

URGENT ACTION

PAKISTANI JOURNALIST ATTACKED WHILE DRIVING HOME

Pakistani journalist Matiullah Jan was driving home with his two children on 24 September when he was attacked by two men on a motorbike, who threw a brick-sized piece of concrete at his car. The attack appears to have been a response to Matiullah Jan's work as a journalist. He could be at risk of further attack.

Pakistani journalist **Matiullah Jan**, who writes for *Nawaiwaqt*, an Urdu language daily, and hosts a political talk show called '*Apna apna gareban*' on Waqt News, a national news channel, was attacked on the afternoon of 24 September by two men on a motorcycle who threw a brick-sized piece of concrete at his car as he was driving towards Barakahu, on the outskirts of Islamabad. His two children were travelling in the backseat of the car at the time of the attack. The front windscreen of his car was shattered, and shards of glass fell on him. He and his two children were unharmed.

This is the second time Matiullah Jan has faced such an attack. The first was in 2011, when he and his colleague, both working on the same news story, were the subjects of separate attacks on the same day. The two attacks appear to be retaliation for his critical journalism on the policies of the government, the military and Pakistan's intelligence agencies. Amnesty International fears that Matiullah Jan remains at risk of further attacks.

Please write immediately in English or Urdu:

- Calling on the Pakistani authorities to conduct a thorough, impartial, independent and effective investigation into the attacks on Matiullah Jan, and bring those suspected of responsibility to justice in trials which meet international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Urging them to take immediate measures to end the continuing threats, attacks and intimidation against journalists;
- Calling on them to ensure a safe and enabling environment in which journalists, other media workers and human rights defenders are able to carry out their work freely and without fear of reprisals.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 NOVEMBER 2017:

Prime Minister of Pakistan
Shahid Khaqan Abbasi
Prime Minister House
Secretariat, Constitution Avenue
Islamabad, Pakistan
Email: shahid.na50@na.gov.pk

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

And copies to:
Federal Minister for Interior
Ahsan Iqbal
Room 404, 4th Floor, R Block
Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 920 2624
Salutation: Dear Interior Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR SYED IBNE ABBAS, High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 35-36 Lowndes Square SW1X 9JN tel: 020 7664 9284 Fax 020 7664 9224 or 020 7664 9227 (Ambassador's office) email: poldiv@phclondon.org and [cwg@phclondon.org](mailto:cwd@phclondon.org) and suggestions@phclondon.org web: www.phclondon.org facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pakistanihighcommissionuk> twitter: <https://twitter.com/phclondon> Salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

PAKISTANI JOURNALIST ATTACKED WHILE DRIVING HOME

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Pakistan continues to be a dangerous place for media workers and human rights defenders. Both state and non-state actors have attempted to silence critical voices through threats, intimidation, abductions and killings. According to the International Federation of Journalists, five journalists were killed in Pakistan in 2016. On 9 June 2017, Rana Tanweer, a reporter for Pakistan's Express Tribune who reports mainly on minority rights issues, including discrimination against the Ahmaddiya community and blasphemy laws, survived an assassination attempt when a car tried to run him over in Lahore, the capital of Punjab, Pakistan's largest province. He was thrown off his motorbike as the car rammed into him from behind. His leg was fractured in the accident. On 8 May 2016, Khurram Zaki, a human rights defender and editor of the website "Let us Build Pakistan", was shot dead in Karachi. Khurram Zaki had campaigned against Maulana Abdul Aziz, the Imam of the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad, known for his anti-Shia rhetoric and support for the armed group calling itself the Islamic State (IS).

In an overwhelming majority of cases investigated by Amnesty International, the Pakistani authorities have failed to carry out prompt, impartial, independent and thorough investigations into human rights abuses against journalists. In April 2014, Hamid Mir, host of Capital Talk, a popular TV show aired on the privately-owned Geo News channel, was shot and seriously wounded in Karachi, on his way to the television station's offices. Raza Rumi, another well-known television journalist, was forced to flee Pakistan in 2014 after gunmen on a motorcycle opened fire on his vehicle, killing his driver, moments after he finished doing a show.

Pakistan's Constitution, while guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression, subjects those freedoms to a range of vaguely-worded restrictions, such as "reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam", "the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof" and "friendly relations with foreign States".. These include offences which go beyond the permissible restrictions on freedom of expression under international human rights law. This last example was used following media coverage of Pakistan's response to the intervention of Saudi Arabia in Yemen in May 2015, and the stampede in September 2015 at the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca where more than 2,000 pilgrims died. The state-run Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issued warnings to the media against airing reports deemed critical of Saudi Arabia. A similar notice was issued in January 2016 at a time of political tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran. For each of these, PEMRA invoked Article 19 of the Constitution.

Five human rights defenders were forcibly disappeared in January 2017. Four of them were returned three weeks later. One of them spoke of being tortured in custody. The fate and whereabouts of one of them, Samar Abbas remains unknown. Many bloggers and journalists have been forced to self-censor for fear of being targeted too. Attempts by sections of the media and some religious groups to link human rights defenders with "blasphemous" online content represent a new and a particularly dangerous tool to counter political dissent.

UA: 220/17 Index: ASA 33/7162/2017 Issue Date: 25 September 2017