



## Balochistan: 20 killed in May, 29 disappeared, woman's killing by 'State-backed robbers' sparks protests

A four-year-old baby girl, Bramsh, was shot and injured and her mother Malik Naz killed when a group of three robbers broke into their house on May 26 at around 03AM local time in Dannok village of Turbat, district Kech.

The incident attracted mass attention in all of Balochistan and beyond in a short time, as the family had captured one of the culprits who admitted he worked for Pakistan's Military Intelligence. He was carrying an ID card of the MI. He confessed and gave the names of the rest of the gang, including their leader Sameer Sabzal.

A picture of Sameer was found on social media in which he is seen sitting next to Balochistan's finance minister Zahoor Buledi. The minister denied any acquaintance with the person he was photographed with.

People from all walks of life took to the streets and demanded justice for Bramsh and her mother. Massive protests were held in almost all the major cities and towns of Balochistan as well as Baloch areas of Punjab and Karachi. The demands were that Malik Naz's killers be arrested and punished and all the state-backed death squads in Balochistan be dismembered.



*Bramsh & MalikNaz. Photo: Balochistants.com*

They demanded the arrest of the gang leader Sameer who went into hiding. He was arrested by the Turbat police on June 4, but he made a public appearance on social media and claimed he had nothing to do with the captured culprit. However, he said nothing about his affiliation with the Balochistan Awami Party, the ruling party in the province.

We are unable to understand why it took the police this much time to arrest the gang leader nominated for the killing of Malik Naz and injuring Bramsh despite the arrested robber confessing to working for him. People from all walks did their best to raise voice and demand justice. Many people were seen organizing the protests. They are, for sure, being watched by the huge network of the death squads, operating as the military's contractors to whom the military has outsourced its counter insurgency operations across Balochistan. We fear for the safety of the organisers.

Shafiq Sasoli from Khuzdar region of Balochistan was one of those who helped organise a Bramsh rally after which his family received a threatening note and a shroud at his house on June 5.

Unknown gunmen roam around streets and markets of the villages and

towns of Balochistan, who kill, abduct and rob people anywhere, any time. They are locally called Death Squads and serve the military's mass-scale, decades-long policy of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings in the province. However, the military had always denied any role behind these armed groups and any role in the disappearances and killings, even in cases where military is clearly seen involved like that of Javed Gwahram.

On May 24, Javed Gwahram, 26, resident of Mand, district Kech succumbed to severe torture injuries and died in a hospital in Karachi, Sindh. He was taken to Karachi because his kidneys stopped functioning, as he was not provided drinking water for more than a week in the military's torture cell. He was abducted by personnel of Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force on May 7. His uncle, Latif, was called by officials of the Frontier Corps to visit their camp and bring Javed's younger brother Zubair with him. Latif was told on May 15 to leave Zubair in the camp and leave. He had no choice. Latif received another call on May 17 to visit the camp. He went and brought the elder brother, Javed, who was in half dead condition. Javed was taken to the Turbat hospital but doctors advised the family to take him to a big hospital in Karachi, where Javed died on May 24. His brother Zubair remains in illegal custody. Zubair is a fisherman and the youngest of three orphaned brothers and five sisters.

Meanwhile, three other students and a teacher among 29 were forcibly disappeared by the military in the month of May, 2020 and twenty persons killed, including four women. The students include a cultural and literary activist, Sana Sypad, a resident of Kharan, who was the president of a literary society, Naseer Kubdani Labzaki Diwan, based in Kharan, and currently, pursuing M.Phil at the Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad. He was abducted by FC on 13 May.