



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 10

### Technical assistance and capacity-building

## **Written statement\* submitted by Association MIMAN, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 May 2023]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

## **Enhanced Identification on the Report of the High Commissioner Recommending the Way Forward to Improve Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building in the Field of Human Rights Concerning Enforced Disappearances in Balochistan by Pakistan.**

Our Organization would like to draw the attention of the United Nations to the alarming situation of enforced disappearances in Balochistan, a region within Pakistan. Enforced disappearances are a grave violation of human rights and have caused immense suffering to the Balochistan population. It is essential that the international community takes strong and immediate action to address this issue.

Our concerns are rooted in the report of the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances, which highlights the persistent and widespread occurrences of enforced disappearances in Balochistan \*1. The report provides compelling evidence of a pattern of arbitrary detentions, secret detentions, and extrajudicial killings, leading to a climate of fear and impunity. The victims and their families are denied access to justice and redress, perpetuating a cycle of human rights abuses.

Balochistan region of Pakistan is afflicted by an extremely afflicted regime. One constant serious human rights issue that has been tormenting the people of Balochistan is the phenomenon of enforced disappearances caused by the administration.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has released a detailed fact-finding report in April 2023, which examines the extent of the problem. \*2

The HRCP noted: -

"While many victims have been missing for over a decade, such as Baloch activist Dr Deen Mohammad who was forcibly disappeared in June 2009, HRCP has also observed a change in tactics over the years, with political dissidents, journalists, students, and rights activists being disappeared for short periods and subsequently released—followed by a string of fresh disappearances soon after. A local journalist in Gwadar appeared to confirm this, saying, 'If the state releases one missing person on a given day, it will disappear another four the next day.'"

This seems to be a concerted effort by the administration to stifle dissent. As the HRCP found:

"When asked why they thought this pattern occurred, several civil society activists in Turbat said it was a way to 'keep Baloch dissent in check,' adding, 'If our people have committed any crimes, the state should produce them in court. But unfortunately, the state does not trust its own institutions. If [the state] were to produce our missing persons in court, there would be no reason for our families to take to the streets and chant slogans against the state.'"

The scale of the problem is shocking. As reported in Global Media more than 5000 are missing. \*3 As per the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, the numbers are even more scary - About 47,000 Baloch and 35,000 Pashtuns are reported "missing"\*4.

The people of Balochistan are left with no avenue to voice their concerns. The HRCP noted in a statement: -

"Having closely followed the recent mass demonstrations in Gwadar, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) believes it is now imperative for the state to shed its tacit policy of relegating Balochistan to second-class status. While HRCP deplores the violence that left one policeman dead during the recent protests, we also urge the provincial

government to protect people's right' to freedom of peaceful assembly by refraining from mass arrests and use of force, and focusing instead on more effective methods of crowd control.

In the medium term, however, the onus is on the provincial government to negotiate with the protestors and give their demands a fair hearing. Their legitimate grievances—which are not new—centre on demands that any citizen of Pakistan has a right to make: the right to security of person, freedom of movement and peaceful assembly, access to clean water, education and healthcare, an end to enforced disappearances, and greater economic opportunities and livelihoods. Moreover, the unofficial media blackout of Balochistan and its problems must end, and the region's problems given the attention they have long merited. \*5

These constitute violations of human rights by every standard and covenant. The fact that these are done without even a semblance of due process points to a complete breakdown of the rule of law. The UN is urged to intervene suitably on this issue.

Our organisation requests one or two such platforms should be organized each year, each focusing on a different theme such as women's rights, torture prevention, end practice of enforced disappearances, etc.

We strongly urge the Government of Pakistan to acknowledge and address the issue of enforced disappearances in Balochistan. This requires the implementation of effective measures to hold perpetrators accountable, provide remedies to the victims and their families, and ensure the respect and protection of human rights in accordance with international standards and obligations.

Technical cooperation and capacity building are crucial to improving the human rights situation in Balochistan. We call upon the United Nations and its member states to enhance support to Pakistan in developing and implementing comprehensive programs that strengthen the rule of law, promote transparency, and build the capacity of law enforcement agencies, judiciary, and civil society organizations to effectively address enforced disappearances.

Moreover, it is essential to establish an independent mechanism to investigate allegations of enforced disappearances, including a mandate to identify and prosecute those responsible. Such a mechanism would contribute to addressing the culture of impunity and provide a pathway towards justice and accountability.

We further emphasize the importance of engaging and involving the affected communities, civil society organizations, and human rights defenders in the process of finding solutions. Their voices must be heard, and their participation should be actively sought in shaping policies, legislation, and strategies aimed at combating enforced disappearances and safeguarding human rights.

In conclusion, we call upon all member states and relevant stakeholders to prioritize the issue of enforced disappearances in Balochistan and to provide the necessary support to Pakistan in its efforts to address this serious human rights concern. The United Nations has a responsibility to protect and promote human rights globally, and we must remain vigilant in ensuring that no individual or community is subjected to enforced disappearance or any form of human rights abuse.

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Baloch Voice Association (BVA), Baloch Peoples Congress (BPC), Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP), Baloch Voice Foundation (BVF), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

- \*1 - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc2245add2-report-working-group-enforced-or-involuntary-disappearances>
- \*2 - <https://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2023-Balochistans-Struggle-for-Hope.pdf>
- \*3 - <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jul/06/pakistan-5000-people-disappeared-missing-balochistan>
- \*4 - <https://oldsite.hrcp-web.org/balochistan-neglected-still-2/>
- \*5 - <https://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/state-must-heed-gwadars-legitimate-grievances/>