



General Assembly

Distr.: General
XX May 2023

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-third session

19 June–14 July 2023

Agenda item 6

Universal periodic review

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]

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

The Failure of Pakistan to Fulfill UPR Recommendations: A Detriment to Human Rights.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a crucial mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), aiming to assess the human rights situation in all UN member states. Pakistan, like other countries, has undergone the UPR process, receiving recommendations to improve its human rights record. However, the failure of Pakistan to fulfill these UPR recommendations is deeply concerning, as it perpetuates a climate of impunity and undermines the protection of human rights within the country. This statement highlights the key areas where Pakistan has fallen short and emphasizes the urgent need for the government to prioritize and implement the UPR recommendations effectively.

Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom:

One of the fundamental pillars of a democratic society is the freedom of expression, including a vibrant and independent press. Despite receiving UPR recommendations to strengthen freedom of expression and protect journalists, Pakistan has witnessed a concerning decline in press freedom. Journalists face threats, intimidation, and violence, leading to self-censorship and a chilling effect on free speech. Furthermore, restrictive legislation such as the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) has been used to curtail online expression, stifling dissent and impeding the work of human rights defenders.

Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial Killings:

Enforced disappearances continue to be a grave concern in Pakistan, despite UPR recommendations to address this issue. Human rights organizations have documented numerous cases of individuals being abducted by state security forces or intelligence agencies, often leading to torture, extrajudicial killings, or secret detention. The lack of effective investigations, prosecutions, and accountability for these crimes perpetuates a culture of impunity, denying victims and their families justice and redress. A recent news report states : BALOCHISTAN: Protests continued in Quetta, Karachi, Kech, Khuzdar, Mand and other parts of Balochistan against the enforced disappearances of Baloch women. New series of these protests are taking place after the enforced disappearances of Baloch women. On February 3, Pakistan Army in collaboration with intelligence agencies forcibly disappeared Rahim Zehri, his mother Mahbas Khatoon, his wife Rasheeda Zehri, and their two children from Gishkori Town in Quetta, the capital city of Balochistan. *1

Counterterrorism Measures and Human Rights Abuses:

While combating terrorism is essential, counterterrorism measures must not be employed as a pretext for human rights abuses. Pakistan has been urged through UPR recommendations to ensure that counterterrorism operations adhere to international human rights standards. However, reports continue to emerge regarding excessive use of force, arbitrary detentions, and torture during counterterrorism operations, particularly in areas such as Balochistan and the tribal regions. These practices undermine trust, exacerbate grievances, and create fertile ground for further human rights violations. On 30th January 2023, this was reported that : Pakistani forces' crackdown on Baloch student protesters *2

Women's Rights and Gender Equality:

The UPR process highlighted the need for Pakistan to address gender-based discrimination and violence against women, and to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. However, progress in this area remains insufficient. Women in Pakistan continue to face systemic discrimination, including honor killings, domestic violence, forced marriages, and limited access to education and healthcare. Despite some legislative measures, such as the passage of the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Ordinance, implementation gaps and societal norms perpetuate a culture of gender inequality. Mahal Baloch a widow and mother of Two children was taken from her house by CTD at midnight without any warrant.

Reported in the media as follows "A new wave of state repression sweeps Balochistan as abductions by the Pakistan Army is on the rise which has led to the outbreak of massive protests in the country" *4.

Religious Freedom and Minority Rights:

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right, and the UPR recommendations urged Pakistan to take concrete steps to protect religious minorities and their places of worship. However, religious minorities in Pakistan, including Christians, Hindus, and Ahmadiyya Muslims, face persecution, violence, and discrimination. Places of worship are attacked, and individuals from minority communities are targeted and marginalized, exacerbating their vulnerability and hindering their full participation in society. Contry report 2022 of Religious Rights states "Human rights activists reported numerous instances of societal violence related to allegations of blasphemy; of efforts by individuals to coerce religious minorities to convert to Islam; and of societal harassment, discrimination, and threats of violence directed at members of religious minority communities. NGOs expressed concern about what they stated was the increasing frequency of attempts to kidnap, forcibly convert, and forcibly marry young women and girls from religious minority communities, especially Hindus and Christians".*3

Conclusion:

The failure of Pakistan to fulfill UPR recommendations undermines the credibility of the UPR process and poses a significant challenge to the protection and promotion of human rights within the country. Urgent and comprehensive action is needed to address the concerns raised in the UPR, including ensuring freedom of expression and press freedom, ending enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, balancing counterterrorism measures with human rights, promoting women's rights and gender equality, and safeguarding religious freedom and minority rights. Pakistan must prioritize the implementation of these recommendations, engage with civil society, and work collaboratively with international partners to establish a culture of accountability, transparency, and respect for human rights. The international community, including the United Nations, has a responsibility to hold Pakistan accountable and provide support to facilitate the fulfillment of these recommendations. Only through such efforts can Pakistan begin to overcome its human rights challenges and move towards a society that upholds and protects the rights and dignity of all its citizens.

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

*1 - <https://www.dtnext.in/world/2023/02/25/abduction-of-women-new-wave-of-state-repression-in-balochistan>

*2 - <https://www.siasat.com/pakistani-forces-crackdown-on-baloch-student-protesters-report-2513813/>

*3 - <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/441219-PAKISTAN-2022-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>

*4 - <https://www.thequint.com/opinion/how-pakistan-army-targets-women-in-its-campaign-against-balochistan-rebels>