URGENT ACTION

RELEASE CONVICTED HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS

On 23 January, human rights lawyers Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chatta were arbitrary arrested and the next day, 24 January, both sentenced to 10 to 17 years' imprisonment for social media posts deemed to be "anti-state" and "fake and false information" under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act. Eight months on and their appeal against their sentence and conviction has yet to be heard. Imaan Mazari-Hazir has experienced serious health concerns in detention for which she needed urgent healthcare and which the authorities repeatedly denied her access to. The Pakistani authorities must quash their conviction and immediately and unconditionally release them.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif
Prime Minister's Office,
Constitution Avenue, G-5/2 Islamabad, Pakistan
Email: info@pmo.gov.pk

Dear Hon. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif,

I am writing to bring your attention to the continued unlawful imprisonment of human rights defenders and prominent lawyers, ***Imaan Mazari-Hazir*** *and* ***Hadi Ali Chattha****.*

Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha were arrested on 23 January and on 24 January sentenced to a 10 to 17 years' imprisonment for social media posts under provisions of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 related to "cyber terrorism" and "fake and false information". While their trial raised significant fair trial concerns, Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha's applications to suspend their prison sentence and appeal against their conviction have also not been heard by the higher courts, particularly the Islamabad High Court. In light of the courts' failure to hear their appeals within the two-week time frame stipulated by the Supreme Court, there is concern that the authorities are using delay tactics to prolong their arbitrary detention, which could also constitute a violation of their right to appeal.

I am also extremely concerned about reports regarding Imaan Mazari-Hazir's poor health for the past month during which she has suffered from dental and gastrointestinal problems. Imaan has experienced heavy bleeding in her gums, and the prison authorities failed to provide her with access to a dentist. Imaan Mazari-Hazir's family sent her medicine after consulting a dentist, however not all the medicine was delivered to her by the prison authorities. She was also found to be suffering from a chest infection and experiencing stomach issues. Imaan Mazari-Hazir's family has noted that many women in the prison facility are suffering from infectious diseases, and no measures are being taken to stem the spread of these infections in the women's prison.

Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha are being imprisoned as retaliation for their work as human rights lawyers and exercising their right to freedom of expression to extend solidarity to activists and movements within Pakistan. Their imprisonment under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act continues to raise serious questions about the misuse of the law to silence dissent inside the country and runs contrary to Pakistan's international human rights obligations.

I urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure that Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha's convictions are quashed and they are immediately and unconditionally released. Pending their release, I urge you to ensure that Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha are granted access to adequate and all necessary healthcare without delay.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights lawyers Imaan Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha were arrested on 23 January 2026 whilst travelling to court where they were due to appear in relation to a case filed against them. They were arrested despite being granted pre-arrest bail two days earlier, on 21 January. Eyewitnesses reported use of unnecessary force by law enforcement during their arrest. They were detained in Adiala Jail, Rawalpindi near Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, and remain imprisoned there. On 24 January, an Islamabad district and sessions court sentenced Imaan and Hadi with 10 to 17 years imprisonment under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), sections 9 (glorification of an offence), 10 (cyber terrorism), and 26-A (false or fake information), based on their posts on X primarily expressing solidarity with Baloch and Pashtun activists and criticizing the Pakistan military's policies. Hadi was charged with resharing Imaan's posts. Their trial was conducted with unusual haste, and they were consistently denied the right to cross-examine witnesses and bring evidence against them.

Since their imprisonment, Imaan and Hadi have filed applications appealing their conviction and suspension of the imprisonment. These applications have not been heard by the courts through delay tactics such as refusing to list the case. On 2 March, the Islamabad High Court dissolved the bench due to hear their appeal. After appealing to the Supreme Court, the court directed the Islamabad High Court on 12 May to pass a verdict on the sentence suspension pleas within two weeks. Despite these orders, no substantial hearing of the appeal has taken place.

Imaan and Hadi have been subjected to arbitrary detention and criminal charges several times for their human rights work in recent years. Imaan was arrested under charges of terrorism after her speech at a Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) rally in August 2023. She was released on bail a week later. In October 2024, Imaan and Hadi were arrested under terrorism charges for removing police barricades set up in relation to an international cricket team's visit in Islamabad. They were released days later. After a case was filed against them in August 2025 under PECA for so-called "anti-state" tweets, arrest warrants were issued. Both lawyers were granted pre-arrest bail, however, Hadi was briefly arrested on 29 October 2025 in relation to the case. On 15 January 2026, the court cancelled Imaan and Hadi's bail after Imaan filed an application excusing non-appearance on account of illness. On 16 January, the court ordered their arrest within 24 hours. They were granted temporary bail on 19 January; however, additional charges were brought against them through a previously unknown First Information Report dated July 2025 relating to a protest by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) in Islamabad.

Imaan Mazari is a 33-year-old human rights lawyer from Islamabad and Hadi Ali Chattha is a 33-year-old human rights lawyer from Multan. Both Imaan and Hadi got married in 2023. Imaan and Hadi have been representing victims of state oppression for years, particularly journalists targeted under Pakistan's anti-terrorism and cybercrime laws, victims accused under the blasphemy laws and victims of enforced disappearances. In June 2025, Imaan was awarded the World Expression Forum's Young Inspiration Award 2025.

Pakistani authorities have carried out a wider crackdown on freedom of expression. Since the passage of the Prevention of Electronic Crime Act in 2016, scores of journalists, human rights defenders and members and supporters of opposition parties have been detained and harassed under the law. In January 2025, the Act was amended to further restrict online speech and add section 26-A which allows for a maximum three-year prison sentence for "fake or false information". Amnesty International has also documented a system of surveillance and censorship in Pakistan, used to target journalists and human rights lawyers. Use of internet shutdowns and slowdowns are being deployed with increased frequency to curb protests and the flow of information. Activists, particularly those belonging to Baloch and Pashtun ethnic identities, have been targeted through antiterrorism laws and subjected to enforced disappearances.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Urdu
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 7 March 2027
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Imaan Mazari-Hazir (she/her)**; Hadi Ali Chattha** (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa33/0660/2026/en/