtar Baloch. However, the HRCP told the Reuters news agency that police had told them that he was in the custody of some government agency but that they were unable to say where he was.

The HRCP fear that Akhtar Baloch, a prominent member of the organization, may have been targeted by security agents. This may be because the HRCP condemned the Pakistani government's human rights record in its annual report, published earlier in March.

The HRCP has made widespread enquiries to the authorities, including the police and the Home Minister and Governor of Sindh, on Akhtar Baloch's behalf. However, they have not been able to confirm his whereabouts.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Akhtar Baloch, who has not been seen since 23 March;
- calling for the authorities to immediately reveal his whereabouts if he is being held by a government agency, and if not, to undertake to do everything possible to find out where he is;
- calling on the authorities to release Akhtar Baloch immediately if he is in detention, unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought before a court of law;
- urging the authorities, if they are holding Akhtar Baloch, to guarantee that he will not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated while he is in custody.

**APPEALS TO:**

President Pervez Musharraf  
Pakistan Secretariat  
Islamabad  
Pakistan

**Telegram:**      **President Musharraf, Islamabad, Pakistan**

**Fax:**              **+ 92 51 9201051 (please keep trying)**

**Salutation:**     **Dear President**

Syed Kamal Shah  
Inspector General of Police  
Police Headquarters  
Karashi  
Sindh  
Pakistan

**Telegram:** Inspector General of Police, Karashi, Sindh, Pakistan

**Fax:** + 92 21 9212051 (please keep trying)

**Email:** [igp@sindhpolice.gov.pk](mailto:igp@sindhpolice.gov.pk)

**Salutation:** Dear Inspector General

**COPIES TO:**

Dr. Ishratul Ebad  
The Governor of Sindh  
Governor of Sindh Province  
Governor=s House  
Karachi  
Pakistan

**Fax:** + 92 21 9201218 / 9201226

**Salutation:** Dear Governor

and to diplomatic representatives of Pakistan accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 May 2003.