

URGENT ACTION

STUDENT LEADER'S FATE AND WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

24-year-old student leader Shabbir Baloch may have been subjected to enforced disappearance by the security forces during a day-long military operation in Gwarkop in Balochistan, Pakistan. He is at grave risk of ill-treatment, torture, and even death.

Shabbir Baloch, a 24-year-old student leader, the central information secretary and member of the central committee in the Baloch Student Organization-Azaad (BSO-Azaad) may have been subjected to an enforced disappearance after Pakistani security forces arrested him and seven other people on Tuesday 4 October during a day-long military operation in Gwarkop, Balochistan. According to friends and family of Shabbir Baloch, three of the eight (including Shabbir Baloch) are still missing and their location is unknown. The other two are a 70-year-old man and a 45-year-old man living in the same area whose names are not yet known.

Shabbir Baloch and his wife were guests at the home of their friends when members of the Pakistani Army, dressed in uniform and armed, entered and besieged their home between 5 and 6am on 4 October. The army members arrested Shabbir Baloch, blindfolded him and tied his hands and took him with them. Since mobile phone service and internet in the area were jammed and disconnected at the time of the siege, Shabbir's wife sent one of their friends to a nearby area where mobile phone signal was enabled to inform friends and BSO-Azaad members of his disappearance and that of the other two men. The family of the 70-year-old man went to the police station to file a complaint about all three disappearances but the police refused to do so.

The BSO-Azaad is a student organisation advocating for the separation of Balochistan province from the state of Pakistan. The Pakistan government banned the organisation in March 2013 claiming it was "involved in terrorism." State authorities have accused some members of the group of involvement in killings and other crimes. There are concerns that the ban has been used to suppress legitimate, peaceful political expression and protest. Several members have been abducted, killed or have fled the country out of fear of persecution. The abduction of Shabbir Baloch follows a pattern of enforced disappearances of Baloch political activists, human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers and suspected insurgents. Across the province many of those subjected to enforced disappearance have been recovered dead, often bearing bullet wounds and marks of torture.

Please write immediately in English or Urdu or your own language:

- Urging the Pakistani authorities to order an immediate, impartial, independent and effective investigation into Shabbir Baloch's fate and whereabouts, publicly disclose its findings and bring those responsible for his apparent enforced disappearance to justice in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty;
- Insisting that, if Shabbir Baloch is in state custody, that he is immediately released, or, if credible evidence of a recognised offence exists, is transferred to an official place of detention, charged promptly and remanded by an independent court, in line with international human rights standards;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and that he is allowed access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and adequate medical care.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 NOVEMBER 2016 TO:

President of Pakistan
Honourable Mr Mamnoon Hussain
President's Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 920 8479
Twitter: @Mamnoon_hussain
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

Chief Minister of Balochistan
Nawab Sanaullah Khan Zehri
B-39 Jhalawan House, Chaman Housing
Scheme, Quetta
Balochistan, Pakistan
Fax: +92 81 9201643
Salutation: Dear Chief 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.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights defenders and political activists from the ethnic Baloch community have been subjected to abductions, enforced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial executions in Pakistan's Balochistan province and in and around the city of Karachi in the neighbouring province of Sindh. Scores of individuals, mostly men but allegedly also some children, have reportedly been subjected to these violations, but the precise figures are impossible to verify given the secretive nature of the abductions and killings. Some of these individuals are released or handed to the police to be prosecuted before the courts. However, many are recovered dead, their bodies often bearing bullet wounds and what appear to be torture marks. Relatives and Baloch groups accuse Pakistani security forces, particularly the paramilitary Frontier Corps and Rangers and intelligence services, of perpetrating these violations. In December 2013 the then Chief Minister of Balochistan province Dr Abdul Malik Baloch acknowledged that state "agencies" were responsible for "illegal confinement" of Baloch activists. His comments echoed statements by the then Chief Justice of the Pakistan Supreme Court earlier in 2013 during *habeas corpus* hearings that included instances of alleged enforced disappearances.

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. 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.

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