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Second UA: 46/24 Index: ASA 33/8257/2024 Pakistan of July 3, 2024

## **PAKISTAN JOURNALIST AND POET FACES CHARGES AFTER ABDUCTION**

On May 15, 2024, Kashmiri journalist and poet Ahmad Farhad was forcibly taken from his home in Islamabad, Pakistan. Ahmad is known for his criticism of enforced disappearances and his support for social movements. On May 29, 2024, he reappeared in police custody in Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir. Authorities charged him with "*obstructing a public servant*" at a Kohala check post near Muzaffarabad. Later, he faced additional charges related to terrorism and unlawful assembly. Ahmad was released on bail on June 14, but the charges remain, and investigations continue.

### **Write to the Prime Minister of Pakistan urging him to:**

- Drop all criminal proceedings against, and end the harassment and intimidation of, Ahmad Farhad for exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Ensure that anyone suspected of criminal responsibility for their involvement in Ahmad's enforced disappearance is investigated and tried before civilian courts through principles of fair trial without recourse to the death penalty.

### **Write to:**

Azad Jammu and Kashmir  
Prime Minister Secretariat,  
Muzaffaraba  
Pakistan, 13100  
Email: [contact@ajkpm.gok.pk](mailto:contact@ajkpm.gok.pk)  
*Salutation: Dear Prime Minister,*

### **And copy:**

His Excellency Zaheer Aslam JANJUA  
High Commissioner  
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
10 Range Road  
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J3  
Tel: (613) 238-7881, -7882, -7883 Fax: (613) 238-7296  
Email: [pahicottawa@mofa.gov.pk](mailto:pahicottawa@mofa.gov.pk)

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Ahmad Farhad, a 38-year-old Pakistani journalist of Kashmiri origin, was abducted from his home in Islamabad at 1 am on May 15, 2024, by four men. His family saw him being taken away in an unknown vehicle. They filed a habeas corpus petition at the Islamabad High Court, prompting a police investigation ordered by the court. The High Court instructed the police to report their progress. On May 17, Ahmad's wife received a call from his alleged abductors, urging her to withdraw the petition to secure his return. Despite her lawyers filing the withdrawal, Ahmad was not released.

Ahmad resurfaced on May 29 at a check post in Kohala, near Muzaffarabad, in Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He was taken into custody, and an FIR was filed against him under section 186 of the Azad Kashmir Penal Code for “obstructing a public servant.” He applied for bail but was denied on June 4. Meanwhile, he faced additional charges, including criminal conspiracy, rioting, unlawful assembly, and terrorism, linked to the Kashmir Long March protests. Although Ahmad was not present at the protests, he was reporting on them from Islamabad and was accused of posting provocative content on social media. He was granted bail on June 14, but the charges remain, and the investigation continues.

Ahmad is a seasoned journalist with 15 years of experience, having worked for over 10 mainstream Pakistani TV news channels. He is also a renowned Urdu poet, known for addressing political themes like enforced disappearances in his poetry. Ahmad is an outspoken critic of political interference by the armed forces in Pakistan and has faced threats in the past. Currently a freelance journalist, he was under surveillance for the last two years, and his laptop was confiscated last year. Ahmad has four children, with the youngest being four years old. His health deteriorated during his disappearance, but he is now recovering.

[Enforced disappearances in Pakistan](#) are used to silence journalists, human rights defenders, and minority groups, with no laws criminalizing the practice and a [lack of state accountability](#). This practice violates several human rights, despite Pakistan's ratification of relevant international covenants.

***Please take action as soon as possible until October 28, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.***