

URGENT ACTION

FOUR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS GONE MISSING

Since the beginning of January activists **Salman Haider, Waqas Goraya, Asim Saeed, and Ahmed Raza Naseer** have gone missing in a suspected enforced disappearance by state security forces in Pakistan. The activists are known for their social media activism and for expressing their views on human rights issues and state policies. An investigation into one of the cases has been ordered by the Ministry of Interior, but the fate or whereabouts of the activists has so far not been disclosed.

Activists **Salman Haider, Waqas Goraya, Asim Saeed, and Ahmed Raza Naseer** have gone missing in Pakistan since the beginning of January. All four were active on social media and spoke out on human rights issues and state policies.

On 6 January, Salman Haider, a prominent human rights defender, writer and lecturer at Fatima Jinnah University went missing from the Bani Gala area in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital. He is well known for his Urdu poetry on issues including enforced disappearances in the Balochistan province in Pakistan. According to his family, on 6 January Salman Haider left his home in Korang Town in Islamabad and was due to return home at 8.30pm. At around 10:30pm he texted his wife asking her to collect his car from Korang Town Chowk near the Islamabad Expressway. His car was found by his family, but Salman Haider has been missing since. Some media reports indicate that the investigation ordered by the Ministry of Interior revealed footage from nearby cameras showing two vehicles and five people taking Salman Haider. There are no known witnesses that saw him being abducted.

According to local contacts, two other activists Waqas Goraya, usually based in Holland, and Asim Saeed, who had just returned from Singapore, went missing on 4 January from Lahore, the capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab. They both help run the 'Mochi' Facebook page, which has been critical of Pakistan's military. Activist Ahmed Raza Naseer went missing from his family shop in Nanakana Sahib, in the Punjab province, on 7 January.

Please write immediately in English or Urdu:

- Expressing concern that Salman Haider, Waqas Goraya, Asim Saeed, and Ahmed Raza Naseer may have been subjected to enforced disappearance and urging the authorities to immediately disclose their whereabouts if they are in their custody;
- Calling on them to ensure that, if they are in custody, they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and given prompt access to their families, lawyers and any medical attention they may require pending their immediate and unconditional release;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that any investigation is carried out in a fair and transparent manner. Where sufficient evidence is gathered, those suspected of responsibility for crimes – including those with command responsibility – should be brought to justice in trials which meet international standards of fairness, without recourse to the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 FEBRUARY 2017 TO:

President of Pakistan
Honourable Mr Mamnoon Hussain
President's Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 920 8479
Salutation: Your Excellency

Prime Minister of Pakistan
Muhammad Nawaz Sharif
Prime Minister's House
Secretariat, Constitution Avenue
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 922 0404 (PM Secretariat)
Twitter: @pmln_org
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Federal Minister for Interior
Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan
Room 404, 4th Floor, R Block
Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 920 2624
E-mail: interior.complaintcell@gmail.com
Salutation: Dear Interior 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

Cases of arbitrary detention, harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders, journalists, and political activists have been regularly reported in various parts of Pakistan, including Balochistan, and most recently, Karachi, where the Rangers have been given extensive powers by virtue of the Anti-Terrorism Act to use force, conduct raids and arrest suspects for the prevention of 'terrorism'. However, these four activists going missing – one from the capital and the others from other cities in the Punjab province - is a new, and extremely disturbing development as it signifies a crackdown against online dissent against state policies and the voicing of opinions relating to human rights.

Wahid Baloch, human rights defender and Baloch activist was subjected to a suspected enforced disappearance by state security forces from the outskirts of Karachi on 26 July 2016. He was reunited with his family more than four months later. His family has said that he was dropped in Malir, 30km east of Karachi, on Monday morning 5 December and he was then able to take a taxi to his home in Lyari. Wahid Baloch chose not to speak about his abduction during a news broadcast, however thanked rights groups for campaigning on his behalf. Prior to this, Human rights defender Saeed Baloch was arrested in Karachi on 16 January by members of the Rangers, Pakistan's paramilitary police force. Following national and international pressure, he was presented in court on 26 January. The Rangers claimed he had only been arrested on 25 January. He was placed under a preventative detention order for three months under the Anti-Terrorism Act, and eventually released on bail on 3 August 2016.

Under international law, the right to life and freedom from torture and other ill-treatment are non-derogable, and apply in all circumstances. Pakistan is obliged to respect and protect these rights under several human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. In addition, the prohibition of enforced disappearance is a rule of customary international law binding on all states and an international crime. Under Article 2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, each state has a duty to create the conditions necessary to defend human rights within their jurisdictions. However, human rights defenders in Pakistan continue to be arrested, detained, tortured and imprisoned simply for their involvement in peaceful activities. Human rights defenders in Pakistan also face intimidation and harassment. Amnesty International calls on the Government of Pakistan to ensure an environment in which it is possible to defend human rights as well as peacefully express political opinions without fear of reprisal or intimidation.

Name: Salman Haider, Waqas Goraya, Asim Saeed, and Ahmed Raza Naseer

Gender m/f: M

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