

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST AND POET ABDUCTED IN PAKISTAN

On 15 May 2024, Ahmad Farhad, a Kashmiri journalist and poet, was forcibly disappeared from his home in the capital city of Pakistan, Islamabad, and his whereabouts remain unknown. The police initially refused to file a First Information Report (FIR), and one was subsequently filed on the orders of the Islamabad High Court. Information regarding Ahmad's whereabouts must be made known, and he must be released immediately. The authorities must ensure an effective, prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigation is conducted into the circumstances of Ahmad's enforced disappearance.

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

Mr. Mohsin Naqvi, Minister of Interior
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Pakistan
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Dear Minister Mohsin Naqvi,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the enforced disappearance of Pakistani **journalist and poet, Ahmad Farhad**, from his home in Islamabad at 1am on 15 May 2024 by four men in plain clothes. CCTV footage from cameras installed at his home was also taken. His wife approached the police at 4am in the morning to file a First Information Report (FIR), but they refused to do so. An FIR was subsequently filed on the orders of the Islamabad High Court, but the state authorities have failed to disclose Ahmad's whereabouts despite multiple court hearings.

Ahmed has been a vocal critic of the Pakistani authorities and has received multiple threats regarding his social media activity in the past. I am deeply concerned for Ahmad's safety as his abduction follows the pattern of forcibly disappearing journalists and human rights defenders in Pakistan. He suffers from a severe form of stomach gastritis and requires regular medication.

Therefore, I urge your Ministry to ensure:

- **his immediate return;**
- **an effective, prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigation into the fate and whereabouts of Ahmed Farhad;**
- **ensure that anyone suspected of criminal responsibility for their involvement in Ahmad's enforced disappearance is tried before civilian courts through principles of fair trial without recourse to the death penalty.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmad Farhad is a 38-year-old Pakistani journalist of Kashmiri origin who was abducted while returning to his home in Islamabad at 1am on 15 May 2024 by four men. His family witnessed him being taken away into an unknown vehicle. The men also broke the CCTV cameras of the house and took a digital video recorder (DVR) of the house along with them. Ahmed's family visited the police station at 4am on the same day but the police refused to file a First Information Report (FIR) or investigate the case. The family filed a habeas corpus petition at the Islamabad High Court to produce him in court and the police subsequently started the investigation on the orders of the Court. The High Court has ordered the police to report its progress in the investigation to the court. On 17 May, Ahmad's wife received a call allegedly from his unidentified abductors to withdraw her petition at the high court to secure Ahmad's return. He was not released after an application to withdraw was filed by her lawyers the next day, and subsequently, she has decided to continue her case.

Ahmad is a journalist with 15 years of experience and has worked for over 10 mainstream Pakistani TV news channels, including Bol News, Hum News, Neo News and Capital TV. He is also a renowned Urdu poet, who has raised political themes such as enforced disappearances in his poetry. Ahmad has an active presence on social media. He has been an outspoken critic of political interference by the armed forces in Pakistan and has faced threats in the past due to his dissent. He was currently working as a freelance journalist after repeatedly being let go by previous employers due to pressure from state authorities. Ahmad had been under surveillance for the last two years, and his laptop was confiscated last year by the authorities. Two months ago, his family members in Kashmir were threatened by the police who demanded that he delete his social media posts against state authorities.

Ahmad has four children, the youngest among them is four years old. Ahmad's wife has stated that the uncertainty about his whereabouts has been extremely distressing for the family.

Enforced disappearances have been [used in Pakistan](#) to silence journalists, human rights defenders, dissenters and groups belonging to minority populations, particularly from Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There is no law criminalizing enforced disappearances and there persists a lack of accountability from the state. Families of the disappeared are regularly subject to [harassment](#), surveillance and intimidation by the state for demanding accountability for their loved ones. The practice of enforced disappearances violates the right to liberty, right to a fair trial and the right to freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Pakistan has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Ahmad is from the Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir region and his disappearance comes at a time when there have been mass protests in the region organized by the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) marching for economic rights, reduced electricity tariffs, wheat subsidies and increased taxation for high-income groups. The march was met with immense state brutality including the use of tear gas and lethal ammunition by law enforcement which resulted in the deaths of three protesters and close to a hundred injuries since 11 May 2024. A mobile internet blackout was imposed in the region.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL 15 July 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ahmad Farhad (he/him)