

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014



World Sindhi Congress  
ورلڊ سنڌي ڪانگريس

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## ABOUT

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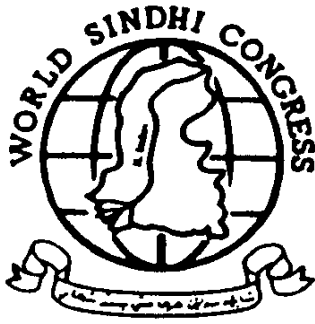
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## Purpose of the Organisation

World Sindhi Congress ("WSC") is a human rights advocacy organization based in the UK, US, 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, the UK, and Louisiana, US, organized only to carry out non-profit activities.

### Executive Committee (2014-2016)

Lakhu Luhana	Chairman
Saghir Shaikh	Secretary General
Rubina Shaikh	Senior Vice Chairperson
Sattar Zangejo	Vice Chairperson
Farhan Kaghzi	Deputy Secretary General
Gul Sanai	Finance Secretary
Ali Memon	Information Secretary
Zubair Bhambhro	Cultural Secretary
Hidayat Bhutto	Organizer UK Chapter
Umed Laghari	Organizer US Chapter
Asif Panwhar	Organizer Canada Chapter



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

### World Sindhi Congress 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 support all organisations in Sindh working on human rights, sustainable development, equal rights for women, and religious minorities, as well as advocate conflict resolution and peaceful initiatives.
- To promote and encourage the solidarity of Sindhis living throughout the world.
- To create awareness of Sindhis worldwide by:
  - o organising seminars
  - o publishing newsletters, reports and research papers
  - o working with media, non-governmental organizations, academics, and other conscientious individuals

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## The Backdrop - Sindh in 2013 and 2014

The period that this report covers (November 2013- November 2014) has been one of tragedy and triumph for the Sindhi nation. WSC has mourned the enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of advocates and activists for the Sindhi Nation, and has also collaborated in numerous councils and protested with organisations to advocate the rights of the Sindhi Nation:

1. Two prominent Sindhi advocates died in brutal extrajudicial killings: Maqsood Qureshi and Salman Wadho on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2014.
2. More than 100 Sindhi political and civil society activists continue to remain missing. Additionally during this period Shahid Junejo, Asghar Jamali, Zamir Khaskheli were kidnapped and are still missing.
3. The violence against a section of indigenous population, Sindhi Hindus, continues to intensify. Scores of Sindhi Hindu girls are kidnapped and forced to convert and enter into marriages. This state-sponsored atmosphere of fear, persecution, and insecurity is perpetuated within this section of indigenous Sindhi people in order to force them to migrate.
4. The state sponsored action to attack the secular Sindhi society intensified. Thousands of new fanatic religious schools (madarsahs) have mushroomed everywhere in Sindh. Talibans are being settled at strategic locations in Sindh.
5. Sindhi people were systematically marginalised in all spheres of social, cultural, and economic development, while Sindh produced 70% of the wealth of Pakistan:
  - i. Sindh has the worst education in the entirety of Pakistan, worse than the war torn area of FATA. Almost half of all the school-going children are not enrolled, and almost 70% of girls in rural areas remain illiterate. More than 6 million primary school-going children are out of education.
  - ii. More than 50% of the Sindhi population remain under the absolute poverty line.
  - iii. The malnutrition among Sindhi people is comparable to African draught hit areas.
  - iv. The governance in Sindh is at its worst. The entirety of Sindh has become ruins. Hundreds of people are dying in Sindh needlessly from illnesses resulting from endemic poverty, malnutrition, and lack of basic health facilities.
  - v. The capital of Sindh, Karachi, has become the battleground for various immigrant communities; with support from the state establishment, who want to control the wealth of Karachi and Sindh, the capital has fallen to battle territory.

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, protesting with strikes, processions, hunger strikes, rallies, seminars and conferences to demand their democratic and human rights.

During this period, WSC stood in solidarity with the struggle of Sindhi people and continued to work with the international community to inform them about the persecution of Sindhi people. The activities of WSC undertaken during this period have informed the wider world about the plight of Sindhi people are outlined in the following sections.

**9 Nov 2013, London:  
World Sindhi Congress 25th  
Conference**

The WSC held its 25th International Conference on Sindh on the 9th of November 2013 in London. Several distinguished scholars and activists from Sindh, the USA, the EU, Canada and the UK gathered to present papers and speeches on the theme of 'Regional Peace and Security in South Asia: Role of the Sindhi Nation.' The consensus of the conference was 'Violent religious extremism patronized by Pakistan is a threat to South Asia and the world. The Sindhi nation because of its deep secular roots and strategic location can play a decisive role in the region to avoid the threat.' At the end of the conference a number of resolutions were adopted, demanding the Pakistan government to stop human rights violations of Sindhi people including violence against Sindhi Hindus and enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killing of Sindhi political activists. The conference delegates requested the international community to condition any aid to Pakistan with strict observance of human rights.

**WSC Activities 2013-2014**



**08 Dec 2013– London:**

### **Sindhi Culture and Ekta Day**

On 08 December 2013, World Sindhi Congress (WSC) held gathering of Sindhis in the UK, to celebrate “Sindhi Unity and Cultural Day” in London. In response to WSC call a large number of Sindhi women, children and men gathered in the Parliament Square London in traditional Sindhi dresses, Topis and Ajraks. The day was celebrated to show solidarity of Sindhis in England to their people and motherland.



Youtube video of dance on Sindhi Culture Day

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUWnH3DLG3w&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUWnH3DLG3w&feature=youtube_gdata_player)





**18 Jan 2014, London:**

### **Saeen GM Syed 110 Birthday**

The World Sindhi Congress commemorated Saeen GM Syed's 110th birthday event in London University on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January to pay tribute to the life, work, and sacrifices of Saeen GM Syed. Scores of Sindhi and Baloch political and human rights activists participated in the event to talk and pay tribute to the struggle, contribution, and sacrifices of Saeen GM Syed for the emancipation of the Sindhi nation.

A similar event as organized by World Sindhi Congress in collaboration with the G. M. Syed Memorial Committee, a Houston, Texas-based educational group on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Several hundreds of Sindhi-Americans attended the event, including two Sindhi luminaries, Mr. Abdul Khaliq Junejo Atta (61) of Larkano, Sindh and Ms. Paru Chawla (82) of Mumbai, India, who were conferred with the prestigious 'G. M. Syed Memorial Awards 2013' in recognition of their contributions to *Sindhi identity, language and Sindhi Rights Movement*.



### **11 Feb 2014, London: WSC Participation at the Conference of World Religions**

A delegation of the World Sindhi Congress comprising of Dr. Rubina Greenwood and Dr. Lakhu Luhana were invited to attend the 'Conference of World Religions' organised by the Ahmadiya community on the 11th of February at Guildhall in London.

It was a very high profile conference attended by scores of dignitaries including heads of all major religious faiths, MPs and numerous NGOs. WSC delegates met with the other emissaries to discuss the issues of increasing persecution of religious minorities in Sindh and Pakistan.



### 18th March 2014- Brussels WSC Participation in European Parliament Event

Dr. Lakhu Luhana represented the WSC at an event on the 18th of March 2014 titled 'Freedom of Religion or Belief in Pakistan.' The event was held in the European Parliament, Brussels, and organised by Hannu Takkula and the European Parliament Working Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief (EPWG on FoRB). Dr Luhana spoke about the misery and death resulting from the man-made catastrophe of the Thar drought and strategic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan.



### 30th March 2014- London;

#### WSC rally against extrajudicial killing of Maqsood Qureshi and Salman Wadho

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 WSC held a rally against the brutal extrajudicial killing of Maqsood Qureshi and Salman Wadho which occurred on the 21<sup>th</sup> of March 2014. A large number of Sindhis, Balochs and representatives of other human rights organisations gathered in front of 10 Downing Street, residence of the British Prime Minister, to protest. The representatives of Baloch Human Rights Council UK (BHRC UK), International Voice for Missing Baloch Persons, and other Sindhi organisations from all over Britain gathered in front of the British Prime Minister's 10 Baloch Forum and participated in the protest.





**26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> April 2014, London:**

### **Rally and Hunger Strike Against Enforced Disappearance of Zahid Baloch**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> and the 27<sup>th</sup> of April, 2014 a protest rally and a hunger strike was held by BSO AZAD, BSYA, BNM and WSC in front of 10 Downing Street against the enforced disappearance of BSO-Azad Chairman, Zahid Baloch. The rally demanded the immediate release of Zahid Baloch.

**11<sup>th</sup> May 2014, Bradford:**

### **Remembrance Day**

The WSC held a Remembrance Conference in Bradford on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2014 to pay tribute to the Sindhi heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of their motherland Sindh and Sindhi people.



The conference was attended by scores of Sindhi, Baloch and other human rights activists from across the UK. The guests included Pervez Fateh, Prof. Nazir Tabassum and Lala Mohammad Younis of South Asian Peoples Forum UK.



Videos of the event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYKcuVll2sl> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lp1gbmTJZg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8aMDIO6se0> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KejC1BCOvEU>



## 28th June, 2014, Canada: International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

On June 28th, 2014 WSC and Baloch Human Rights Council (BHRC Canada) held an event for the UN's "International Day in Support of Victims of Torture." Several dozen activists from different parts of Canada and the US came to attend the event.

Among those who attended were Dileep Ratnani, Farhan Kaghzi, Hajan Kalhoro, Ishwari Ratnani of WSC, Zafar Baloch and Tarek Fateh of BHRC (Canada), Mr. Mumtaz Khan of United Kashmir Peoples Party, Ms. Shahida Soomro of International Sindhi Women Organisation (ISWO), and Khair Mohammed Kolachi of Sindhi Association of North America (SANA). A number of resolutions were adopted to request the international community to investigate the enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killing of Sindhi and Baloch people.

## 2nd-4th July 2014, Genoa: WSC invited to speak at the General Assembly of HFE

Dr. Lakhu Luhana was an invited speaker at the General Assembly of HFE from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2014 held in Genoa, Italy. On behalf of WSC, a presentation was made at the General Assembly to inform the delegates about the plight and violence against indigenous Sindhi Hindus and the underlining political reasons for their



**17th August 2014, London:**

**Rally against persecution of Hindus in Pakistan**

WSC Participated in a protest demonstration on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2014 in front of the Pakistan High Commission in London to raise a voice against the systematic persecution of indigenous Sindhi Hindus. The protest was attended by scores of activists across Britain. Dr Lakhu Luhana was the main speaker of the rally.



Dr. Lakhu Luhana's speech: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRyv\\_81E6EE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRyv_81E6EE&feature=youtu.be)



**March, June, and September 2014, Geneva:**  
**WSC Participates in the 25th, 26th and 27th Sessions of UN Human Rights Council in Geneva**

A delegation of the WSC comprising of Dr. Hidayat Bhutto and Dr. Lakhu Luhana participated in three sessions of United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2014 held in Geneva: 25th session (3rd to 27th March 2014), 26th session (10th to 27th June 2014) and 27th session (8th to 26th September 2014). During the participation the delegation met with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) and representatives of Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial Killings and Special Rapporteur for Enforced Disappearances. The delegation spoke at a number of briefing and made statements at the 26th and 27th sessions about the human rights situation in Sindh. The delegation also met with human rights defenders of other nations and representatives of numerous NGOs. During these deliberations, the delegation raised the issues of gross human rights violations perpetrated by Pakistan establishment against Sindhi people including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, violence against indigenous Sindhi Hindus, state support of the spreading of religious extremism, usurpation of the natural resources of Sindhi people and man-made natural disasters such as famine in Thar in which lives of hundreds of lives were lost.



Video of Dr. Lakhu Luhana's statement at UNHRC on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ezyZ-MjcEU&feature=youtu.be>



## Appendix



### World Environment and Resources Council (WERC)

UNHRC 25th Session: Item 3 General Debate - 14 March 2014

#### Human Rights Situation in Sindh

Dr. Lakhu Luhana

Mr. President,

I want to inform the UNHRC about the gross human rights violations and atrocities committed by the state and security establishment of Pakistan against Sindhi people.

While Sindh contributes 70% of the wealth of Pakistan, the indicators are: 50% of primary school-going Sindhi children - about 6 million nationwide - are out of education, Sindhi female literacy rate is about 20%, education in Sindh is worse than any other part of Pakistan, 50% Sindhi people live under absolute poverty line, malnutrition levels among Sindhi rural population are one of the highest in the world, and more than 10% Sindhi people suffer from chronic illnesses such as hepatitis and tuberculosis.

The campaign of enforced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial killing of Sindhi political leaders and activists continues unabated. While hundreds of Sindhi political activists were already missing in September 2013, Shahid Junejo, Asghar Jamali, Zamir Khaskheli have now been kidnaped. In recent months the mutilated bodies of Afzal Panwhar, Zamin Shah, Sobhal Dahar, Yamin Chachar, Barkat Chandio and Sahib Khan Ghoto have been thrown.

State-supported abductions, forced conversions, and marriages of Sindhi Hindu girls as young as 9 and 11 have become routine. We believe that the Pakistani state is using the sexual violence of vulnerable Sindhi indigenous communities as a tool to coerce them to migrate in order to convert Sindhis into minorities in their own motherland. As a result more than 100,000 Sindhi Hindus have migrated in the last three years alone.

Sindhi people's secular society is under full-fledged attack by state-sponsored talbanistaion of Sindh. Currently there are more than 12,000 religious schools in Sindh. The Pakistani state establishment is settling hundreds of thousands Afghani Talibans at strategic locations in Sindh. Sindhi people are genuinely worried that they will be used against Sindhi people's struggle for their democratic rights, to further strengthen violent religious extremism and to convert Sindhis into minority in their own motherland.

Due to systematic apartheid and criminal negligence, Sindh is currently going through one of the worst humanitarian crises in its history. In the drought-hit Thar area of Sindh to date more than 500 people have died mainly from starvation. Sadly 90% of the dead are children from poor Hindu communities. The people are still dying in scores and the provincial and federal governments have failed to avert the situation.

May I request the UNHRC to press upon the Pakistani state to stop atrocities against Sindhi people, release all the disappeared, investigate the extrajudicial killings, and stop talbanisation of Sindh. May I request the international community to condition any aid and business to Pakistan with its strict

observance of human rights. May I request the international community to support Sindhi people in their struggle for human rights and take immediate actions to support the dying people of my motherland.

Thank you

World Environment and Resources Council (WERC)

UNHRC 27th Session: Item 3: General Debate – 12 September 2014

Human Rights Situation in Sindh

Dr Lakhu Luhana

Mr. President,

I want to inform the UNHRC about the gross human rights violations committed by the state and security establishment of Pakistan against Sindhi people. The three biggest violations in 2014 include:

1. To date in 2014 more than ten nationalist Sindhi political leaders and activists have been extrajudicially killed. The bullet-riddled and charred bodies of Maqsood Qureshi and Salman Wadhu were found two days before the Freedom March on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, which they were actively involved in organising. Sahib Khan Ghoto, Muneer Choliani, and Anees Soomro were abducted by security agencies and within days their tortured and bullet-riddled bodies were found. Invariably in all the cases police refused to lodge a report against the perpetrators.
2. In 2014 more than 50 Sindhi political activists have been the victim of enforced disappearances. Some of these include Asif Juno, Javed Memon, Rohal Laghari, Raja Fattah Dahri Faheem Panhwar, Asif Panhwar, Fahim Bhutto, Wajid Langhah, Noor Sundrani, Alahwadhaio Mahar, and Waheed Mahar. In most cases, police refused to register a report. Most of the active leaders and workers still fighting for human rights receive abusive and threatening calls on a routine basis that they will have the same fate, and we are seriously worried about their well-being and security.
3. As a direct outcome of the state support to spread violent religious extremism in Sindh, the violence against religious minorities has vastly increased. The indigenous Sindhi Hindus are the particular victims of this violence. Between March and July 2014, there have been ten incidents of burning and vandalism of their temples. Not a single perpetrator has been arrested. The state supported abductions, forced conversions, and marriages of Sindhi Hindu girls as young as 9 and 11, as well as boys as young as 11 marrying women with four children have occurred in 2014. As a result of this unprecedented violence, more than one hundred thousand Sindhi Hindus have migrated in the last three years alone. The Sindhi society's secular fabric is also being torn apart by the state settling hundreds of thousands of Taliban at strategic locations in Sindh, which is also creating very detrimental demographic changes for the indigenous Sindhi people.

May I request the UNHRC to press upon the Pakistani state to stop atrocities against Sindhi people, release all the disappeared Sindhi political activists, investigate the cases of extrajudicial killings,

enforced disappearances, and violence against indigenous Sindhi Hindus. The UNHRC must ask to stop the Pakistani establishment's patronage to 'Talibanize' our secular homeland of Sindh.

Thank you

## WSC Collaboartion on the Thar Relief Camp March 2014

