

17 November 2020

Pakistan: Transgender rights defender Nayyab Ali physically assaulted

On 9 November 2020, transgender rights defender **Nayyab Ali** was physically assaulted and robbed at her home in Islamabad by two unidentified, armed men. The defender, after a struggle, was able to fend off the attackers but suffered serious injuries. Nayyab Ali had recently been vocal about the increased targeting of the transgender community in Pakistan through her social media pages, and had since been receiving death threats. A First Information Report (FIR) was filed regarding the attack at the Golra police station on 10 November.

[Nayyab Ali](#) is a transgender rights defender and Chairperson of the All Pakistan Transgender Election Network. She also manages the 'Khawaja Sira Community Centre' in Okara, which offers a basic literacy and numeracy programme, vocational training, life skills education and driving classes for the transgender community. In 2018, Nayyab was one of four transgender candidates who ran for Pakistan's general elections. Nayyab has also been leading the advocacy efforts for the approval of the Pakistan's National Transgender Rights Protection Policy. She is a winner of the Galas Award in 2020, for her human rights work. The day prior to her attack, Nayyab was nominated for the APCOM Hero award for her work on transgender rights.

On 9 November 2020, two unidentified men, armed with knives, entered Nayyab Ali's home in Islamabad. The defender was bound and beaten for nearly three hours. The attackers forced her to sign her cheque book and took her identity card, bank cards, jewellery, and devices, including phone and laptop. The men threatened to kill the defender if she continued to raise her voice for victims of violence in the transgender community. An FIR was lodged by the Golra police only the following day (10 November), after much pressure from civil society.

Over the past several months, there have been increasing physical attacks on transgender persons and defenders in Pakistan, including in the national capital Islamabad. Nayyab Ali has been vocal about an attack on another transgender rights defender in Islamabad on 31 October 2020. She launched a campaign on social media demanding justice for this case, and denounced the lack of police action and impunity afforded to those responsible for such attacks. The human rights defender believes that the attack against her is due to her vocal campaign for justice. So far, the attacks against transgender community members has gone unpunished due to entrenched stereotypes and a lack of will to protect those most vulnerable.

Front Line Defenders condemns the attack, intimidation and death threats against transgender rights defender Nayyab Ali, and the transgender community in Pakistan, as it believes she is being targeted for her legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights, specifically on the issue of transgender rights, in Pakistan.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Pakistan to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the physical attack on Nayyab Ali, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Nayyab Ali;
3. 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.

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