

# Annual Report 2011-2012



World Sindhi Congress  
ورلڊ سنڌي ڪانگريس



## Mission

The World Sindhi Congress (WSC) exists to promote and undertake the struggle for right to self-determination of Sindhis. WSC continue to provide a voice of Sindhis and international communities around the world who want to see Sindh as a sovereign state. WSC believes this is essential to achieving a just and lasting peace in the region.

## Objectives

- To create a better understanding among the international community about the disadvantaged status of Sindhis in Pakistan and about Sindhi people's struggles for their human rights, including the right to self-determination.
- To advocate and support all organisations working on human rights, sustainable development, equal rights for women and religious minorities, as well as conflict resolution and peaceful initiatives in Sindh.
- To promote and encourage the association of Sindhis living throughout the world.
- Means of creating such awareness include:
  - o organising seminars;
  - o publishing newsletters, reports and research papers;
  - o working with media, non-governmental organizations, academicians, and other conscientious individuals.

### Executive Committee (2012-2014)

Lakhu Luhana	Chairman
Rubina Shaikh	Secretary General
Farhan Kaghzi	Senior Vice Chairperson
Sattar Zangejo	Vice Chairperson
Gul Sanai	Deputy Secretary General
Ambreen Hisbani	Finance Secretary
Ali Memon	Information Secretary
Hafeezan Wadhio	Cultural Secretary
Hidayat Bhutto	Organizer UK Chapter
Mansoor Samo	Organizer US Chapter
Asif Panwhar	Organizer Canada Chapter
Siraj Makhdum	Member Exec. Committee
Saghir Shaikh	Member Exec. Committee
A R Kakepoto	Member Exec. Committee
Malik D Shaikh	Member Exec. Committee
Umed Laghari	Member Exec. Committee

## The Backdrop - Sindh in 2011 and 2012

The period that this report covers (2011-2012) has been one of the most traumatic for Sindhi people. The landscape of Sindhi society remained dominated by killing of their leaders, enforced abduction of political activists and continuation of political, social, economic, and cultural marginalisation of Sindhi people:

1. Killing of Sindhi leaders and political activists:
  - i. Muzaffar Bhutto, a senior member of a Sindhi nationalist political party in Pakistan, was found dead on 22 May after being allegedly abducted by plain-clothed intelligence agents and police on 25 February 2011.
  - ii. Another leader of Jeay Sindh Muthida Mahaz (JSMM), Zulfiqar Kolachi, was murdered on 05 March 2011. He previously was missing in 2006-2008 and remained in the torture centres of Pakistani agencies ;
  - iii. On 21 April 2011 a car carrying senior leaders of JSMM, Sirai Qurban Khuhawar, Roplo Choliani, Noorullah Tunio and Nadir Bugti was sprayed with bullets and they were set on fire while still alive;
  - iv. The leader of the largest Sindhi nationalist party, Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM), Mr Bashir Khan Qureshi, was poisoned to death on 07 April 2012; and
  - v. The bullet riddled body of General Secretary JSMM, Muzaffar Bhutto, who was missing, was found on 22 May 2012.
2. More than 100 Sindhi political and civil society activists continue to remain missing. Additionally during this period Riaz Kakepoto, Shahnawaz Bhutto, Jam Bhutto, Yasir Notiar and Nawab Mahar were kidnapped and still are missing.
3. The violence against a section of indigenous population, Sindhi Hindus, intensified. Scores of kidnapping of Sindhi Hindu girls and their forcible conversion and marriages occurred during this period. The case of Rinkle Kumari and grave injustice in her case got the attention of international conscience. On 07 November 2011, three young Sindhi Hindu professionals were killed. This state sponsored atmosphere of fear, persecution and insecurity is created among this section of indigenous Sindhi people in order to force them to migrate.
4. Sindhi people continue to face worst apartheid in their capital and other urban areas. On top of it a draconian, anti-democratic, anti-people local bodies system was being imposed against the wishes of entire Sindhi nation by the cowardice government of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Mutihda Qaumi Movement (MQM) for the purposes of giving complete control of major Sindh cities to MQM. A peaceful rally against this grave injustice on 22 May 2012 was fired upon by terrorists resulting in killing of 12 political activists of Sindhi Awami Tahreek (SAT).

During this period, all sections of Sindhi society have put a heroic struggle against the grave violations of human rights and injustices. Not a single day goes by when Sindhi people have not been on the streets, strikes, processions, hunger strikes, rallies, seminars and conferences to demand for their democratic and human rights.

During this period, World Sindhi Congress stood in solidarity with the struggle of Sindhi people back home and inspired by their struggle, continued to work with the international community to inform them about the disadvantaged position of Sindhi people.

## Activities 2011-2012

### 16 January 2011 Celebration Anniversary GM Syed

In London WSC organised a commemoration event on the 107th birthday of Saen GM Syed, the father of modern Sindhi nationalism. A visionary leader who struggled for human rights, democracy and freedom of Sindh, he died in prison after having spent 30 years without ever being charged. During the celebration in London, which was attended by Sindhi and Baloch activists and intellectuals from all over the UK, speeches on Syed's life and work were followed by a cake cutting ceremony. During the celebration in Houston, Texas, two awards in the memory of GM Syed to individuals who have contributed to the Sindh identity, language and Sindhi rights movement. Mr. Muhammad Memon, a writer, "publisher and editor, was honoured for his extensive work on GM Syed's life and work. Dr. MK Jetley, linguist, was honoured for his work on teaching and promoting Sindhi language.

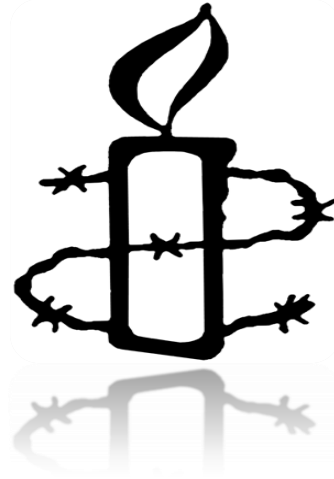


### 16 March 2011 Participated in the 16th session of the UNHCR

A delegation of WSC comprising of Ali Memon, Dr Hidayat Bhutto and Dr Lakhu Luhana participated in the 16th session of the UNHCR to inform the politicians, NGOS and human rights defenders present about the worsening situation in Sindh. The delegates made statements at side events and held smaller meetings to gain support from other delegates. Among other things, they discussed recent extrajudicial killings of nationalist leaders, enforced disappearances, and Pakistan's practise of protecting and supporting violent religious extremist groups. The other delegates expressed their support for the people of Sindh and their struggle for human rights, including the right to self-determination.

## 22 March 2011 Participation in Amnesty General Meeting

A delegation of the World Sindhi Congress participated in Amnesty USA's 50th annual meeting. At the conference, the delegates participated in the sessions, met with international human rights campaigners, and made sure to thank Amnesty International for its support on enforced disappearances cases. 'It has been a tremendously educating event for use' said delegate Dr. Saghir Shaikh. 'Today's event reminds and reinforces to all of us that human rights include women's rights, right to health, education, development and social and economic rights in addition to political rights.'



## 8 May 2011 London Protest

A large number of Sindhis and Balochs from all over the UK and gathers in front of 10 Downing Street to protest against Pakistan agencies' killings. Speakers at the events strongly condemned the inhumane and barbaric killings and widespread disappearances of Sindhi and Baloch people. They insisted that the violations should be seen as crimes against humanity and that the perpetrators should be put on trial. They also demanded that the UN set up a fact-finding mission to investigate the atrocities. At the end of the rally, a petition was submitted to the British Prime Minister demanding his urgent intervention.

## 27 May 2011 Houston protest against US Aid to Pakistan

Several dozen Baloch and Sindh protesters gathered for a peaceful yet vocal protest in front of the Pakistan consul-general to condemn Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, Islamabad's support for terrorist outfits, and state violence against Sindhi and Baloch people. In a statement, Senior Vice Chairman Umed Laghari remarked that 'It appears that Pakistan army has been successful in keeping their terrorism activities inside and outside the country.



## 21 August 2011 Save Sindh Rally

In front of the UK Prime Minister's residence in London, a large group and supporters of Sindhi people gathered to demand restoration of the historical status of Karachi and condemn violence against people of Sindh. The rally was held in cooperation with Sindhi and Baloch human rights organisations. During the day, several speakers spoke on the local governance system, increasing attacks on Sindhi villages and the need to unite Sindhis to fight against these crimes. A letter was presented to the British Prime Minister in which he was requested to take urgent action, explaining that violations against a largely secular people could weaken the peaceful progressive forces at work in Pakistan.

### 28 September WSC represented Sindhi people at Human Rights Council

A delegation consisting of Dr Hidayat Bhutto and Dr Lakhu Luhana participated in the 18th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. They spoke in various panels and briefings about the worsening human rights situation in Sindh, and presented details of recent targeted killings and the negligence of the Pakistani government after the floods in November. The conference gave the delegates opportunity to meet with numerous NGOs and other human rights defenders from South Asia. The other delegates extended their support of struggle of Sindhi people.



### 10 November 2011 statement UN OHCHR

Dr. Rubina Shaikh, Vice Chairperson of WSC, took the floor in a meeting of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights in Geneva. In her statement, she detailed the practise of enforced disappearances and targeted killings by Pakistan military and security service. She gave more details about some of the 45 cases of enforced disappearances that have appeared over the past year. Her appeal to the Committee was to pressure the Pakistani government to set up an independent investigation of the recent killings and disappearances of political activists and ordinary Sindhi in line with Pakistan's official commitments to United Nations treaties addressing freedom of speech and association.



## 20 November 2011 Sindh Cultural Day

WSC chapter in Canada and London organised events to celebrate the Unity and Culture Day of Sindhi people celebrated in Sindh and all over the world.



## 29-30 November 2011 United Nations Minority Women

A WSC delegation attended a meeting on 'Guaranteeing the Rights of Minority Women'. Dr. Rubina Greenwood and Kamla Hirani made a detailed statement on the situation of Sindhi Hindu women. These women are regularly targeted for abduction, forced conversions and forced marriages. This unfair treatment has led to a drastic reduction of Hindu population in Pakistan.



**10 December 2011 International HR Day Celebrated in Los Angeles, CA**

Two dozens of activists belonging to various southern California towns gathered in a local restaurant on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to celebrate the International Human Rights Day 2011 and to participate in a seminar by a renowned human right defender and scholar from Pakistan, Mr Iqbal Detho. Dr Zahid Ahmed, the professor of anthropology at Jehangirnagar University in Dhaka also spoke on this occasion. This event was jointly organized by Sindhi Association of North America (SANA), South Asian Network (SAN), South Asia Forum (SAF) and World Sindhi Congress (WSC). Others



<http://www.WorldSindhiCongress.Org>



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### 21 January 2012 Birth Anniversary Saeen GM Syed

World Sindhi Congress in London and Houston organised celebrations to honour the 108th birthday of Saeen GM Syed, the father of modern Sindhi nationalism. The event in London was chaired by Dr Naseer Dashti, the Coordinator of the Sindhi Baloch forum. During the celebration in Houston, Texas, renowned artist Sunny Dewan performed Sindhi songs, and there was room for inter-community dialogue on social and cultural aspects of Sindhi identity.

### 31 March 2012 Discussion Session Lahore Resolution

The Canadian chapter of WSC held a discussion session on the Lahore Resolution of 23 March 1940. This resolution, which effectively created the Pakistani state, was discussed in relation to its historical context and the political and social situation in Sindh today. The event, organized in cooperation with the Sindhi Association of North America and the World Sindhi Institute, ended in a lively discussion with all participants.





### 14 April 2012 Remembrance Bashir Khan Qureshi

A remembrance gathering was held at Sindh Centre in London to commemorate the life and struggle of Bashir Khan Qureshi, a Sindhi politician who was killed on 16<sup>th</sup> April after having been poisoned. A vast number of human rights and political activists from Sindhi, Baloch and other communities called for an independent inquiry into his death.

### 6 May 2012 Demonstration Against Kidnappings

WSC held a demonstration in cooperation with the International Sindhi Women's Organization outside the British Prime Minister's residence to protest against the kidnapping and forced conversion of Sindhi Hindu girls. Speakers from the Thatachel Foundation, United Christian Forum, Sindh Christian NGO, Hindu Cultural Society, Balochistan National Party also addressed the participants. They discussed how young women and girls are being used as tools for systematic and state sponsored abuse, specifically in the recent case of Rinkle Kumari. A petition was offered to the Prime Minister requesting him to influence his Pakistani counterpart to make legal and policy changes to stop this practice.





### 28 May 2012 Boycott Chief Justice Award ceremony in London

In cooperation with other representatives of Sindhis living in UK, including the International Sindh Women's Organization, WSC staged a boycott of an award ceremony in London. At the ceremony, Pakistani Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chowdry was handed the International Jurist Award. WSC protested against this event because Mr Chowdry was actually instrumental in the cover-up of many human rights violations in Sindh. Most notably, he was the one who handed over Hindu girl Rinkel Kumari, who had been kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam, over to her abductors in the court case despite her clear protestations.

### 10 June 2012 Demonstration at 10 Downing Street

In response to the extrajudicial killing of Muzaffar Zhutto and the killing of 11 Sindhi and Baloch people at a peaceful protest in Karachi, a rally was held in London. The demonstration was organized in collaboration with the Baloch Human Rights Council (UK) and the International Voice for Missing Baloch Persons (IVMBP). Speakers paid tribute to the ultimate sacrifice of Muzaffar Bhutto for the cause of his people. They also applauded the support of the international community, and condemned the role of MQM and recent state operations against nationalists.





### 22 July 2012 Rally Chinese Embassy

A demonstration was held in front of Chinese embassy in London to protest against the Zulfiqarabad project, and to ask the Chinese government to stop supporting it. The proposed project to build mega-city in Southern Sindh would divert water and deprive local communities from their livelihood resource. An influx of migrants would also cause a demographic and linguistic shift would endanger Sindhi culture. The rally was addressed by speakers from WSC and Baloch Human Rights Group.

### 21 September 2012 Joint Protest New York

The American chapter of World Sindhi Congress joined hands with the International Sindhi Women's Organization, Sindhi Association of North America and the World Sindhi Institute to protest atrocities against religious minorities in Pakistan. They presented a joint memo to the Consulate General of Pakistan asking for a legal and political system to safeguard the fundamental rights of Sindh Hindus. The memorandum asked that the constitution of Pakistan be revised to eliminate discrimination based on religion, caste, or creed, Catalysts in spreading religious hatred and instigating violence against minorities in the media be strictly scrutinized with efforts to fairly report on current events; and religious bias and hatred be eliminated from academic curricula and replaced with education and awareness of human rights and ethnic diversity to promote peace and harmony.



## 8 October 2012 Protest against Asif Ali Zardari

As a response to the Local Bodies Ordinance, a new bill which would give the responsibility for many crucial community institutions to metropolitan organisation, a rally was held outside the hotel where President Asif Ali Zardari was staying. The new law is latest in a series of measures that increase discrimination and divide the urban and rural population of Sindh.



**13 October 2012 International Congress on Sindh** Delegates from Sindh, United Kingdom, the United States, India and Europe gathered in London for the 24<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Sindh. A number of politicians, academics and human rights activists shed light on issues concerning Sindh. Journalists Mushtaq Sarki and Nisar Khokhar delivered a factual account of the current situation and the need for Sindhi organizations to unite. Historians Sarah Ansari and Dan Haines explained the effect of the partition and land related policies. Humaira Soomro of ISWO said without women empowerment no nation can progress or get their rights. Abdul Jabbar Qureshi, President, Sindhi Sangat UK demanded the independent inquiry in to the murder of Bashir Khan Qureshi. Dr Sarwar Shah, a social analyst, did a presentation on 'Right to Return'. Lakhu Luhana talked about the international context that is relevant to Sindh. Veteran human rights activist and intellectual Comrade Rochi Ram detailed the importance of Karachi as the head that the body of Sindh needs to survive. Indian lawyer and veteran politician Ram Jethmalani, who was born in Sindh, confirmed his allegiance to the people of Sindh. Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Jalal Shah gave their opinion on local politics in Sindh, the local bodies' ordinance and the role of the PPP. Hidayat Bhutto referred back to the optimistic text of the 1940 resolution to show how different reality is today.

### 18 October 2012 Rubina Shaikh briefs US Congress on situation Sindh

WSC representative Rubina Shaikh travelled to Washington to brief the American Congress on the situation of Pakistan's Hindu and Christian women. In the context of the Congressional Briefing on Minority Women's Rights in Pakistan, she informed the members of Congress on the daily abductions, forced conversions and cases of marital rape that women are faced with. During her trip, she also met with a USAID and number of NGOs and congressmen.



### 31 October 2012 Participation UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review

A delegation consisting of Dr. Hidayat Bhutto and Dr. Rubina Shaikh participated in the Universal Periodic Review, which is a rotating system in which the human rights situation of all countries is reviewed every four years. WSC submitted two contributions, one specifically on enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of political activists, and one on violence against lesser known minorities in Sindh. These documents were referred to by other countries, and some of the recommendations became part of the official recommendations of the UPR. During the meeting, a large number of countries expressed their concerns over the human rights situation in Pakistan.

## Appendix - Resolutions



# The 24<sup>th</sup> International Conference, London 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012

On this auspicious occasion of 24<sup>th</sup> International Conference, the WSC Executive Committee is honoured to present the following resolutions for approval of this august gathering:

### 1. Right to Self Determination

This Conference requests the International Community to help resolve the issue of right of self-determination of Sindh and all the constituent nations of Pakistan under the auspices of United Nations Organisation.

### 2. Local Government

WSC strongly condemns the Sindh Peoples Local Government Ordinance (SPLGO) 2012 passed on 1<sup>st</sup> October against the wishes of the Sindhi people and all forms of justice and fair play. WSC considers SPLGO as a clear division of Sindh and Peoples Party's resolve to be in power at any cost, including bowing to the selfish demands of its coalition partner, MQM.

Therefore, it is resolved that the Sindh government abolishes SPLGO with immediate effect and adopts a system of local government, which is acceptable to all the people and not the one which is based on gerrymandering and demanded by only one political group to further their racist goals

### 3. Extra Judicial Killings of and Attacks on Sindhi Nationalists

Sindhi nationalists and other political activists have always been a target of the Pakistani establishment. Extra judicial killings and involuntary disappearances have become a norm in Sindh. This year has witnessed the untimely and brutal deaths of many valiant sons and daughters of Sindh.

Bashir Khan Qureshi, Chairman Jeay Sindh Quomi Mahaz (JAQM) died on 7<sup>th</sup> April in mysterious circumstances.

On 22 May JSMM General Secretary Muzzafar Bhutto, who was kidnapped and made to disappear by Pakistani ISI first in 2006 and then in February 2011, was found dead in a tortured state in a graveyard in Sindh.

Most recently in this month, Altaf Khaskheli, the only son of Ghous Bux Khaskheli, a hero of anti-One Unit struggle, has been killed by Police in a demonstration held against the notorious SPLGO in Thareri Mirwaah, Sindh.

On 8<sup>th</sup> October the armed gangsters of PPP attacked another nationalist Leader Comrade Hussain Bux Thebo for leading protest rallies against the division of Sindh inflicted by SPLGO.

Therefore, this august house resolves and demands of the governments of Sindh and Pakistan to

- Stop kidnapping, killing and attacking Sindhi nationalists and other activists.



- Investigate the death of Bashir Khan Qureshi under the auspices of international organizations
- Conduct a judicial inquiry into the death of Muzaffar Bhutto, Altaf Khaskheli and many others, punish the culprits and compensate their families accordingly
- Protect the life and liberty of all the citizens, including the ones who demonstrate peacefully for the rights of the their land and people

#### **4. Human Rights Violations and International Community**

Welcoming the recent visit of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to Pakistan, it is resolved that the UN and international community

- Arrange more such visits, thoroughly investigate the human rights violations, especially in Sindh and Balochistan and publish its reports
- Impress upon the government of Pakistan to declare the whereabouts of the missing people, release the political prisoners and if considered guilty, bring them before the courts of law.

#### **5. Kidnapping, Forcible conversion of Sindhi Hindu Girls**

Earlier this year in March, the kidnapping, forced conversion and then marriage to a Muslim man of Rinkel Kumari, a young Sindhi Hindu woman from Mirpur Mathelo, Sindh has shocked the people in Sindh, Pakistan and all over the world. The involvement of a ruling party MNA (Member National Assembly) and the negative role of the courts of Justice, including Supreme Court of Pakistan, have further mad Pakistan's position on religious minorities and women questionable.

Therefore, it is resolved that

- Rinkel Kumari be released from the private jail of Mian Mitho, MNA of the ruling PPP
- Rinkel Kumari, Asha and Dr Lata be granted freedom to determine their future
- Forcible conversion to Islam of Sindhi Hindu girls in Sindh and Christian women in Punjab and their forcible weddings to Muslim men be stopped with immediate effect
- All forcible conversions be stopped for once and all.

#### **6. Attack on Muhabat Sindh (love Sindh) Rally**

There is no respect for civil liberties in Pakistan and especially in Sindh. Peaceful protesters are attacked and violence is glorified. On 22<sup>nd</sup> May the Mohabbat Sindh rally organized in Karachi by Awami Tehrik and some other parties for solidarity and unity of Sindh was attacked by MQM, killing at least 14 people, including Ghazala Siddiqui, a niece of ex Labor Leader Usman Baloch. WSC condemns this attack.

Therefore it is resolved that a judicial inquiry be conducted into the attack, those found guilty be punished and families of the affected be compensated accordingly

#### **7. Language and Culture:** This House resolves that the:

- Constitution be amended to declare all the Pakistan languages as the national languages and not just Urdu as it is now.
- 17973 Sindhi Language Bill passed by Sindh Assembly be implemented.
- Sindhi Medium schools in Sindh, including Karachi be restored.
- Sindhi language be given its due share in the government controlled electronic media

**8. Status of Women:** It is resolved that all the discriminatory laws against women, such as, the Hudood Ordinance be repealed with immediate effect. Women be given equal opportunities in education, jobs and political positions.

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## About

### *Registration information and media notice:*

The World Sindhi Congress is a registered company with the Companies House in England and Wales (Company Number: 03842312). World Sindhi Congress, Inc. is a registered non-profit company with the State of Louisiana (Charter No. 40032259 N).

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## Purpose of the Organisation

World Sindhi Congress ("WSC") is a human rights advocacy organization based in the UK, USA and Canada. It aims to create a better understanding among the international community about the disadvantaged status of Sindhis in Pakistan and about Sindhi people's struggles for their human rights, including the right to self-determination. In addition, WSC strives to create an association of Sindhis around the world. WSC is a registered company in England and Wales, UK and Louisiana, USA, organized to carry out non-profit activities only.

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