

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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March 24, 2014

## Human Rights Watch open letter to Afghan journalist Sardar Ahmad 's family, friends, and colleagues

[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

Human Rights Watch extends its deepest sympathies to the Afghan journalist community for the horrific killing of Sardar Ahmad, a senior correspondent with *Agence France Presse* and the founder of Pressistan. We are greatly saddened by the loss of one of Afghanistan's finest journalists and offer our condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues. Human Rights Watch strongly condemns the attack that killed Sardar, and calls on the Taliban and other insurgent groups to end all attacks targeting civilians.

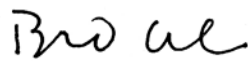
Sardar had been with AFP since 2003, when he covered news conferences at Bagram air base. In 2009 he founded Pressistan, a media production firm that supported visiting foreign correspondents. Sardar had a reputation as a dedicated and courageous journalist, covering not only the ongoing war in Afghanistan but many other issues of concern to the lives of Afghans.

Sardar and his family were eating dinner at Kabul's Serena Hotel on March 21 to celebrate the Afghan New Year when the hotel was attacked by four gunmen who shot dead nine guests, including Sardar, his wife, Humaira, and two of their children, Nilofar, 6, and Omar, 5. Their third child, Abuzar, 2, was also shot and remains in critical condition. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

Initial reports indicate that a security lapse allowed the four attackers to enter the Serena Hotel. The Taliban and other insurgent forces have over many years committed numerous deliberate attacks against civilians in violation of international law. We call on the Afghan government to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of civilians, including journalists.

Sardar Ahmad's family, colleagues and friends remain in our thoughts as they rebuild their lives in his absence.

Sincerely,



Brad Adams  
Asia Director  
Human Rights Watch