

**Mandate of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances**

REFERENCE: UA  
PAK 10/2014:

19 September 2014

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances pursuant to Human Rights Council decision 25/116.

In this connection, I would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information I have received concerning the alleged ill-treatment and harassment against Mr. **Babar Anis Syed**. Mr. Syed is the president of the Committee for Missing Persons, a non-governmental organization which was registered in Karachi, Pakistan, working on cases of enforced disappearances. The organization represents Urdu speaking population in Pakistan. Mr. Syed has in the past submitted cases to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and he has a meeting scheduled with the Working Group on 19 September 2014 in Geneva.

According to the information received:

Prior to his visit to Geneva, on 12 September 2014, Mr. Babar Anis Syed was arrested by Pakistani rangers in uniform, from home at approximately 5 a.m. The ranger personnel did not present any arrest warrant. They arrived in six vehicles and six to eight motorcycles. One of the ranger officers was believed to belong to Sachal Rangers Office. Mr. Babar Anis Syed was blindfolded when he was forced to enter their vehicle. He was taken to the Sachal Rangers Office situated at block 6 FB area, Karachi.

Mr. Babar Anis Syed was interrogated at the premises of the Sachal Rangers Office. He was asked about his upcoming visit to Geneva, his agenda, and the documents that he was planning to take with him. He was blindfolded during the entire interrogation. When Mr. Babar Anis Syed mentioned that he already submitted cases to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on behalf of families of missing persons in Karachi, he was threatened that because he sympathizes with the Mohajirs, the Urdu speaking people in Pakistan, he should have been disappeared as well. He was further

threatened that if he did not stop his activities, he would be the next missing person.

After the interrogation, the ranger personnel tied Mr. Syed's hands and feet, hanged him upside down with the support of a bamboo stick. Mr. Syed was beaten on the soles of his feet with bamboo sticks repeatedly. The ranger personnel kept slapping him on his left side of the face, which was repeated four to five times.

At midnight on the same day, Mr. Syed was released in the presence of one local Member of Parliament. His family was informed to collect him after submitting their finger prints.

It was reported that when Mr. Syed was detained, some of the documents that he prepared for his visit to Geneva were taken away from his home.

The Working Group expresses serious concern about the physical security of Mr. Babar Anis Syed upon his return to Pakistan on 20 September 2014. We are further concerned that the alleged ill-treatment and harassment which have been imposed on Mr. Syed may be due to his legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression and of association. Further concern has been raised that the ill-treatment, harassment and threats appear to be acts of reprisal against Mr. Syed for his work on the issue of enforced disappearance and his engagement with international human rights mechanisms, especially the Working Group on Enforce or Involuntary Disappearances.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we wish to draw your Excellency's Government attention to article 13 (1) and (3) of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which states that "Steps shall be taken to ensure that all involved in the investigation, including the complainant, counsel, witnesses and those conducting the investigation, are protected against ill-treatment, intimidation or reprisal".

We would like to recall that, in its resolution 7/12, the Human Rights Council urged Governments to take steps to provide adequate protection to witnesses of enforced or involuntary disappearances, human rights defenders acting against enforced disappearances and the lawyers and families of disappeared persons against any intimidation or ill-treatment to which they might be subjected. The protection of families of disappeared persons should be carried out regardless of the existence of criminal investigation.

The Working Group calls upon the Government of Pakistan to take all possible measures to guarantee the security of Mr. Babar Anis Syed upon his return to Pakistan on 20 September 2014.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) /can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, I would appreciate a response on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of Mr. Babar Anis Syed in compliance with international instruments.

As it is the Working Group's responsibility, under the mandate provided to the Working Group by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, the Working Group would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Are the facts alleged in the above summary of the case accurate?
2. Please provide information on measures that have been taken to guarantee the protection of Mr. Babar Anis Syed, and to ensure that he is not subjected to any threat, intimidation or harassment upon his arrival in Pakistan;
3. Please provide the details, and where available the results, of any investigation and inquiry carried out in relation to this case, including efforts made to ensure that perpetrators of the alleged acts of ill-treatment and harassment against Mr. Babar Anis Syed are brought to justice.

While awaiting a reply, the Working Group urges that all necessary measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible of the alleged violations.

Your Excellency's Government's response will be made available in a report to be presented to the Human Rights Council for its consideration.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Ariel Dulitzky  
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary  
Disappearances