



Global Urgent Action



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**UA 54/06 Possible "disappearance"/fear of torture or ill-treatment
PAKISTAN Dr Safdar Sarki (m), US national**

US national Dr Safdar Sarki, who is the head of a political party campaigning for the rights of the Sindhi ethnic group, was abducted on 24 February by men alleged to be members of the security forces. He is in grave danger of torture, which is routinely used on political activists and detainees who are held incommunicado. The authorities have denied having him in custody, and it is feared that he may have "disappeared".

A group of 16 men in civilian clothes, at least one of whom was allegedly recognised as a senior police officer by eyewitnesses, reportedly took Dr Sarki from his apartment in the Gulistan-i-Jauhar area of Karachi, between 2 and 3pm. Witnesses apparently saw him being bundled into a van, "blindfolded and bleeding". There are also reports that his apartment was ransacked, and his laptop computer, passport and other items were taken.

Dr Sarki is the Secretary General of a political party campaigning for the rights of Sindhi people in Pakistan, Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM). Members of JSQM and the World Sindhi Congress have filed a habeas corpus petition with the Sindh High Court. No charges are known to have been filed against him, and the authorities have not acknowledged having him in custody. The Constitution of Pakistan states that "No person shall be deprived of life and liberty save in accordance with law" (Article 9). Under Article 10, every detainee must be brought before a magistrate within 24 hours of arrest. The detention of Dr Sarki, if carried out by the security forces, is a clear violation of these requirements.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The province of Sindh is in the south-east of Pakistan and shares a border with India. Sindh is largely desert, and is often susceptible to drought. Members of the Sindhi community, who originate from this region, have historically campaigned for better access to resources, especially water, which they feel remains in short supply due to the construction of dams along the Indus River that deprive Sindh of its fair share of water. This in turn impacts on the livelihood of Sindhis, who remain largely agricultural. The JSQM is one of the smaller political party campaigning for the rights of Sindhis.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Dr Safdar Sarki, who was abducted on 24 February, by men alleged to be police officers;
- calling on the authorities to reveal immediately where and in whose custody Dr Safdar Sarki is being held;
- expressing fears for his safety and asking the authorities to ensure that Dr Safdar Sarki is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to release Dr Safdar Sarki immediately and unconditionally, if he is in the custody, or else charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- if he is to be charged, urging the authorities to ensure that Dr Safdar Sarki is treated strictly in accordance with law, and given immediate and regular access to a lawyer of his choice and regular contact with his family.

1. APPEALS TO: (please note that fax numbers and email addresses may be difficult to get through to, particularly outside office hours – GMT+ 5. If you do not get through first time, please keep trying.)

Governor of Sindh

Hon. Mr Ishrat-ul-Ibad Khan

Governor House

Karachi, Pakistan

Fax: +92 21 920 1218 +92 21 920 1226 (You may need to ask for the fax machine to be turned on)

Salutation: Dear Governor

2. Provincial Police Officer Sindh Police,
Central Police Office, Karachi, Pakistan
Fax: +92 21 9212051 (You may need to ask for the fax machine to be turned on)
Salutation: Dear Sir

3. Minister of Law, Justice and Human Rights
Mr Muhammad Wasi Zafar
S Block, Pakistan Secretariat Islamabad
Fax: +92 51 9202628 (there are a few clicks before the fax tone begins)
E-mail: minister@molaw.gov.pk
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

American Embassy, Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5 Islamabad, Pakistan Fax: +92 51 227 6427 and to diplomatic representatives of Pakistan accredited to your country.