



Sent Electronically

The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP

Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

11th March 2026

Subject: Transnational Repression Threats linked to Pakistan affecting individuals & communities in the United Kingdom

Dear Home Secretary,

We are writing to express our concern about the recent alarming escalation of incidents against members of the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom.

The Tackling Transnational Repression in the UK Working Group, have been contacted by one of our members, Roshaan Khattak, who has been receiving continuous and escalating threats due to his academic research and as a result has serious and ongoing concerns for his safety. Mr Khattak, a Pakistani documentary filmmaker and human rights defender, was until recently enrolled as a postgraduate researcher at the University of Cambridge. His proposed PhD research focused on enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations committed by the Pakistani military in Balochistan.

He has also been contacted by other individuals who have had similar experiences and seen a pattern of escalation. The international human rights organisation, Article 19, has recently [reported](#) on the case of Shahzad Akbar, a former adviser to Pakistan's ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan. According to the report, Mr Akbar was attacked and beaten up outside his home in Cambridge in December 2025. A week later, Mr Akbar's home was attacked again, with two men breaking a window and attempting to set the house on fire, one of whom was carrying a firearm. This was a day after Cambridge Police advised him that it was safe for him to return. This was followed by a third attack in January. This is not the first time Akbar has been targeted, having survived an acid attack in 2023. We fear the severity of these incidents, as well as absence of any meaningful state response, has had a chilling effect on the broader Pakistani exile community and emboldened those seeking to intimidate others.

As members of the Tackling TNR in the UK Working Group, we are concerned that despite regularly reporting incidents to the police, both Roshaan Khattak and Shahzad Akbar no longer feel safe in the UK.

We would be most grateful if you could investigate their cases and explore options to strengthen support and protection. Any additional information you can provide about safeguarding and public communication guidelines for such cases would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Chubb, *Richardson Institute for Peace Studies, Lancaster University*

Brigitte Andersen, *Article 19*

Grady Vaughan, *Freedom House*

Izzy Cutts, *Chair of the Tackling TNR in the UK Steering Group*

John McDaniel, *School of Law, Lancaster University*

Lucia Ardevini, *Richardson Institute for Peace Studies, Lancaster University*

Nik Williams, *Index on Censorship*

Shideh H, *Impact Shift*

Sara Rydkvist, *Amnesty International*



Rt. Hon. Yvette Cooper MP
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
King Charles Street
London, SW1A 2AH

11th March 2026

Subject: Transnational Repression Threats linked to Pakistan affecting individuals & communities in the United Kingdom

Dear Foreign Secretary,

We are writing to express our concern about the recent alarming escalation of incidents against members of the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom.

The Tackling Transnational Repression in the UK Working Group, have been contacted by one of our members, Roshaan Khattak, who has been receiving continuous and escalating threats due to his academic research and as a result has serious and ongoing concerns for his safety. Mr Khattak, a Pakistani documentary filmmaker and human rights defender, was until recently enrolled as a postgraduate researcher at the University of Cambridge. His proposed PhD research focused on enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations committed by the Pakistani military in Balochistan.

He has also been contacted by other individuals who have had similar experiences and seen a pattern of escalation. The international human rights organisation, Article 19, has recently [reported](#) on the case of Shahzad Akbar, a former adviser to Pakistan's ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan. According to the report, Mr Akbar was attacked and beaten up outside his home in Cambridge in December 2025. A week later, Mr Akbar's home was attacked again, with two men breaking a window and attempting to set the house on fire, one of whom was carrying a firearm. This was a day after Cambridge Police advised him that it was safe for him to return. This was followed by a third attack in January. This is not the first time Akbar has been targeted, having survived an acid attack in 2023. We fear the severity of these incidents, as well as absence of any meaningful state response, has had a chilling effect on the broader Pakistani exile community and emboldened those seeking to intimidate others.

As members of the Tackling TNR in the UK Working Group, we are concerned about potential unexamined links to foreign state activity, and the curtailing of the rights of those in the UK.

While recognising diplomatic engagement on these issues often happens behind closed doors, silence may embolden authoritarian regimes.

We would be most grateful if you could ensure that this information is reflected in your diplomatic engagement.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Chubb, *Richardson Institute for Peace Studies, Lancaster University*

Brigitte Andersen, *Article 19*

Grady Vaughan, *Freedom House*

Izzy Cutts, *Chair of the Tackling TNR in the UK Steering Group*

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