

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI: Index: ASA 33/002/2010  
11 March 2010

## **Pakistan: Amnesty International condemns armed attack on World Vision staff**

Insurgent groups must end the policy of targeting international and national humanitarian agencies which are trying to provide help and assistance to Pakistan's poor, said Amnesty International today.

The attack on the office of Christian aid agency, World Vision, in Manshera district in the Northwest Frontier province, killed six Pakistani staff members, four men and two women, according to the aid agency. Seven other employees were injured in the attack and taken to hospital. The organization has suspended all operations in the country.

The aid agency said in a statement that no threatening letters were received prior to the attack. According to media reports, around 10 gunmen raided the office yesterday morning, gathering staff into one area and then opening fire on them. On leaving the building the men set off explosives. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack but the authorities suspect that the Taliban or related insurgent groups were behind the attack.

Amnesty International condemned all targeted or indiscriminate attacks on civilians.

The attack is a major setback for the human rights and humanitarian efforts underway in Pakistan. Amnesty International calls on armed groups to immediately end such attacks. Those suspected of carrying the attacks out or ordering them must be brought to justice and tried according to international human rights standards.

Millions of Pakistanis depend on international assistance for food, water, healthcare and education. The latest attack on World Vision staff impairs the already limited ability of aid workers to assist Pakistanis, particularly those in conflict-affected areas in the country's northwest region.

It is imperative that the Pakistan government and international community not only condemn such attacks but also take measures to regain stability and security for all those in the country.

### **Background:**

Attacks on aid workers and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) occur frequently in Pakistan and have claimed the lives of scores of innocent people. Insurgents frequently target aid workers accusing them of "spying" or "collaborating" with the Pakistani authorities.

In April 2009 three women workers and a driver of a USAID-funded educational NGO, Rise International, were shot dead in Manshera. Local people suspected that militants were behind the attack.

In February 2008, four Pakistani staff members of the British aid agency, Plan international, were killed and at least 10 injured following an attack on its office in Manshera. The organization, which had been operating in the area for 12 years, suspended its operations in the country.