

BY AIRMAIL

H.E. Mr. Mamnoon Hussain
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
President's Secretariat
Islamabad
PAKISTAN

Email: publicmail@president.gov.pk

Amsterdam, 21 May 2014

Subject: Murder of Rashid Rehman Khan and injury to Nadeem Parwaz and Afzal.

Your Excellency,

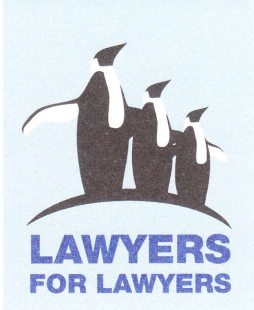
The Netherlands based Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation ('L4L') has been informed of the assassination of Mr. Rashid Rehman Khan, a prominent Punjabi human rights lawyer, on 7 May 2014. His fellow lawyers Mr. Nadeem Parwaz and Afzal were also shot and got injured. The murderers, two unidentified armed men, walked into Mr. Rehman Khan's office and shot him five times. Mr. Rehman Khan succumbed to his injuries on the way to Nishtar Hospital. Mr. Parwaz is still at the hospital and is said to be in critical condition. The two gunmen managed to escape.

Prior to the assassination, Mr. Rehman Khan had been seriously threatened that he should stop representing Junaid Hafeez, a university lecturer at Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan, charged with blasphemy. It is reported that no lawyer was willing to take the case of the lecturer for many months when his first lawyer had withdrawn after being threatened by extremist religious groups. On 9 April 2014, when the case of the lecturer was being heard, four men threatened Mr. Rehman Khan in the courtroom by saying: *"you will not come to court next time because you will not exist anymore"*.

L4L understands that these threats were reported in April 2014 to a number of authorities including the police; the district administration of Multan; the bar association and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). Subsequently, HRCP wrote to the Punjab government, expressing its concern and demanding that action would be taken by the government to ensure Mr. Rehman Khan's security and to proceed against the persons who had threatened Mr. Rehman Khan. The authorities took no action to provide any security to Mr. Rehman Khan, who was apparently advised by the local administration of the district that no action on the threats was planned. Although the threats were made before the Additional District and Sessions Judge, he did not say anything even when Mr. Rehman reportedly drew his attention to the threats.

L4L has been informed that following Mr. Rashid Rehman's assassination, the police stated that the shooting was likely to be a targeted killing and that the police was aware of threats that had been made against Mr. Rehman Khan.

On 8 May 2014, on the day of Mr. Rehman Khan's burial, leaflets that claimed that Mr. Rehman Khan had met his "rightful end" were distributed in Multan and the person who led the funeral prayers was threatened.



L4L firmly denounces the assassination of Mr. Rehman Khan and the injury to Mr. Nadeem Parwaz and Afzal. The shooting of lawyers for doing their professional duty is a direct obstruction of the Pakistani court process. We are deeply concerned for the safety of Mr. Rehman Khan's colleagues taking up blasphemy cases, including Mr. Nadeem Parwaz and Afzal.

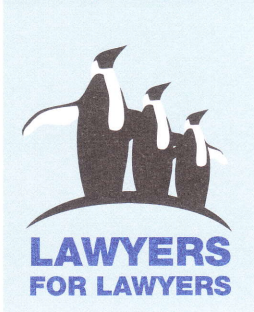
L4L also firmly denounces the lack of action by the responsible authorities that were aware of the threats against Mr. Rehman Khan.

As a member of the United Nations, (since 30 September 1947) and a state party to the *International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*, (ratified 23 June 2010), Pakistan has a legal duty to take effective measures to ensure the right to life of all persons and to take measures to effectively prevent and punish violations. The duty to specifically protect the lives and the personal and professional safety of lawyers is integral to Pakistan's duty under the *ICCPR* to ensure that all persons have effective access to legal services and to justice. A particular duty to provide protection to lawyers vulnerable to attack has also been identified.

Furthermore, the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* apply. The Basic Principles were unanimously adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990, and provide for a number of rights and responsibilities for lawyers acting in their professional capacity. In particular paragraphs 16 and 17 of the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*, apply. According to paragraph 16, the government is under an obligation "to ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference". Paragraph 17 states that "where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities". These principles are universally applicable. Therefore, your government is under an obligation to adequately protect and support its lawyers.

In view of the above, L4L strongly urges the Pakistani government to honour its international human rights obligations and to immediately take action in order to ensure:

1. investigation of the assassination of Mr. Rehman Khan promptly fully and objectively and to ensure that the authorities take decisive steps to show that such crimes will not be tolerated;
2. prosecution and trial of the suspected perpetrators of the shooting identified by the investigation;
3. investigation by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan to determine why no protection was provided to Mr. Rehman Khan and his colleagues and to identify state authorities responsible for failing or refusing to provide protection;
4. recognition of the valuable role played by human rights lawyers and to promote and support their work in line with the above mentioned Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, that provides for a number of rights and responsibilities for lawyers acting in their professional capacity;



5. the safety of Mr. Rehman Khans's family and colleagues, including Mr. Nadeem Parvaz and Afzal, the lawyers who got injured in the shooting of 7 Mai 2014.

Thank you for your attention corning this grave matter. L4L will continue to monitor the case of Mr. Rehnan Khan and the safety situation and protection of Mr. Nadeem Parvaz and Afzal in particular and lawyers in Pakistan in general.

On behalf of the Board of Lawyers for Lawyers,

Sincerely,

Adrie van de Streek
Executive Director Lawyers for Lawyers

Letters concerning the same topic were also sent to:

- Prime Minister of Pakistan; Mr. Mian Nawaz Sharif
- Federal Minister for Interior; Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan
- Chief Minister of the Government of Punjab Province; Mr. Shahbaz Sharif
- Federal Minister of Law, Justice and Human Rights; Mr. Pervez Rashid
- Ambassador to the Netherlands; Mr. Moazzam Ahmad Khan

A copy of this letter was sent to:

- Ambassador of the Netherlands to Pakistan; Mr. Marcel de Vink
- The Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Lawyers and Judges; Mrs. Gabriella Knaul
- The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Mrs. Margaret Sekaggya