

PUBLIC

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UA 92/06 Arbitrary arrest/possible "disappearance"/fear of torture

PAKISTAN Munir Mengal (m), TV station director

Munir Mengal, who reportedly has no links to any political party, was arrested by intelligence agents on 4 April at Karachi airport. He has been preparing to launch a Baloch-language TV station, and this appears to be at least part of the reason he was arrested. His whereabouts are unknown, and he is in danger of torture or "disappearance".

Munir Mengal is the director of "Baloch Voice", the first independent Baloch-language satellite television channel. Based in the United Arab Emirates, it is scheduled to start broadcasting in June. He has applied to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority for a licence for the channel.

His relatives say that they were told by immigration officials that Munir Mengal was taken away by staff of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), an intelligence service under the control of the army. They were told the same thing by the Director of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). They believe that he may be held in the Malir Cantonment of Karachi. Karachi-based journalists told the NGO Reporters without Borders, which campaigns for press freedom, that intelligence agencies were investigating the source of funding for Baloch Voice.

His family have tried to file a complaint with police, but have not been allowed to do so. Staff at the Malir Cantonment have refused to respond to the family's request for information about his whereabouts. Relatives also said that they had received threatening phone calls from people claiming to be from a government agency.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Local people in Balochistan are demanding a bigger share of the revenue generated by the province's natural resources, principally natural gas, which they believe now benefit other provinces. A number of Balochi groups are seeking more rights for the province, some of which have resorted to violence, while others are campaigning peacefully. The government has attempted to suppress this opposition by increasing the military presence in the region. Many people have died at the hands of the security forces in extrajudicial executions and deaths in custody, and dozens of people are reported to have "disappeared".

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Munir Mengal, who was apparently arrested by the ISI on 4 April, and whose whereabouts are now unknown;
- expressing concern that the police station where his family tried to register a complaint refused to accept it, and calling for an investigation into this, with the officers responsible removed from duty;
- urging the authorities to reveal Munir Mengal's whereabouts and to ensure that he is not tortured or ill-treated;
- calling for him to be released immediately and unconditionally, unless he is charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

President

President Pervez Musharraf
Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad

Fax: +92 51 9221422

Email: ce@pak.gov.pk

Salutation: Dear President Musharraf

Governor of Sindh province

Dr Ishrat-ul-Ibad Khan
Governor
Governor House
Karachi
Pakistan

email: governor@governorsindh.gov.pk

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES 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 25 May 2005.