



*Committed to serve the people  
of Sindh in their pursuit for  
social justice, peace and freedom*

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W.S.I. Press Release

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### **Disappearance of Dr. Safdar Sarki**

President of The World Sindhi Institute (WSI), Mr. Zahid Makhdoom has announced that WSI is carrying on an Advocacy campaign with individual members of the Pakistani Caucus at the United States Congress on the issue of the disappearance of Dr. Safdar Sarki. WSI has also nominated the names of Dr. Safdar Sarki and Mr. Asif Baladi to the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area (UNA-NCA), to be awarded the Community Human Rights Award 2006. Acknowledgements of their commitment and service to human rights in Sindh will be awarded at Capitol Hill over a highly prestigious luncheon ceremony on December 08, 2006. Moreover, as a tribute to the services of Dr. Sarki and other Sindhi rights activists who have 'disappeared', WSI plans to hold a commemorative event in Washington, DC on February 24, 2007; the day Dr. Safdar Sarki was abducted.

Dr. Safdar Sarki is a U.S. citizen, who went to Pakistan for promoting the rights of religious and ethnic minorities. On February 24, 2006, he was abducted from his apartment in Karachi, Pakistan by members of Pakistan's security forces after being blind folded, hand cuffed, beaten for an hour and caused to bleed profusely, according to eye witnesses in the neighborhood. His laptop and US passport were also confiscated. Since then, his whereabouts are unknown. His family and friends fear for his life or that he will be severely tortured if he is still alive. A habeas corpus petition was filed in the Sindh High Court, Amnesty International and the Asian Human Rights Commission have issued urgent appeals, and over 60 news articles in the Pakistani media have been published concerning Dr. Sarki's abduction. Yet, the government has failed to provide any information in response.

Dr. Sarki's disappearance fits a pattern of persecution of human rights advocates and secular political leaders belonging to minorities in Pakistan. Recently the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) observed that Pakistani "intelligence" agencies have been involved in the kidnapping of nationalist leaders and students from the Sindh and Balochistan provinces. Just about every day, activists are picked up by government authorities and held captive without access to legal processes or fair trials. In just a few months, scores of people have disappeared from Sindh and Balochistan for supporting a nationalist movement group and/or opposing government views and projects. They are abducted, held captive in secret prisons, and tortured until death. Even their bodies are not released to their families; instead they are buried like a piece of garbage in a hidden mass grave. However, when confronted, the government denies any involvement in these disappearances. The question still remains unanswered, as to where do these people go?

Munawar Laghari  
Executive Director, WSI