

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Pakistan: Impartial investigation into journalist's killing urgently needed

Amnesty International is concerned by recent reports that the government of Sindh province is interfering in police investigation into the killing of a journalist -- Amir Baksh Brohi.

Local observers believe that Amir Baksh Brohi was killed because he had written several articles on violence against women and human rights abuses perpetrated by the tribal justice system in the province. They also believe the authorities are obstructing the investigations because of his outspoken views.

Amir Baksh Brohi was a district correspondent for Kwawish newspaper in Shirkarpur, Sindh province. According to reports, on 3 October 2003, Brohi was outside the "Gymkhana" guest house in Shikarpur when he was shot four times by 2 or 3 unidentified gunmen. Brohi was returning to the guest house after a meeting at the District Police Officer's residence about 300 metres away.

A First Information Report was lodged by Amir Baksh Brohi's uncle on 4 October at Lakhigate police station in Shikarpur District and 2 or 3 individuals were subsequently arrested after pressure from local human rights groups. Soon afterwards, however, the case was transferred to another district.

Amnesty International believes that the transfer of the murder case to Khairpur district for no apparent reason will delay the investigation and calls on the government of Sindh province to ensure that the case is immediately and impartially investigated.

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