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**Pakistan: Threat of false legal action against woman human rights defender Imaan Zainab Mazari and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha**

On 20 March 2025, **Imaan Zainab Mazari**, and her husband advocate **Hadi Ali Chattha** were issued summons by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Cyber Crimes Reporting Unit in Lahore to appear for an inquiry based on what appears to be baseless allegations. The FIA has declined to provide any further details, including a copy of the original complaint, nor have they shared information regarding the basis or substance of the inquiry.

[Imaan Zainab Mazari](#) is a woman human rights lawyer who has represented countless victims of human rights violations, taking up sensitive cases of enforced disappearances, extra judicial killings, arbitrary arrest and custodial violations. Through her work she has guaranteed access to justice, redress for human rights defenders, victims and their families against the oppressive practices of state authorities, especially the military, police, and intelligence agencies. Due to her activism and advocacy, Imaan Mazaari has been targeted by state authorities, including her arrest on baseless grounds in October 2024, and ongoing campaigns to smear and diminish her contribution.

[Hadi Ali Chattha](#) is a human rights lawyer and a criminal law specialist, who has represented over a dozen victims falsely accused of blasphemy. Hadi Ali Chattha began his legal career with the Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell, working pro bono to represent victims of sexual violence, rape and enforced disappearances. The human rights defender has also worked with Justice Project Pakistan on cases of prisoners on death row.

On 20 March, summons were issued against Imaan Zainab Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha as part of a pattern of abuse and intimidation, whereby the authorities have employed legal means and the executive power of the State to silence the human rights defenders. The FIA issued the summons on baseless allegations of defamation, filed by a religious leader with a reputation for pursuing blasphemy allegations against members of minority communities in Pakistan. Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha have declined to appear for the inquiry until a copy of the complaint and clear details of the violation are shared with them by the FIA, which the agency has so far failed to do. In light of past and ongoing threats against Imaan Mazaari and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha, the conduct of the FIA and the profile of the complainant in this instance, raises strong concerns of a possible fabricated blasphemy allegation against the two human rights defenders. These actions are targeted at crippling their legal practice, and punishing them for taking up sensitive cases which seek to hold powerful Pakistan authorities, including the military and intelligence agencies, accountable for their conduct.

Front Line Defenders is extremely concerned with the defamation and legal persecution of Imaan Zainab Mazaari and Hadi Ali Chattha, which the organisation believes to be a reprisal for their human rights work and advocacy on behalf of victims and their families. It is believed that the action by the FIA is aimed at threatening and intimidating Imaan Mazaari and Hadi Ali Chattha, in order to silence their work and prevent them from litigating on behalf of victims. Furthermore, the organisation is deeply concerned that this initial summons is a first step in an attempt to build a false legal case against the woman human rights defender for blasphemy, a crime which is punishable by death in Pakistan, and also exposes those accused to vigilante violence.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Pakistan to:**

1. Immediately dismiss the baseless complaint filed against Imaan Zainab Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha, and ensure that they do not suffer further interrogations or harassment by the Federal Investigation Agency;
2. Immediately cease all further harassment of Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha, as Front Line believes that the human rights defenders are being persecuted solely a result of their legitimate work in the defence of human rights;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Pakistan and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

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