

29 May 2020

Afghanistan: Human rights defender Ibrahim Ebrat killed

On 28 May 2020, human rights defender **Ibrahim Ebrat** succumbed to his injuries after he was shot by unknown assailants on 20 May 2020 while on his way home after his Ramadan prayers.

[Ibrahim Ebrat](#) was a prominent human rights defender and the coordinator of the Afghan Civil Society Joint Working Group in Zabul province, Afghanistan. In this role he responded to cases of human rights violations, threats against human rights defenders, and coordinated advocacy and support for those affected. He was also engaged in promoting education for girls, and livelihood programs for vulnerable groups in the province.

On 20 May 2020, Ibrahim Ebrat was on his way home from Ramadan prayers when he was attacked by two unknown men on a motorbike. The human rights defender sustained one gun shot to his head and was rushed to the hospital in Kabul where he was placed in intensive care. On the morning of 28 May 2020, Ibrahim Ebrat succumbed to his injuries and died in hospital.

The human rights defender had previously received threats from the Taliban to stop his human rights work. Most recently, prior to the attack, the defender had received warnings that his life and safety were under threat. Despite these threats, Ibrahim Ebrat continued his work in defence of human rights. No group has officially claimed responsibility for the killing.

Afghanistan has seen a rise in the number of attacks on human rights defenders in recent months, especially in the context of ongoing peace-talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. Human rights defenders have been targeted with death threats, abduction and assassination attempts in reprisal for their peaceful human rights work. Despite public commitment to protect defenders and the launching of a protection strategy for human rights defenders in early 2020, the government has failed to investigate and bring justice to those that have been victimised and targeted as a result of their human rights work.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the killing of Ibrahim Ebrat, which it believes was solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights. It is concerned regarding the increasingly hostile environment that human rights defenders are facing in Afghanistan. Local defenders, especially women human rights defenders and those working outside the capital, have for years worked under extremely hostile conditions. The level of impunity and disregard shown towards attacks on them and the human cost of these crimes must be condemned in the strongest terms. Key to protecting defenders such as Ibrahim Ebrat is to hold those responsible to account and act on international and public commitments to ensure their safety and the safety of their family.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Afghanistan to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of human rights defender Ibrahim Ebrat, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Ensure the safety of the family and colleagues of Ibrahim Ebrat, and that all those pursuing justice in his case are protected from any reprisals and threats to their safety;

3. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Afghanistan are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals, and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

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