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### **Pakistan: Police raid on residence of woman human rights defender Hooran Baloch**

On 27 November 2023, Pakistan police, accompanied by plainclothes police officers, raided the home of woman human rights defender **Hooran Baloch** in Quetta, Balochistan. Police forcibly entered the premises where they threatened and filmed Hooran Baloch and her family without consent. At the end of the two hour raid, police arrested Hooran Baloch's brother-in-law, Ali Nawaz, who was released after being detained for two hours at the Sattellite Town police station in Quetta.

[Hooran Baloch](#) is a woman human rights defender and the Research Coordinator of the Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP) based in Balochistan. VBMP, which was established in 2009, is a key organization that supports victims and relatives of enforced disappearances in Balochistan. It documents violations and is a strong advocate for release, redress and accountability. VBMP staff, including Hooran Baloch, have faced reprisals for their work, and are themselves at serious risk of legal and extra-legal violence.

Despite these risks, Hooran Baloch has continued to work in an extremely hostile and militarized context to support victims and their families. The woman human rights defender has supported and encouraged families to file complaints and legal cases for victims of enforced disappearance. Her work is vital in a context where many victims and families are afraid to file complaints and are likely to be unaware of their rights or know or do not know how to seek redress. Hooran Baloch's support is critical in advocating for the release of prisoners and she has personally intervened to assist families in this process. The state reprisals against Hooran Baloch seek to prevent her from continuing her work, branding her as a terrorist. This amounts to a clear attempt to shut down any advocacy and information flow from Balochistan regarding ongoing violations.

On 27 November 2023, at around 2 pm, a contingent of police officers from the Satellite town Police station, Quetta, together with intelligence officers in plain clothes, forcibly entered the residence of Hooran Baloch in Quetta, Balochistan, where she lives with her family. Police searched the woman human rights defender's house for around 2 hours at the end of which they arrested Ali Nawaz, the brother-in-law of Hooran Baloch. No reason was provided for the raid or for Ali Nawaz's detention at the Sattelite police station. During the raid, security forces threatened, harrassed and filmed the woman human rights defender and her family without their consent. Ali Nawaz was released after being detained for two hours the same day.

Hooran Baloch has been threatened in the past in relation to her work. This has included online attacks – hate speech and defamation – as well as intimidation and harassment by police and other security forces. As a result of the raid, Hooran Baloch is deeply concerned for her safety and fears the possibility of further reprisals.

Front Line Defenders is extremely concerned for the safety of Hooran Baloch and her family. We believe that the raid on her home, and the arrest of her relative, is part of a pattern of reprisals against the woman human rights defender to frustrate her work, and to stop her from providing support to victims of violations, particularly of extra-judicial killings, and enforced disappearances. Front Line defenders is worried by Pakistani authorities attempts to punish human rights defenders like Hooran Baloch and to shut down their work and silence credible voices from the ground who continue to challenge state propaganda and misinformation against communities and ongoing violations.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Pakistan to:**

1. Immediately cease all further intimidation and harassment of Hooran Baloch and her family;
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 reprisal and free from all restrictions.