

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ARRESTED, FATE UNKNOWN

Human rights defender Saeed Baloch was arrested in Karachi on 16 January by members of the Rangers, Pakistan's paramilitary police force. Following national and international pressure, he was presented in court on 26 January. The Rangers claimed he had only been arrested on 25 January. He has been placed under a preventative detention order for three months under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Saeed Baloch is a human rights defender and General Secretary of the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, an NGO that protects the rights of fishermen and the fishing communities in Pakistan. On 16 January, at around 4pm, he was asked to go to a location in Karachi for a meeting with members of the Rangers, Pakistan's Paramilitary police force. He went to the meeting along with two of his colleagues. At around 8pm his phone was turned off and he and his two colleagues went missing. On 17 January, Saeed Baloch's family members wrote a letter to the Citizens Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) requesting them to disclose the status and whereabouts of the individuals detained, but there was no response. On 18 and 19 January Saeed's family read in the news that he had been arrested by members of the Rangers and accused of providing financial support to individuals involved in organised crime and to the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), an armed group that demands a separate homeland for ethnic Baloch. His family, colleagues and the human rights community claim that Saeed Baloch has no such links, that these allegations are false, and filed a petition relating to his unlawful detention in the Sindh High Court.

On 26 January, following intense pressure from civil society and human rights groups, Saeed Baloch and his colleagues were presented before the administrative judge of an antiterrorism court in Karachi by the members of the Rangers. According to a news report, the Court was told that he and the two others were placed under a three-month preventive detention under Section 11-EEEE of the 2014 Anti-terrorism (amendment) Act for an inquiry. This order allows persons to remain detained for up to three months without being formally charged for any crime.

According to the same news report, the Rangers' spokesperson claimed that Saeed Baloch was arrested on 25 January from Kalri police station in Karachi, despite earlier news reports confirming he was detained on 16 January.

Please write immediately in English or Urdu:

- Expressing concern to the authorities that Saeed Baloch and his colleagues have not been seen or had contact with their families or a lawyer since 16 January 2016 and insisting that they be released immediately, or charged promptly with an internationally recognizable offence and be brought promptly before a judge;
- Urging the authorities to immediately disclose the location of their detention, facilitate regular access with their family and lawyers, provide access to medical treatment as required and ensure that they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- Calling for an end of arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances of human rights activists in Pakistan.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 MARCH 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 House
Secretariat, Constitution Avenue
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 922 0404 (PM Secretariat)
Twitter: @PMNawazSharif
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Federal Minister for Interior
Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan
Room 404, 4th Floor, R Block
Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad, Pakistan
Fax: +92 51 920 2624
E-mail: interior.complaintcell@gmail.com
Salutation: Dear Interior Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Saeed Baloch is a prominent human rights defender in Pakistan. He has been held in detention from 16 January 2016 at an unknown location and has not been provided access to family or to lawyers. Visits and communication with families, lawyers, and medical staff, if required, are important safeguards against torture and ill treatment and the right to a fair trial, particularly the right to prepare an adequate defence.

Similar cases of arbitrary detention, harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders, journalists, and political activists have been regularly reported in various parts of Pakistan, including Balochistan, and most recently, Karachi, where the Rangers have been given extensive powers by virtue of the Anti-Terrorism Act to use force, conduct raids and arrest suspects for the prevention of 'terrorism'. Another human rights defender, Rizwan Akram Niazi, the Faisalabad coordinator for Defence for Human Rights Pakistan, an organisation working with families of missing persons was arrested by members of the Elite Force, a branch of the Punjab Police. According to his lawyer and colleagues, he was taken from his home in Faisalabad in front of his family members on 11 November 2015, a day after he organised a protest against enforced disappearances. His whereabouts still remain unknown.

Under Article 2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, each state has a duty to create the conditions necessary to defend human rights within their jurisdictions. However, human rights defenders in Pakistan continue to be arrested, detained and imprisoned simply for their involvement in peaceful activities. Human rights defenders in Pakistan also face intimidation and harassment. Amnesty International calls on the Government of Pakistan to ensure an environment in which it is possible to defend human rights without fear of reprisal or intimidation.

Name: Saeed Baloch

Gender m/f: m

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