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Sindhi, Baloch and Pakhtun Leaders Gather at International Conference in London

London, July 2000, The International Conference on Sindh with the theme of **'New Millennium, New Challenges: The Future of Sindhi Nation,'** was held at 'Sindhi Center', London on the July 22, 2000. Several prominent speakers from all over the world and large numbers of attendees of this conference made this event indeed a significant occasion.

The conference was organized in two sessions. Dr. Rubina Shaikh (Vice Chairperson) conducted the proceedings of this conference. Dr. Hidayat Bhutto (Information Secretary), welcomed the participants. The theme of the first session was, *"Local and Global Alliances and International Mediation for Conflict Resolution in Sindh and Pakistan."* Dr. Saghir Shaikh (Deputy Secretary-General) was the moderator of this session. Ms. Suriya Makhdoom, from Birmingham in her speech lamented over the fact that the 1999 Country Assessment Report for Pakistan, issued by UK Home Office, has not mentioned human rights violation against Sindhis. Mr. K Dougal of *India Forum*, UK, said that all nationalities in South Asia should work together to seek their rights. Ms.



Activists and political leaders from all over the world attended the Sindh Conference in London in July 2000

Maggie Bowden of *Liberation* (a European based NGO), emphasized the need for the availability of data about Sindh to the international community to encourage international mediation about the Sindh situation. She praised the WSC's efforts in this regard. Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, *member UK Parliament*, criticized the policies of IMF and other international agencies. He said in the name of Globaliza-

tion, their policies are damaging the developing countries. He expressed his strong concern over the proliferation of arms in world. He reminded that the basic human rights include the right to development, right to democracy and the right of self-determination. He admired the fact that WSC believes in the peaceful struggle for the right of self-determination and unity among all the peoples of Sindh. Mr.

Zahid Makhdoom of *World Sindhi Institute* talked about 'building the bridges' among Sindhis living in different

(Continued on page 2)

WSC Speaks at UN on Kalabagh Dam and Plight of Women in Sindh

Geneva, August 2000, The delegation of the WSC, led by Dr. Rubina Shaikh, Vice Chairperson, participated in the 52nd Session of UN Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights held in Geneva from July 31st - August 18, 2000.

During her visit to Geneva, Dr. Shaikh met various UN

(Continued on page 6)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Activities	3
UN Meeting on Indigenous Population	4
Statement on Indigenous Children & Youth	4
Community News	5
Statement on Traditional Practices & Women	6
Human Rights Briefing in Geneva	7
Resolutions Passed at Sindh Conference	11
Cyber Sindh	12

(Continued from page 1—International conference in London)

parts of the world and creating alliances with other political, justice and peace movements around the globe. The last speaker of this session, Dada Keerat Babani, who is a most prominent Sindhi intellectual in India, in his passionate speech about the long struggle of Sindhis for the freedom and equality. He spoke about the two-decades long struggle for defending Sindhi Language in India. He said that it was Saen G. M. Syed who gave this vision for liberty and freedom. He said the real struggle will be carried out inside the Sindh. The people in Diaspora can only help in this struggle.

Before the start of the second session of the conference, a brief ceremony was held to inaugurate four Sindhi books. Ms. Ambreen Hisbani (Cultural Secretary) was the mistress of that ceremony. The names of authors whose books were inaugurated were: Dada Keerat Babani, Syed Imdad Mohammed Shah, Mr. Raj Daswani, and Sohail Memon.

The theme of the second session of the conference was, “*New Challenges to Sindhi People’s Struggle for Equality, Liberty, Unity and Peace.*” Dr. Lakhu Lohano moderated this session. Mr Sohail Memon of *Jeay Sindh Quomi Mahaz* (JSQM), expressed that the only salvation for Sindhi lies in carrying out the struggle for free Sindh as envisioned by Saen G. M. Syed. Mr. Zain Shah, central leader of JSQM said that he does not have much hope with Pakistan, and that is why he advocates the free Sindh. He lamented the fact that accounts of the atrocities on Sindh and Sindhis are known to international community to certain extent, however, the support lent by them is almost none. Abdul Rahim Mandokhel, Ex - Senator of Pakistan and a leader of *Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party*, elaborated upon the current hegemonic structure of Pakistan. He said that it is important that all Sindhi nationalist organizations in Sindh are united among themselves first. Mr. Mahmood Khan Achakzai of *Pakistan’s Oppressed Nations’ Movement* (PONM), said Pakistan is only acceptable to the oppressed nations if it is based on the principle of equality. This unfair structure will not last for a long.

Peoples of the oppressed nations are getting frustrated with the current set-up. It is important that the western countries that have influence in Pakistan must condemn its military government and stop the patronage of Pakistan, which he called a country with a fascist set up. He said if international community is interested in doing business in Central Asia—a potential market for global businesses, then they have to recognize the significance of the peace, prosperity and political stability among the Sindh, Baluchistan and Pakhtoonkhwa areas. It is be-

cause, Sindh and Baluchistan through its sea-ports are the only provider of inlets for the transportation of goods while Pakhtoonkhwa is an exit of such routes towards the Central Asia. He also appealed the international donors to stop the funding for the construction of the Kalabagh Dam. In the context of the challenges to Sindhis’ struggle,

he said that MQM would only be accepted if they accept themselves as Sindhis and he assured that there is a lot of hope that they would join the Sindh’s struggle for the right of self-determination. Comrade Sobho Gianchandani, a veteran human rights activist and a writer said that Pakistani

establishment consists of Punjabi military and elite which victimizes Sindhis, Baluchis, Pakhtoons, Seraikis as well as the common people of Punjab. He also admired the work done by Saen G. M. Syed for the struggle for Sindhi rights.

Sardar Attaullah Mengal, central leader of PONM criticized the west’s approval of Pakistan’s autocratic rule. He said Pakistan is a failed state and one reason that it is barely existing today in its current shape is because international community still considers it as a ‘legitimate’ state, while its own people have completely rejected the status-quo and are demanding the Pakistan as it was promised in 1940’s resolution. He warned that military should go back to its barracks, otherwise the people of oppressed nations will be carry out the struggle to free themselves from this military rule. In response to Comrade Sobho’s speech he said that in his eyes a common Punjabi is indirectly involved in the exploiting setup by reaping the fruits of the Punjab’s domination and going along with the status-quo.

Finally, Syed Imdad Mohammed Shah, a central leader of PONM, in speech said that Sindhis have the message of peace and tolerance. He appealed to Sindhis living in different parts of the world to unite and come on a single platform for a joint struggle. He also pleaded to Sindhis living outside Sindh to keep the Sindhi language and heritage alive. He considers all peoples living in Sindh as Sindhis unless, they themselves deny that identity.

In his concluding speech, Dr. Safdar Sarki, Chairperson WSC thanked all the participants of the conference. He said that we are committed to the Sindh’s struggle for freedom and liberty according to the teachings of Saen G. M. Syed. He said that WSC, with its limited resources, is trying its best to make world aware about the Sindh as well as Baluchistan and Pakhtoonkhwa disadvantaged status by participating in UN and other international forums. He said that today’s conference has been very successful because of the prominent personalities from all over

(Continued on page 10)

“...basic human rights include the right to development, right to democracy and the right of self-determination”

Jeremy Corbyn , MP UK

“...if international community is interested in doing business in Central Asia—a potential market for global businesses, then they have to recognize the significance of the peace, prosperity and political stability among the Sindh, Baluchistan and Pakhtoonkhwa areas”

Mahmood Khan Achakzai, PKAMP

ACTIVITIES

WSC Officer Re-elected as Liberation's Central Committee Member

London, July 2000, A delegation of WSC Led by Mr. Umed A Laghari, Senior Vice Chairperson attended the 46th Annual General Meeting of Liberation, anti-imperialist organization for the colonial freedom, held on 1st July 2000 at Conway Hall, London.

During the meeting, election of new Central Committee for Liberation was also held. All the members of Liberation elected Dr. Haleem Bhatti, Secretary General WSC as a member of Central Committee of Liberation. Honorable Jeremy Corbyn, Member British Parliament and Chairman of Liberation presided this meeting.

WSC proposed five resolutions regarding South Asian nuclear proliferation, unequal water resource distribution and its impact on Sindh's agriculture, drought situations in Thar and Baluchistan, rise of religious fundamentalism, and violation of Sindhi human rights. The general body of Liberation passed all resolutions.

The 12th Annual General Meeting of WSC Held in London New Constitution Approved

London, July 2000, The 12th Annual General Meeting of WSC was held at 'Sindhi Center', London on the July 22, 2000. The day began with the WSC's annual activity report read by Dr. Haleem Bhatti (Secretary General). Dr. Bhatti in his report re-affirmed WSC's commitment towards advocacy for the human rights including the rights of self-determination for the people of Sindh. He said that WSC would also continue its struggle for the equal rights for women and minorities, nuclear disarmament, peace in the region, and unity of Sindhi people and peoples of other oppressed nations of Pakistan.

Secretary General's activity report was followed by the financial report read by Dr. Lakhu Lohano (Finance Secretary). On behalf of Executive Committee Dr. Saghir Shaikh presented the revised constitution of WSC, prepared under the supervision of Mr. Giri Raisaighany -- a reputable attorney in UK and legal advisor of the WSC. The AGM unanimously approved the constitution.

An International Conference on Sindh with the theme of '*New Millennium, New Challenges: The Future of Sindhi Nation*,' was also held on the same day and was participated by several prominent leaders and activists around the world.

The AGM and International conference delegates unanimously passed seventeen resolution pertaining to the situation in Sindh and Pakistan. (See Page 11)

WSC Condemns the Assault and Arrest of Sindhi Leaders

Louisville, August 2000, The WSC expresses its extreme concern over the arrest of Sindhi activists and leaders. Hundreds of activists including Rasool Bux Palijo, G. N. Bhurghri, and Qadir Magsi--the prominent leaders of Pakistan Oppressed Nation's Movement (PONM) were brutally assaulted and arrested by the Sukkur police earlier this week. Two dozens of activists including Mr. Palijo, a veteran Sindhi leader have been injured and 100 of other activists have been arrested by the police when they gathered in Sukkur to hold a peaceful demonstration protesting against the construction of Kalabagh Dam. All three provinces have rejected this project.

WSC strongly condemns these arrests and feels that this sort of action is carried out to harass the people of Sindh, Baluchistan, and Pakhtoonkhawa, carrying out campaign against the Kalabagh Dam. In a separate event, the leaders of Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM) were also arrested. WSC also appeals to Sindhis and other activists all over the world to protest against these arrests and demand the release of the Sindhi leaders by writing to Pakistani authorities and international human rights groups.

WSC Welcomes PONM's Efforts to Unite Sindhi People

London, July 2000, WSC arranged a luncheon this Sunday in London for the PONM leaders in gratitude to their participation in Sindh Conference. Syed Imdad Mohammed Shah, Sardar Attaullah Mengal, Mahmood Khan Achakzai, A. Rahim Mandokhel, Sobho Gianchandani, Syed Zain Shah, Sohail Memon, Zahid Makhdoom, and Keerat Babani were among the notable guests. PONM leaders and WSC leaders discussed both platform's objectives and activities. It was agreed that they all need to work together in creating unity among peoples of Sindh. WSC welcomed the PONM's contacts with MQM leadership and said that this may reduce gap between Sindhi speaking and Urdu-speaking Sindhis. WSC believes that the only way to achieve rights is to carry out the joint struggle.

WSC Hosts a Community Gathering in Chicago

Chicago, October 2000, WSC organized a community gathering on October 24th in Chicago. Several local resident as well as neighbouring states participated in this event. Dr. Safdar Sarki, Chairperson WSC, Mr. Umed Ali Lighari, Sebiar Vice Chairperson WSC (from UK) and Mr. Sohail Memon, Central Leader of JSQM (from Sindh) were the key speakers. Speakers informed the audiences about the current social and political situation in the Sindh. Dr. Safdar elaborated on the role of the WSC and appealed for the cooperation of the community in their effort.

WSC Statements at the UN Meeting on Indigenous Populations

Sub commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities Working group on Indigenous Populations, 18th session, Geneva, 24th-28th July 2000.

Statements by: Dr. Haleem Bhatti, Secretary General, WSC

Item 4: Indigenous Children and Youth.

Thank you Madam Chairperson for giving me floor on this important issue. The government of Pakistan has failed to protect the rights of children and young. Children are widely being exploited, abused & victimized. There are confirmed reports of child labor and child prostitution. According reports published in local papers five million children in Pakistan are in child labor. These children are largely employed by the carpet industry and sports goods industry. In Pakistan, some fundamentalists groups offer religious schooling to children from poor families. The children in those schools are trained and sent for war to Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya and other parts of world, thus increasing the religious fundamentalism in the world. Sometimes these religious groups forcibly recruit indigenous youngsters and give them army training in camps in the name of Holy war or Jihad. International media has also reported presence of these camps in Pakistan & Pakistan army also supports these training camps.

Madam Chairperson, We are concerned for the health of Indigenous infants and young children. There is no proper medical treatment for indigenous population and infant mortality rate is high in Pakistan. Government of Pakistan has allocated less than 1% of budget on health. There is no proper vaccination program in rural areas of Sindh, resulting in disability and deaths of thousands indigenous children due to TB, meningitis, whooping cough and pneumonia.

Madam Chairperson, The state has not only failed to protect the rights of young women; it has neglected to promote attitudes, which will permit them to enjoy these rights. Since, the enforcement of *Shariat* Laws, numerous of young women have been unjustly involved with the criminal justice system and subjected to sexual assault, torture and illegal confinement. Several hundreds young girls were killed for allegedly dishonoring family. Women's behavior which is thought to bring dishonor to family including alleged or real sexual relations outside marriage, choosing a marriage partners against wishes of parents are seeking are divorced. Some women are also considered to have dishonored their family are tribe because of they have been raped. Defenders of women rights are also targeted for their work.

Madam chairperson Indigenous Sindhi youths are discriminated with regard to education and employment opportunities. There are few Sindhi medium schools in urban areas of Sindh and Sindhi youths are denied higher education. All the development projects have been stopped in Sindh after taking over of army in Pakistan. As a result there

is poverty & mass unemployment in indigenous Sindhi population. There is discrimination in recruitment of Sindhis in Government, Semi government and autonomous departments. This has caused depression and frustration among young educated Sindhis resulting in increased number of suicides in Sindhi youths. Furthermore, Large number of Sindhis have been sacked from their jobs without prior notice and replaced by army personnel.

Madam Chairperson, We plead to international community to help Indigenous Sindhi Children and youngsters in obtaining equal opportunities and rights to health, education, employment and prosperity.

Thank you Madam Chairperson

Item 5: Review of recent development pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental rights of Indigenous People.

Mr. Chairperson, It is great opportunity for me to present in this august gathering, account of sufferings of my Indigenous Sindhi in Pakistan.

As its name indicates WSC represents the interests of Sindh and Sindhis. Sindhis are original inhabitants of Sindh, which has given birth and seen the glory of well known ten thousands years old Indus Civilization.

Mr. Chairperson, Last year Army was called upon in Pakistan including Sindh and we are concerned over de-facto Martial law. Constitution of Pakistan has been suspended and all political activities are banned. Also hundreds of Sindhis are being arrested by the security forces without any proper charges & without any trial. Detainees are tortured and beaten to obtain false confession. Fundamental rights of Sindhi people are being denied. Several Non-governmental organizations working for welfare of citizens have been banned. There is restriction and censorship for Sindhi press. Sindhi journalists are harassed and persecuted

by the security forces for exposing unfair treatment of government towards Sindhi people. All the development programs in Sindh have been suspended because of lack of resources and corruption of army & bureaucrats. The natural resources of

Sindh specially oil, gas, coal and minerals are being indiscriminately exploited for quick commercial gains and military purposes such as construction of military cantonments in Sindh, expenses of military operations inside and outside its borders, and detonation of nuclear bombs.

Mr. Chairperson, We are concerned for victims of famine after severe drought in Thar, Sindh and Khuzdar, Baluchistan. According reports published in local newspapers at least 60 people died in Thar area of Sindh due to diseases related to drought. According to UN report published on

(Continued on page 10)



Dr. H. U. Bhatti

Government of Pakistan
has allocated less than
1% of budget on health

Community News

Overseas Sindhi Organizations Collaborate on Campaign Against Kalabagh Dam

Arlington, August 2000, Various overseas Sindhi organizations have decided to collaborate on the campaign against the construction of Kalabagh Dam. Members of Sindhi Association of North America, World Sindhi Congress, World Sindhi Institute, and Sindhi Sangat Australia and several others activists around the globe have shown their solidarity. This campaign is being carried out to create awareness among international community about the anti-people, anti-environmental Kalabagh Dam project.

WSI Arranged a Protest Rally in DC, USA

Washington, DC, August 2000, The World Sindhi Institute (WSI) held a rally against the proposed Kalabagh Dam project in front of the Pakistan Embassy, on August 14, 2000. WSI called it as a "Black Day for Oppressed Nations of Pakistan" The rally was attended by several community and human rights activists. WSI also presented a memorandum to the Pakistan's Ambassador to USA registering their protest on the construction of Kalabagh Dam.

Thousands of Sindhis Gathered for Sindhi Sammelan in Chicago, USA

Chicago, August 2000, A few thousands Sindhis from all over the world attended the 7th International Sindhi Sammelan held in Chicago during August 4th-6th. This event was organized by The Alliance of Sindhi Association of Americas, Inc. (ASA). This three-day program consists of sessions on Sindhi nation, culture, issues pertaining to senior citizens, inter-racial/inter-community marriages, community support etc. It also included special programs for women, and youth members. Sindhi music evening was also arranged. For more information please visit <http://www.sindhisammelan.com>.



Speakers at the International Sindhi Conference held in London

WSC EC Meet in London-Undertakes New Projects and Selects USA/Canada Representatives

London, November 2000, The Executive Committee (EC) of the WSC met on November 12th in London. Dr. Rubina Shaikh, Vice Chairperson of WSC, presided at this meeting. The EC reviewed current socio-political situations of Sindh and Pakistan, and examined WSC's roles in the present and future. The EC prepared a plan of activities for the year 2001 and passed important resolutions pertaining to current political situations in Sindh:

- ◆ WSC EC nominated a delegation to attend the forthcoming meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission to be held in Geneva in March 2001.
- ◆ A cultural event has been planned in London to be held in February 2001.
- ◆ Data Collection Committee has been formed to carry out research and the collection of statistics related to pressing issues in Sindh—i.e., the District Devolution Plan, crimes against women, and the rise of suicides and unemployment.
- ◆ To re-organize WSC activities in North America, interim organizers have been selected on the recommendation of WSC Chairperson Dr. Safdar Sarki. Mr. Farhan Kaghzi will organize the USA Chapter, while Mr. Jamil Sheikh will establish and organize the Canadian Chapter.

WSC EC proclaimed that the so-called **District Devolution Plan** is a conspiracy to destroy unity among peoples of the oppressed nations of Pakistan. This policy is unjustly imposed upon the people by the dictatorial military government. The EC denounced the coming district elections as being arbitrary. Incomplete voters' lists, non-party based elections, the absence of voters' lists in local languages, and undefined role of the district governments make the entire election process unreliable. WSC called this plan a "desperate effort of the Pakistani establishment to hold onto the failing state hegemony in Pakistan."

WSC showed its extreme concern over the increasing rate of crimes against women in Sindh. WSC EC requested all Sindhi parties to unite and create an environment of cooperation among them. WSC further requested all activists, journalists, and academics interested in human rights situation in Sindh to help WSC in its efforts for awareness and advocacy.

(Continued from page 1 - WSC participation at UN)

officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and delegates of several countries participating the session. Dr. Shaikh got an opportunity to submit statements on Item 4(b), Item 5 and Item 12.

On Item 4 (b) a statement was read by the *Liberation* on the construction of Kalabagh Dam on River Indus against the will of people. The *Liberation* is an Europe based non-governmental organization that has supported anti-colonial movements since last five decades. It frequently speaks in UN forums on behalf of marginalized peoples from all over the world.

On behalf of *Liberation* Dr. Rubina Shaikh read a statement on Item 5. Following is the text of the statements.

52ND SESSION SUB COMMISSION ON PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS 31st July -18th August 2000

Item 4. The realization of the right to development

KALABAGH DAM PROJECT

Under the military regime, Pakistan is drifting aimlessly from one disaster to another. In its 9 months rule, the mediocre and inept performance of the government has greatly disappointed the people of Pakistan. The people of Sindh have had to suffer in particular, due to inefficient and callous policies of the government. Sindh has faced a record shortage of water, while Punjab harvested a record amount of wheat crop. This imbalance indicates the total breakdown of the federation and fair play.

We are deeply concerned with intentions of the federal government regarding the proposed construction of controversial Kalabagh Dam. Despite rejection of the dam project by environmental and irrigation experts and by three out of the four provinces of Pakistan--namely, Sindh, Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier Province (Pakhtoonkhwa)--the Government of Pakistan is planning to start this environmentally and ecologically disastrous project. It is clearly stated in EC/CN.4/SUB.2/RES/1999/21) to promote and affirm the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands and resources, in particular, the indigenous and Tribal peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labor Organization, Agenda 21 adopted by the UN Conference on Environment and Development and World Bank Operational Directives 4.20.

The Indus River system cannot afford to have any large-scale dam such as Kalabagh Dam. The current flow of the Indus (four out of every five years) is 123.59 Million Acre Foot (MAF)--approximately 15.59 MAF less than what is

Kalabagh Dam will create various agro-ecological problems and will displace thousands of people.

required to meet the bare minimum needs of four provinces and bare survival of Indus Delta region. Building a Kalabagh Dam with the capacity of approx. 10 MAF would worsen this situation even further. There is simply not enough water to meet additional requirements of the dam. The Kalabagh Dam will create various agro-ecological problems. It will displace thousands of people. It is an unsustainably huge project, which will increase national debt, decrease the net agriculture production and will create food insecurity in the region. Kalabagh Dam will raise the water table and increase water logging in many parts of the country, especially in Sindh and NWFP. It will accelerate the

deforestation process in other areas, culminating in land degradation and soil erosion. The dam will adversely affect flora and fauna of the region, leading to the extinction of many species including 'Palau' fish, Indus Dolphin, and so forth. It will wipe out the wetlands in Sindh, some of which are internationally protected under Ramsar's Agreement. These wetlands provide a habitat for many plants and animals, including many endangered species. The wetlands also act as a source of replenishment for ground water supplies. Migratory birds, too, will lose their breeding grounds. The Kalabagh Dam will destroy Manchar, Keenjhar, Haleji, Hadero, and Chotiari lakes as well as hundreds of smaller lakes and ponds. The dam will destroy 'Tarayoon' in Sindh, along with their habitat, depriving hundreds of thousands of people of their livelihood. There is a complete consensus among peoples of Sindh, Baluchistan, NWFP and many parts of Punjab that the proposed Kalabagh Dam is detrimental. This project has been dead on its arrival. It is the most arrogant display of governance and a sad case of irresponsible resource allocation.

Item 5 (a) Traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls

In considering the implementation of the human rights of women, *Liberation* whilst concerned with the situation facing by women world wide wish today to put before the commission the situation in following countries:

Pakistan

Significant numbers of women are subjected to violence, abuse, rape, trafficking, and other forms of degradation by their spouses and members of society at large in Pakistan. There are considerable discriminations against women, and traditional social and legal constraints have kept women in a subordinate position in the society.

Female children still lag far behind boys in education, health care, and other social benefits.

(Continued on page 9)

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WSC wishes you a happy new year 2001

BRIEFING ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN SINDH

**World Federation of Democratic Youth
Dr. Rubina N. Shaikh (Vice Chairperson WSC)
On Thursday, 10 August 2000-08-09
Room XXIV at 13.00 hrs to 15.00 hrs**

Honorable Chair, Distinguished Guests and my fellow Comrades, Good Afternoon.

I would like to express my gratitude to World Federation of Youth and Interfaith International for providing me the opportunity to speak about the Human Rights Situations in Sindh.

Let me first briefly introduce my organization and myself. I am representing the World Sindhi Congress, a non-profit organization based in the UK, USA, and Sindh. Our main objective is to create better understanding among the international community about the disadvantaged status of Sindhis in Pakistan and about Sindhi people's struggle for their human rights, including the right of self-determination. I consider today's occasion as an opportunity to reach out to the International community.

Let me briefly go over the background so that audience can get a historical perspective of current violations of human rights in Sindh and other parts of Pakistan.

Pakistan has been under military rules for 40 years out of its 52 years of existence. Today it is under the de-facto martial law. We believe that crisis and instability in Pakistan derive from the country's composition in the present form, in which one province, namely Punjab, has an overwhelming domination in all spheres of power. Peoples of smaller provinces, especially Sindh and Baluchistan, are being denied their due political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

Looking at the history of so-called freedom in the last 52 years, the Pakistani establishment has adamantly maintained its dominance intact. The insistence on status quo and the refusal to negotiate even a little on sharing the power have created the chaotic state named Pakistan.

Pakistani State (that is, the government, military, and ruling elite) is involved in all kinds of violence against its own people as well as other peoples across the borders. Today, Pakistan is a symbol of intolerance, human rights abuse, Islamic fundamentalism, and terrorism.

Pakistani establishment has never shown any sign of willingness to negotiate in a peaceful manner. It has always resorted to violence, be that against Bangladeshis in 1971, Baluchis in 1947 and 1973, or Sindhis in 1983, 1986 and the 1990's. State violence continues against Ahemadis, Christians, Shiites, and Hindus everyday! I want to add, my friends, that our own organizational leaders have been victims of state aggression too. Our leader Saen G. M. Syed was imprisoned for 36 long years and was denied adequate

medical treatment-the condition ultimately resulting in his death. Also, our Vice-Chairman late Yousuf Jakhrani was brutally murdered by the military in 1992.

It is virtually impossible to go over the list of human rights violations occurring in Sindh today. The US Country Reports, UN Human Development Reports and UK Interior Ministry Reports are full of the incidents. I would like to briefly go over the different kinds of violations being inflicted on the People of Sindh.

Violations of Rights to Development

- Unemployment rate is at its peak in Sindh. People are resorting to suicides and crime and drug addiction is at its rise.
- Today 70% of Pakistan budget goes into defense related expenses.
- To justify such huge defense expenses Pakistan engages in regional wars.
- We Sindhis find this engagement neither morally justifiable nor economically viable. On one hand Pakistan is spending billions in nuclear bombs and on other hand People of Sindh and Baluchistan are dying out of drought and famine.
- Construction of Kalabagh Dam - Please read Liberation's statement (on Item 4 on Page 6) .
- Unequal Allocation of Financial Resources For last ten years, an illegal and unconstitutional body (consisting of selective non-representative individuals) called the National Finance Commission is managing taxes as well as other financial resources in Pakistan.

- Despite the fact that Sindh remains the largest contributor to the country's federal income (70% of federal taxes and 50% of overall income is generated from Sindh), the province is currently bankrupt and unable to carry out its day to day operations-not to speak of any meaningful development.

- The unconstitutional government and its crony bureaucrats constantly manipulate population census figures and Sindh's budget requirements, and charge

false federal expenses to the province to justify discrimination.

Violation of Rights of Culture and Language

- The majority of people speak the Sindhi language in Sindh, and Sindhi was the official language of the region even under the British rule. In the current undemocratic setup, however, the Sindhi language has been marginalized to such an extent that its survival is under threat. The state-controlled media only provide less than 30 minutes a day of Sindhi broadcast.

(Continued on page 8)

"...crisis and instability in Pakistan derive from the country's composition in the present form, in which one province, namely Punjab, has an overwhelming domination in all spheres of power."

(Continued from page 7 - Human rights briefing at Geneva)

- Sindhi schools are systematically shut down throughout the province, especially from urban areas of Sindh. This is widening the gap between rural and urban people of Sindh. The gap has been a central factor of many social conflicts in the province, resulting in deaths of tens of thousands of people. Federal policies that increase the urban-rural divide are detrimental to Sindh. Furthermore, Sindhi Sufi thoughts, which are more secular in character than the orthodox Islam, have been systematically threatened, as the State engages itself in pan-Islamic propaganda. The suppression of Sindhi culture and the dominance of state-imposed social life created hopelessness among Sindhis.

Violation of Minority Rights

- The current setup in Pakistan thrives on religious dogmatism and intolerance.
- There exist numerous laws and policies that diminish socio-political status of religious minorities and sects.
- There exists separate electorate for Non-Muslims.
- Blasphemy law is still intact and practiced. Government provides its patronage to *Madarsa* Schools a hub for pan-Islamicist militancy.

Violation of Rights of Women

- Significant numbers of women are subjected to violence, abuse, rape, trafficking, and other forms of degradation by their spouses and members of society at large.
- The government failed to take action in high profile "honour killing" cases, and such killings continue throughout the country. There are considerable discriminations against women, and traditional social and legal constraints have kept women in a subordinate position in the society.
- Violence against children, child prostitution, and trafficking in children remain major social problems. Female children still lag far behind boys in education, health care, and other social benefits. are some of the examples of these violation. Please read our statement on Item 5 (see Page 6).

Violation of Rights of Association

- A government servant cannot be associated to any political party. Many political activists are in jails without any trials. Various Journalists and intellectuals are often harassed. It is virtually Impossible to criticize the government policies.

Violation of Right to Democracy

- Currently all assemblies are suspended. Virtual emergency is imposed. All political activities are banned.
- There is a de-facto martial law.

Violation of Rights of Free Speech

- Often media is censored.
- TV and Radio are state controlled. Even a few private channels are often subjected to confirm the governments.

- Political activists are often assaulted and arrested during the peaceful protest. Last April, the leaders of Jeay Sindh Quomi Mahaz (Nationalist Movement in Sindh) were assaulted and arrested during a peaceful protest against the increased unemployment. Similarly two weeks ago, leaders of Pakistan Oppressed Nations' Movement were assaulted during the peaceful protest against the construction of Kalabagh Dam.

Violation of Legal Rights of Citizens

- The judiciary is not free.
- Trials take long time. For every 1000 person, 5 cases are pending. There is only once judge per 85,000 people, and on average every judge has 450 cases pending to be resolved. Such is the situation of judiciary and citizen's access to legal systems. Often people can be remanded in jails for inquiry and so-on.

Dear delegates, Such violence has created a serious dilemma for the people of Sindh, who seek equal rights and prosperity for their region by peaceful means only. The situation is very troubling! Everyday, people of Sindh are getting distraught. We see the stress changing into hopelessness. Self-defeating behaviors are increasing among our people, manifest in the rising rates of suicides, intertribal clashes, violent crimes, drug addictions, and violence against women. Needless to say, hopelessness and self-defeating behaviors are dangerous and end up in violence! So, it is imperative that international activists and intellectuals give considerations to the case of Sindh.

We believe that current strong federal structure leaves no room for negotiating a fair sharing of power and resources. That is why Sindhis are now demanding the right of self-determination. The right of self-determination was promised to all provinces in the Pakistan Resolution of 1940, under which condition Sindh accepted to join the Federation of Pakistan. We also believe that the right of self-determination is Sindhis' inherent and inalienable right, as per the UN Charter and International Convent.

We request International community to :

- Stop their support of Pakistani Establishment.
- Stop their financial support to Pakistani Military.
- Stop their financial support to anti-people projects like Kalabagh Dam.
- Stop the violence against its own people as well as other peoples across its border.
- Convince Pakistan to return to democracy and grant all the Oppressed nations the right of self-determination.
- Abolish the law discriminating women and religious minorities.

Thank you very much. I hope that you will bring our message of liberty, justice and peace to your forums and we expect your solidarity. I hope that one day there will be international mediations for peaceful resolutions of conflicts in Pakistan. Let us all work together for this to happen.

Rubina N Shaikh, Ph.D.

(Continued from page 6—WSC participation at UN)

In many cases, women and girls are abused--sometimes to death--at the hands of their husbands, fathers and brothers, while the authorities merely pay lip service about their obligations to protect women and girls.

In many cases, a girl child goes to *Madrasa* to get *Quranic* education only before the age of puberty, whereas a boy child would go to a proper school. If a girl goes to school, her family does not allow her to pursue education after the age of puberty.

According to the medical reports, the majority of women and girls in rural Sindh are suffering from anemia (iron deficiency). Malnutrition, in general, is a common condition among rural women. Often, due to ignorance, discrimination, and lack for medical resources, a woman's illness does not receive enough attention.

Long physical and mental abuse, polygamy, unwanted marriages, or in some cases marriage with *Quran* often cause mental sicknesses in Sindhi women. Sickness is found in an alarming number of women who get married at a very early age, in some cases even before puberty. These young women often become pregnant and, due to the lack of community hospitals, they seldom receive medical help – even in emergencies. *Dais* (quacks) attend of 85% of births. Early age marriage, low nutrition, and almost no gap between childbirth (use of condoms is a big taboo for Sindhi males, and abortion is illegal in Pakistan) constitute the root causes of death during pregnancy.

However closely a woman tries to conform to social norms, she still has to live under the fear of attack. It can come at any time, from men closest to her. She faces death by being shot, burnt, or slaughtered with axes - just for being suspected of having shamed her family in some way. She can be killed for supposedly having an illicit relationship, for attempting to marry a man of her choice, or for divorcing an abusive husband.

In fact, there is every sign that the number of honor killings is increasing, since the perception of what constitutes honor - and what damages it - widens, and since an increasing number of murders as being claimed as honor killings on the correct assumption that they are rarely punished. Also, the number of honor killings has risen parallel to women's increasing awareness about, and tentative assertion of, their rights.

We also condemn the Pakistani Government's negligence in punishing the buying and selling of innocent women in Thar district, Province of Sindh. There is some evidence that human trafficking takes place under the patronage of influential politicians and Government high officials. Regrettably, the current Government has failed to take serious no-

tice of the inhumane practice, and no action has been taken so far against those vendors of humanity.

The Government of Pakistan, despite having ratified article 14 of Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (E/CN.4/SUB.2/RES/1999/15), has systematically failed to prevent, investigate, and punish honor killings. The Government has taken no measures to amend the country's discriminatory laws, to remove contradictory legal regimes affecting women's rights, or to ensure gender sensitization of police and judiciary. We urge the international community to exert pressure on the Government of Pakistan to honor their obligations to protect women under international laws.

And now more briefly we refer to four other regions:

Maluku

Since January 1999, the conflict in the Malukus has led to over 4,000 deaths and more than half-a-million refugees. The majority of the refugees are women and children whose homes have been destroyed and who are being forced to exist in mountainous terrain without food and shelter. Many women have been raped children are being badly traumatized by the violence inflicted on them and their families. The situation calls for the Indonesian Government to request urgent international co-operation, preferably from its ASEAN partners, to help solve the crisis, as recently proposed by Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights.

Sri Lanka

Once more we turn to that fact of rape used as a weapon of war by armed forces of Sri Lanka. Several rape cases of Tamil women in Northeast of the island have been reported. Over the last four years on average a Tamil woman is raped every 16 days. From several hundreds of these gang-rapes cases only 24 gang rape along with murder are reported in courts.

This information is not new. Liberation is concerned that despite of the fact this issue has been before the commission on numerous occasions this crime still continues. Rapes and sexual assaults of Tamil women by Sri Lanka forces must be brought to an end and we urge that special Rapporteur of Violence Against Women urgently deal with these human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

Yemen

The legal status of women in the Republic of Yemen citizenship is poor. In spite of the law of Nationality 6 of 1990 is a perfect example of the voluntary infringement of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Yemeni Law of Nationality states in Article 3a that Yemeni nationality shall be conferred upon "Children of fathers bearing this nationality."

(Continued on page 10)

The Government of Pakistan has taken no measures to amend the country's discriminatory laws, to remove contradictory legal regimes affecting women's rights, or to ensure gender sensitization of police and judiciary.

(Continued from page 4 - UN meeting on indigenous population)

11 May 2000, this drought is worst natural disaster in the history of Pakistan; according to BBC report of 9th May, conditions are expected to deteriorate in Sindh & Baluchistan, where thousands of people are migrating in search of food & water. Government of Pakistan didn't ask for help from international relief agencies fearing that international aid workers will witness the poverty and plight of these people created by government's policies of discrimination. We demand that government of Pakistan should consider development plans for Thar and other drought affected areas.

Mr. Chairperson, There is deep and special spiritual relationship between Indigenous Sindhis and their land. They consider their land as mother and they want enjoy life on mother earth peacefully & freely without any restriction imposed on them. Agriculture remains the major source of income in Sindh, but regions agriculture industry is victim to the current unequal water distribution by the central government of Pakistan. Furthermore, numerous native Sindhis have been forcibly evicted from their lands, and their lands have been allocated to army generals and bureaucrats.

Mr. Chairperson, The majority of Sindhi people speak Sindhi language in Sindh and Sindhi was the official language of the region even under British rule. In current undemocratic setup, the Sindhi language has been marginalized to such an extent that its survival is under threat. The state controlled media only provide less than 30 minutes a day for Sindhi programs. Sindhi schools are systematically shut down especially in urban areas of Sindh.

Mr. Chairperson, Sindhis believe that right to self Determination is their inherent right, as per UN charter and international convents. By virtue of this right, Sindhis should be allowed freely to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural developments. In no case, should Sindhis be deprived of their own means of income of natural resources such as coal, gas and oil.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson

Dr. H. U. Bhatti, Secretary General, WSC

(Read full text at <http://www.WorldSindhiCongress.org>)

(Continued from page 2—International Conference at London)

the world. This conference has demonstrated our solidarity. He said that WSC team has worked really hard in arranging this conference. He promised that we will work towards uniting all the Sindhi activists.

WSC presented *Ajrak* (a Sindhi traditional shawl) and Sindhi caps to speakers. WSC also thanked to Murli Mukhi of UK Sindhi Assoc., Dr. B. Chaudary of HRIA, and Maggie Bowden of Liberation for their support in arrangements of this conference.

Among other notable participants were Mr. N. I. Bose, Director of *Khidmat*, Jammu-Kashmir Peace Committee, a Kurdish Organization, Mahraja of Gawekar, Prof. I. S. Gupta, Nawabzada Marri and from Sindh, Sultan Mahar, Ali Hassan of HRCF, Ghani Bhutto, and Rafiq Abbassi.

(Continued from page 9—WSC participation at UN)

This provision means that children of a male Yemeni citizen are automatically conferred the father's nationality regardless of their place of birth. Yet, the reverse is not true. The provision, in short, is bluntly discriminatory on the basis of sex.

Kurds

Most of the people in the Refugee Camp in Mahmura, Northern Iraq, are women and children who are suffering serious illness. Sadly this camp belongs to the high Commission of Refugees with only 2 doctors for 8000 people. We ask the United Nations to take immediate actions to protect the health of these women and children.

Looking at this situation of women in these countries Liberation calls upon UN to seriously consider whether these crimes should be brought before the international court unless the relevant Governments take adequate action to stop these violations of human rights.



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Resolutions Passed at the International Conference on Sindh, July 22, 2000, London

WHEREAS the Pakistan Resolution of 1940 furthered the principles of federalism, secularism and democracy.

AND WHEREAS during these successive regimes democratic and civil rights of Pakistani people in general and those of the Sindhi, Baluchi, Saraiki and Pakhtoonkhwa people have remained subjugated.

AND WHEREAS since 1947, Pakistan has suffered through successive military-bureaucratic regimes.

AND WHEREAS the recently imposed *de facto* martial law in Pakistan, has seriously strangled already fragile democratic institutions in the country.

AND WHEREAS Pakistani society is characterised by militarism and militarisation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1. The political power with country is needed back to elected representative transitory mechanism, so that ways and means are devised and implemented in order that a new constitution is formulated on the basis of 1940 resolution.
2. The Right of Self-determination of all nations is constitutionally guaranteed. That is, all five nations of Pakistan are to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, religious, social and cultural development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

3. The continuous theft of water, financial and human resources from Sindh, Baluchistan and Pakhtoonkhwa must be stopped.
4. The construction of the Kalabagh Dam must be stopped immediately.
5. The National Financial Award (NFA) scheme is abrogated and the nations must be given economic independence in collecting their revenues and its spending or according to their specific needs.
6. The systematic dismissal of Sindhi-speaking personnel from their employment is immediately stopped and due process of the law is accorded to those currently under orders for dismissals.
7. Pakistan should launch rehabilitation plans for victims of the Thar and Baluchistan famine areas this year and the cyclone victim last year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

8. That Pakistani military go back to its barracks. There should be no role of military in any political decisions or civil administration. A moratorium must be declared on acquisition of new armaments or recruitment of military personnel for the period of ten years.
9. Pakistan signs Comprehensive Nuclear Test ban Treaty.
10. Resources currently being expended on military are reallocated to strengthen social, educational, and medical services to Pakistani people particularly the ones living in the ruler hinterland.
11. Pakistan replace its engagement in the regional war and adopt peaceful strategies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

12. The current *Shariah* laws are repealed.
13. Judicial institutions are reorganised and strengthened and rendered independent consistent with the common law traditions and principles.
14. Honour killing should be declared as a murder under the Criminal Code.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

15. Appropriate resources to promote Sindhi, Baluchi, Pakhtoonkhwah, Punjabi and Siraiki languages and culture are made available. Sindhi should be given more time in media such as TV and Radio, measures should be taken to open Sindhi medium schools in the urban areas of Sindh.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

16. There is an acute need for unity of amongst Sindhi-Diaspora.

WHEREAS all oppressed nations in the world have inviolable right to self determination.

AND WHEREAS there is an acute need for solidarity between the oppressed nations and peoples

THEREFORE this assembly condemns the oppression of women and children.

1. This assembly further condemns continued subjugation and oppression of the Kurdish people of northern and Shia people of southern Iraq in the hands of the fascistic regime of Saddam Hussein.
2. This assembly further condemns subjugation of women, children and national entities such as Uzbek, Tajik and Hazara people in the hands of the fascistic and fundamentalist Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

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