

9 August 2016

Pakistan – Disappearance of human rights defender Abdul Wahid Baloch

On 4 August 2016, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) formed a Fact Finding Committee to investigate the disappearance of human rights defender Mr **Abdul Wahid Baloch** on 26 July 2016 near a highway toll plaza in Karachi.

[Abdul Wahid Baloch](#) is a human rights defender who has called for justice for the Baloch community through the organisation of campaigns, protests and public condemnation of a number of high profile cases. The Baloch community have faced various forms of oppression in Pakistan and human rights defenders that have demanded justice for state violations against them have been regarded as being anti-state by the Pakistani authorities. This disappearance is the latest in a string of enforced disappearances, torture and extra judicial executions of individuals from the Baloch community from the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan. So far this year, there has been more than [400](#) abductions and enforced disappearances of Baloch civilians by the security forces.

On 4 August 2016, HRCP formed a Fact Finding Committee to investigate the disappearance of Abdul Wahid Baloch on 26 July 2016. HRCP is an independent organisation that monitors human rights violations and seeks redress through public campaigns, lobbying and assistance in court proceedings. HRCP also organises seminars, workshops and fact finding missions on human rights abuses.

On 26 July 2016, Abdul Wahid Baloch was taken by armed persons in plain clothes from a highway toll plaza on the outskirts of Karachi while he was travelling with his friend from Digre. Two of the persons forcibly stopped the vehicle of the human rights defender and asked him to show his national identity card, which they verified with a picture of Abdul Wahid Baloch on their smart phone. Abdul Wahid Baloch was then taken away in a blue vehicle. The friend of Abdul Wahid Baloch later informed the family members of the human rights defender about his disappearance.

On 28 July 2016, family members went to Gadap Police Station to report the incident, however police refused to complete a first information report, to register it as a kidnapping case and have not yet launched any investigation.

Front Line Defenders expresses grave concern at the disappearance of human rights defender Abdul Wahid Baloch, which it believes was solely motivated by the peaceful and legitimate work to demand justice for state violations in the Baloch community in Pakistan.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Pakistan to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the disappearance of human rights defender **Abdul Wahid Baloch**, with a view to ensuring his protection and release, publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in **Pakistan** are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions;

Front Line Defenders Board of Trustees

Denis O'Brien, Noeline Blackwell, Jim Conway, Maria Mulcahy, Kieran Mulvey, Mary Jane Real, David Sykes, Arnold Tsunga

Front Line Defenders Leadership Council

Hanan Ashrawi, Robert Badinter, Bono, His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, Indai Lourdes Sajor, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Desmond Tutu

Front Line Defenders Advisory Council

James L. Cavallaro, Michel Forst, Hina Jilani, Maina Kiai

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 6 (b and c): *“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms; (c) To study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters”*, and to Article 12 (2): *“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.”*

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Lawlor
Executive Director

Front Line Defenders Board of Trustees

Denis O'Brien, Noeline Blackwell, Jim Conway, Maria Mulcahy, Kieran Mulvey, Mary Jane Real, David Sykes, Arnold Tsunga

Front Line Defenders Leadership Council

Hanan Ashrawi, Robert Badinter, Bono, His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, Indai Lourdes Sajor, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Desmond Tutu

Front Line Defenders Advisory Council

James L. Cavallaro, Michel Forst, Hina Jilani, Maina Kiai

Registered Charity Number CHY 14029