



**Pakistan**

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4 March 2011

## **Multiplication of hate crimes - the authorities must react strongly and ensure the protection of those who stand in favour of human rights**

**The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), express their utmost dismay following the assassination of several individuals who had stood in favour of human rights in Pakistan, notably those of religious minorities.**

On March 1, 2011, Mr. Naeem Sabir Jamaldini, shop keeper and Coordinator of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) was shot five times at 5 p.m. on Chakar Khan Road in Khuzdar district by two unknown masked men riding a motorcycle. He was hit in the head and died instantly on the spot. Mr. Naeem Sabir Jamaldini, a renowned human rights defender in the region, had mobilised the community groups for the promotion and the defence of human rights and was continuously reporting human rights violations committed in the Balochistan region, documenting and denouncing the abduction of Baloch activists and acting for the recovery of the corpses<sup>1</sup>. Newspapers reported that an organisation calling itself the Baloch Musallah Difa Army had claimed responsibility. They also said that Mr. Naeem Sabir Jamaldini's younger brother, a student, would also be on their hit list.

On the following day, in the morning, the Federal Minister for Minority Affairs, Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti, was also shot dead by gunmen who ambushed his car in Islamabad. He was on his way to work when his vehicle was sprayed with bullets. Previously, Mr. Bhatti had received death threats related to his opposition against a blasphemy bill which provides for the death sentence against anyone "insulting" Islam. A group calling itself the Tehreek-e-Taliban Punjab (Taliban movement Punjab) has claimed responsibility for the killing and said that he has been killed for his stance on the blasphemy bill. Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti had been active as a human rights defender before he joined the federal cabinet.

In addition our organisations recall that on January 4, 2011, Mr. Salman Taseer, Punjab Governor, was shot dead by one of his bodyguards who admitted murdering the Governor because he had spoken out against the same blasphemy law.

Our organisations express their utmost concern about the ongoing climate of fear faced by dissenting voices in Pakistan, where several human rights defenders have been killed recently. Furthermore, our organisations urge the Pakistani authorities to order an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the murders of Messrs. Naeem Sabir Jamaldini, Shahbaz Bhatti and Salman Taseer, which seem to have been merely aimed at sanctioning and silencing their work or stance in favour of the right of religion and the rights of minorities. The authorities should prosecute all those responsible and try them before a competent and impartial tribunal. In addition, the authorities should immediately adopt measures to ensure the safety of those who are particularly vulnerable to acts of violence by illegal armed groups.

More generally, our organisations call upon the Pakistani authorities to put an end to any kind of harassment against all those who stand in favour of human rights in the country and to guarantee their protection, in conformity with the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders as well as with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Pakistan.

<http://www.fidh.org/Multiplication-of-hate-crimes-the-authorities>