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Pakistan - Disappearance of human rights defenders Salman Haider, Ahmed Raza Naseer, Waqas Goraya and Asim Saeed

Last week, four human rights defenders disappeared in Pakistan. On 7 January 2017, Mr. **Ahmed Raza Naseer** was taken from his family's shop in Punjab province by unidentified men. On 6 January 2017, Mr. **Salman Haider** disappeared from Islamabad. On 4 January 2017, Mr. **Waqas Goraya** and Mr. **Asim Saeed** were reported missing from Wapda Town, Lahore.

[Salman Haider](#) is a human rights defender and a professor at Fatima Jinnah Women University in Rawalpindi. He has been working on minority rights, particularly in Balochistan where he has been critical about enforced disappearances. He has participated in rallies and protests against the disappearances of nationalists and separatists from Balochistan province. This disappearance is the latest in a string of enforced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial executions of individuals from the Baloch community from the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan. In 2016, there have been more than [400](#) abductions and enforced disappearances of Baloch civilians by the security forces. [Waqas Goraya](#) and [Asim Saeed](#) were both human rights defenders and co-administrators of a Facebook page, Mochi and Group: Citizens for Secular Democracy, where they campaign for human rights and religious freedom. Their blog involves reports on human rights violations committed by security forces and religious extremists in Pakistan. This Facebook page is no longer accessible. [Ahmed Raza Naseer](#) is a human rights defender and administrator of a Facebook page that came under the crackdown, this page was also used to report on human rights violations committed by security forces and religious extremists in Pakistan.

On 7 January 2017, Ahmed Raza Naseer was taken by unidentified men from his family's shop in Nankana Sahib, Sheikhpura, Punjab province. On 6 January 2017, Salman Haider disappeared from Islamabad. Before his disappearance, the human rights defender told his brother that he was in the Bani Gala region with friends and had called his wife to let her know that he would be home by 8 p.m. At 10 p.m., his wife called him but there was no answer. Salman Haider's wife later received a text message to her phone, instructing her to collect his car from a roadside at Koral Chowk, located on the outskirts of Islamabad. The police later found Salman Haider's car in Korang Town. A First Information Report (FIR) has been registered at the Lohi Bher police station and police are investigating it as a possible kidnapping under Section 365 of the Pakistan Penal Code. On 4 January 2017, Waqas Goraya and Asim Saeed were taken from Wapda Town, Lahore and were reported missing by a cybersecurity NGO.

[In August 2016](#), the Pakistani government introduced 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 defenders Salman Haider, Ahmed Raza Naseer, Waqas Goraya and Asim Saeed, which it believes is solely motivated by their 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 defenders Salman Haider, Ahmed Raza Naseer, Waqas Goraya and Asim Saeed, with a view to ensuring their 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 legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.