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Pakistan Police Detain 14 in Viral Honour Killing Case

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Police in Balochistan have arrested 14 suspects, including a tribal leader, following the circulation of a video showing the brutal honour killing of a couple, Bano Bibi and Ehsan Ullah. The couple was executed for marrying without family consent, sparking national outrage and renewed debate over the persistence of honour-based violence in Pakistan.

The video, confirmed by law enforcement, showed the couple being shot multiple times in Deghari near Quetta in May 2025. The killings

were reportedly ordered by tribal elder Sardar Satakzai. Bano Bibi was shot seven times and Ehsan Ullah nine times, with armed men continuing to fire at their bodies in a desert setting.

On July 21, 2025, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti confirmed the arrests and suspended a deputy superintendent of police for failing to report the crime. A First Information Report (FIR) was filed, naming eight identified individuals and 15 others who remain unidentified. Authorities said the victims' families had not filed formal complaints, a common occurrence in honour killing cases.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) reported 405 honour killings in 2024. However, rights groups believe the true number is much higher due to underreporting and the influence of tribal customs. Most victims are women, killed for defying family or societal expectations. Despite legal reforms passed in 2016 mandating life imprisonment for perpetrators, enforcement remains inconsistent.

This case has drawn condemnation from government officials and human rights advocates, who call for stronger enforcement of existing laws and broader social reform. The use of tribal justice systems to justify such killings remains a significant barrier to progress.

The arrests represent a critical step toward accountability. However, lasting change will require sustained efforts to challenge deeply rooted cultural norms and ensure legal protection for all citizens, particularly women and marginalized communities.