

17 January 2017

Pakistan - Disappearance of human rights defender Samar Abbas

On 14 January 2017, the family of missing human rights defender Mr. **Samar Abbas** registered a First Information Report (FIR) at Ramna Police station in Islamabad regarding his disappearance from Islamabad on 7 January 2017.

[Samar Abbas](#) is the president of the **Civil Progressive Alliance Pakistan (CPAP)**. CPAP is a human rights group based in Karachi which campaigns for human rights and religious freedom. Their blog reports on human rights violations committed by security forces and religious extremists in Pakistan. Samar Abbas also worked in Karachi with various internet forums that report on the oppression and atrocities committed against Pakistan's ethnic and religious minority groups.

On 14 January 2017, Samar Abbas' family registered a First Information Report (FIR) at Ramna Police station in Islamabad. The family reported that when they were last in contact with Samar Abbas he was located in Sector G-11 of Islamabad. The police are now investigating the disappearance of the human rights defender.

On 7 January 2017, Samar Abbas was travelling from Karachi to Islamabad for business. The family said that he was in continuous communication with them until 7 January 2017 when his mobile phone was switched off. The family have not heard from him since.

The disappearance of Samar Abbas is the fifth disappearance of a human rights defender in Pakistan in just over a week. On 7 January 2017, [Ahmed Raza Naseer](#) was taken from his family's shop in Punjab province by unidentified men. On 6 January 2017, [Salman Haider](#) disappeared from Islamabad. On 4 January 2017, [Waqas Goraya](#) and [Asim Saeed](#) were reported missing from Wapda Town, Lahore.

Human rights defenders in Pakistan are facing an increasingly hostile climate. [In August 2016](#), the Pakistani government enacted a cybercrimes law which is being used to hamper digital freedom of expression. Under this law, the government is able to censor online content, criminalize internet user activity, and access internet users' data without judicial review.

Front Line Defenders expresses grave concern at the disappearance of human rights defender Samar Abbas, which it believes was solely motivated by his peaceful and legitimate work in human rights 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 Samar Abbas, 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



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legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

3. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the disappearance of Ahmed Raza Naseer, Salman Haider, Waqas Goraya and Asim Saeed.