

PUBLIC

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UA 253/05 **Fear for Safety/"disappearance"**

PAKISTAN **Ali Ashgar Bangalzai (m), aged 38**
His wife and eight children

Ali Ashgar Bangalzai, a tailor with eight children, "disappeared" following his arrest in 2001. He has been harassed, tortured and ill-treated by the security forces because of his alleged connection with the Baloch Students Organization (BSO); a group which reportedly advocates the peaceful struggle for the rights of the Baloch people. He is not a member of any political party but is the uncle of BSO chairman Dr Imdad Baloch. The family of Ali Ashgar Bangalzai are reportedly in grave danger after publicly demanding justice for him.

Ali Ashgar Bangalzai was first detained on 1 June 2000 in Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan, and questioned in connection with the murder of a Balochistan High Court judge, Mir Mohammed Marri. Security forces personnel reportedly took him to the Kuli Camp detention centre where he was hung upside down and severely beaten, deprived of sleep and threatened with the death of himself and his family if he did not divulge the identity of the person who had killed the judge. He was released without charge two weeks later.

On 18 October 2001, Ali Ashgar Bangalzai was again arrested by the security forces, this time in front of the Government Degree College in Quetta, along with his friend Muhammad Iqbal Bangalzai. Both men were reportedly severely tortured in detention. Muhammad Iqbal Bangalzai was released after 22 days, but Ali Ashgar Bangalzai has apparently "disappeared".

Members of Ali Ashgar Bangalzai's family filed a constitutional petition in the Balochistan High Court to ascertain who was holding him. When this petition was heard in court, the police told Ali Ashgar Bangalzai's family that he was being held by the intelligence services and that they were unable to intervene. Family members met with the regional head of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Brigadier Siddique, who admitted that Ali Ashgar Bangalzai was in their custody and asked the family to provide clothes for him. The ISI official assured the family that Ali Ashgar Bangalzai would soon be released. Brigadier Siddique was transferred to another post shortly afterwards but his successors made similar promises that Ali Ashgar Bangalzai would be released.

In subsequent years ISI officials have reportedly sworn on the Koran that Ali Ashgar Bangalzai is alive, without revealing where he is being held. A man who had been held by the ISI for a year told Ali Ashgar Bangalzai's family that he had met him in detention. However, his whereabouts have not been established.

Ali Ashgar Bangalzai's family had not publicized his "disappearance" after being repeatedly threatened by the security forces, who warned them of "dire consequences" if they spoke out. Having frustrated all other avenues, his family began carrying out public protests in July 2005. Some of Ali Ashgar Bangalzai's children are believed to have carried out a hunger strike, which is now over.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Baloch Students Organisation is a group that is active in highlighting the plight of the Baloch people. They have campaigned on issues including recent allegations of the unlawful killing of villagers by the military in Balochistan. They have also campaigned on the longer standing issue of access to resources such as gas. Balochistan hosts the country's primary gas installation yet the residents of this province have little access to this resource.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ali Ashgar Bangalzai, who "disappeared" following his arrest in October 2001;
- expressing concern at reports that he has been tortured and ill-treated while in custody, and seeking assurances that he is being humanely treated in detention;
- calling on the authorities to grant him immediate access to his relatives, lawyers and any medical treatment he may require;
- calling for an impartial investigation into the alleged torture and ill-treatment of Ali Ashgar Bangalzai, and into the failure of the Pakistan authorities to disclose his whereabouts or the reason for his detention, with the results of the investigation to be made public and those found to be responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to ensure the safety of Ali Ashgar Bangalzai's wife and eight children, who face reprisals from the security forces after publicizing the "disappearance";
- calling for an investigation into the threats against them, for the results to be made public, and those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President Pervez Musharraf
Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan

Fax: + 92 51 922 1422
E-mail: CE@pak.gov.pk
Salutation: Dear President

Mr. Muhammad Wasi Zafar
Minister of Law, Justice and Human Rights
S Block, Pakistan Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan

Fax: + 92 51 920 2628
E-Mail: minister@molaw.gov.pk
Salutation: Dear Minister

Governor of Balochistan
Awais Ghani
Governor House
Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan

Fax: + 92 81 920 2178 / 2992
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 6 November 2005.