

Cases of Lawyers murdered in Pakistan in which Lawyers Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) has intervened (<https://www.lrwc.org/category/countries/pakistan-letters/>)

LRWC has written letters calling for remediation in these cases. Remediation requested included calls on Pakistan to comply with its international law obligations to: investigate and hold perpetrators accountable, provide effective protection, put in place measures necessary to promote religious tolerance and to prevent and punish vigilantism against people and their counsel accused of blasphemy or otherwise suspected or following another religion. Pakistan has never responded to any of LRWC's communications.

Zainullah Khan was assassinated on 30 March 2018 in Swabi, in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. According to reports Zainullah Khan was shot and killed when he was returning home via Jehangira Road when unidentified attackers in a vehicle open fired at Mr. Khan killing him on the spot while the attackers escaped. Lawyers have called on the provincial government to provide safety to lawyers, Mr. Khan's murder is one of many cases in which lawyers have been targeted and killed in the area.

Pervez Akhtar was assassinated on 7 February 2018 in Sheikhpura Pakistan. On 7 February 2018, lawyer Pervez Akhtar left his home in Rachna Town and was on his way to court by car when two unknown assailants on a motorcycle opened fire on him and fled. Mr. Akhtar was rushed to a hospital in Lahore where he was pronounced dead upon arrival. Lawyers responded by going on strike, demanding accountability for the perpetrators and security for lawyers. No arrests have been made to the knowledge of LRWC.

Muhammad Idrees was assassinated on 5 February 2018 in South Waziristan. Reports state that the young lawyer, Muhammad Idrees had earlier been in an argument over a vehicle accident with the Taliban, who later approached his father's shop in Nizam Bazar, opened fire on and killed Mr. Idrees and then escaped. Protest and violence erupted in the area in response to murder.

Rauf Ahmad Thaur Sheikhpura was murdered on 9 October 2017.

Alia Shenzadi Sheikhpura was murdered on 16 May 2017.

Saleem Latif Nakana Sahib was murdered on 30 March 2017. Lawyer and community leader Saleem Latif, was murdered on 30 March 2017. His attacker has admitted to killing Saleem Latif for adhering to the beliefs of the Ahmadi religion. Prior to the murder, the Government of Pakistan apparently took no action to quell, prevent or punish routine threats against, and public vilification of members of the Ahmadi religion, thereby tacitly encouraging such actions as the terrible murder.

Mohammad Jan Gigyani, was murdered on 4 March 2017. Mr Gigyani, a senior lawyer and leader of the secular Qaumi Watan Party (QWP), was driving to the court in Shahbqadar with his nephew Rahim Shah and two other lawyers when unknown gunmen opened fire on his vehicle, killing Mr. Gigyani and injuring his nephew. The two other lawyers were not physically injured. The gunman escaped. The Charsadda police undertook a search

operation in the area but failed to find the attackers. A case has been registered with the police. Mohammad Jan Gigyani was well respected by locals for speaking out on important issues. He was “[a] long-time advocate for the rights of the poorest members of society, he regularly worked on women’s rights and labour rights cases in courts” [1]. He was among the lawyers that had survived the suicide attack at the Shabqaddar courts on 7 March 2016 that killed 19 people [2]. In honour of Mr. Gigyani, lawyers boycotted courts and observed a day of mourning on 6 March 2017.

Rashid Rehman Khan, was assassinated on 7 May 2014, when two unidentified gunmen stormed his law office where they then murdered him and injured two of his colleagues, Nadeem Parwaz and Afzal. Rashid Rehman Khan, a prominent human rights lawyer, had been threatened with death if he continued to represent a client (Professor Junaid Hafeez) charged with blasphemy. Prior to his murder, Rashid Rehman Khan had served as a widely respected human rights lawyer for over 30 years, advocating against blasphemy laws, in favour of religious freedom and against repression of religious minorities. One of the threats reported to authorities (‘you will not come to court next time because you will not exist anymore.’) was made by four men, two of whom are lawyers, in court and in the presence of the sitting judge. Rashid Rehman Khan promptly reported this death threat and the names of three of the men making the threat to the Punjab Chief Minister, the Inspector General of Punjab Police, the Multan City Police and the District Bar Association. On 10 April 2014, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported the threats to the Punjab government. State officials took no action to punish or restrain the perpetrators or to protect Rashid Rehman Khan.

Irfan Chauhan and Rana Khalid Abbas were shot to death on 25 May 2015. On 25 May 2015, Daska police officer Shehzad Warraich opened fire on a group of lawyers peacefully protesting a disagreement with the Tehsil Municipal Association, killing Irfan Chauhan and Rana Khalid Abbas, President of the Daska Bar Association and injuring a third lawyer, Zohaib Sahi. Witnesses to the extra-judicial killings report that the police officer fired indiscriminately into the gathering without warning and in the absence of any need for violent intervention.

Attempted Murder

On December 3rd, 2014 several gunmen on motorcycles attacked the Multan residence of Mr. Shahbaz Gormani, a lawyer defending a university lecturer against blasphemy charges. Mr. Gormani is acting as defence council for Professor Junaid Hafeez after previous council and prominent human rights lawyer [Rashid Rehman](#), was shot dead by gunmen on May 7, 2014. The gunmen fired indiscriminately at the residence of Mr. Gormani and warned him of future consequences. A letter on Islamic State IS letterhead was dropped at Mr. Gormani’s residence during the attack warning him that his actions were being monitored and his continued representation of Professor Hafeez would bring further violence. The police were informed immediately after the incident. Senior police officials in Multan are aware of the attempt on Mr. Gormani’s life and the continued threat he faces as he fulfils his duty in Pakistan’s courts. The police claim to be investigating the incident and have posted a twenty-four hour detail of two police officers. [1]

Threatened with Death

Lawyer Saif ul Mulook and Superior Court judges, Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, Justice Asif Saeed Khosa and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan were threatened with death, the lawyer for representing Asia Bibi and the judges for overturning her conviction for blasphemy.

Lawyers Threatened with disciplinary action

On 14 April 2017, the Lahore High Court Bar Association (the LHCBA) stated that it will take action against any lawyer who extends their services to Kulbhushan Jadhav, an alleged Indian spy who was sentenced to death in early April 2017 by a Pakistani military court. The LHCBA has “unanimously decided to cancel the membership of any lawyer who offers their services to [Mr. Jadhav].” The Secretary-General of the LHCBA asked the government of Pakistan not to cave to foreign pressure, and stated that the “Indian spy who is involved in playing with lives of Pakistanis should not be spared and the government (should ensure his hanging).”

LRWC has received no response to our letter dated 9th December 2016 regarding Pakistan’s duty to investigate and remedy murders of Bilal Anwar Kasi and all those who were killed in the 8 August 2016 bombing attack at Sandeman Civil Hospital in Quetta. According to reports, very little progress has been made in the investigation and minimum effort has been made to implement important recommendations by the Quetta Inquiry Commission conducted by Justice Qazi Faez Isa, in the 13 December 2016 report. Therefore, LRWC writes again to call on the Government of Pakistan to investigate and remedy the murders of Bilal Anwar Kasi, a prominent lawyer and President of the Balochistan High Court Bar Association and each of the estimated 78 others killed in the bombing, the majority of whom were lawyers. The attack decimated the legal profession in Quetta and left a devastating and long-term legacy of fear for lawyers and other residents. Of the 280 practicing lawyers in Quetta 56 were killed in the attack, including senior members managing 5,000 cases which accounts for more than half of the total caseloads¹. In addition, 92 were injured and others responded by leaving the legal profession or moving away. As stated by Abdullah Kakar, former Vice President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, “The security situation has forced at least 15 lawyers to escape town and around 300 junior lawyers leave the profession completely; all lawyers want to leave Quetta, but they can’t due to financial limitations and lack of appropriate opportunities’.² The Government of Pakistan must give priority to ensuring the identification and punishment of the perpetrators through effective investigation, competent prosecutions and fair trials. In consultation with the legal profession and security experts, the Government of Pakistan must put in place measures to prevent such attacks and to ensure that lawyers are free to carry out their professional duties in safety and without fear of reprisals or attacks.

¹ Hizbullah Khan, *Terror attack on Quetta lawyers throws city into judicial crisis*, The Express Tribune, 28 March 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1367626/terror-attack-quettas-lawyers-throws-city-judicial-crisis/>

² Ibid.