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March 13, 2015

His Excellency Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Your Excellency,

Subject: Human Rights Situation in Sindh (Pakistan)

We the human rights activists belonging to different parts of the world have gathered here to draw your attention to the appalling human rights situation in Sindh.

Sindh is the home to more than 50 million people. Sindhi society has been uniquely tolerant, universalistic and at the forefront of the struggle for democracy in Pakistan. Its rich culture and tradition provides a potent antidote to the increasing trend of religious bigotry and militarism that can be seen in the region today. The Pakistani State and its security agencies engage in systematic discrimination against Sindhis. These human rights abuses and deliberate disenfranchisement of indigenous Sindhis by the Pakistani State needs to be stopped. The major violations are:

Extrajudicial Killings, Targeted Killings, and Enforced Disappearances of Sindhi Activists

In spite of human rights laws, including the right to life in Article 4, Clause 2 (a) of the Pakistani Constitution, hundreds of Sindhi activists have been kidnapped, tortured, and killed, especially in the last decade. In 2014 alone, at least two dozen cases of kidnappings and killings have been reported in the media. Neighbouring Balochistan has seen similar oppression; thousands of Baloch citizens were killed by the security agencies in 2014 as well. The Pakistani government denies all claims and its judicial system provide no recourse.

Forced Conversions and Kidnappings of Sindhi Hindus

Sindhi Hindus are facing increased targeting of discrimination including kidnappings for extortions, forced abductions and conversions of Hindu girls, and forced servitude. This increasing violence has resulted in the exodus of the Hindu population out of Pakistan. In 2014 alone, nineteen cases were reported of Hindu girls, as young as six years, being converted to Islam, and in some cases were also forcibly married to unwanted men or kept in the custody of

their kidnapers. Courts are unable to provide any protection in such cases due to ‘Sharia’ laws permitting the conversion of religion.

Spread of Religious Institutions in Sindh

It is thought that there are 20,000 new madrassahs in Sindh, mostly funded by foreign money and under the patronage of the Government. The Islamic militism is increasing, and Sindh has started seeing unprecedented violence against non-Muslim and non-Sunni sects of Muslims. The text books and school curriculum teaches intolerance and bigotry, further aggravating tensions between these groups. Several incidents of destruction and burning of the places of worships of Christians, Hindus and Ahmedis have been reported.

Forced population movement into Sindh

The State is engaged in an internal displacement of people by bringing non-Sindhi populations from KPK and Punjab provinces and settling them in Sindh. Many public lands have been appropriated by the federal government, and mega cities are being built to settle non-Sindhies. This forced population movement will turn Sindhis into a minority in their homeland.

Misappropriation of Sindh’s Natural Resources

Sindh remains one of the most resourceful states of Pakistan with one of the largest oil and gas reserves in the world. These resources contribute to 69% of all Pakistan revenue, and Sindh has the only seaport in the country. It has 71% of the gas fields of Pakistan and 62% of the oil of Pakistan in addition to the 4th largest coal deposit of the world (estimated to be \$23 trillion – 99% of total coal reserve of Pakistan). In return, it only gets 11% from federal government; 60% of Sindhis live below the poverty line, and 50% of population has diseases borne out of inadequate sanitation, lack of health facilities and improper infrastructure. The literacy rates among Sindhi women are 30%, and about 6 million Sindhi children under eight years old are out of school. 80% of Sindhis do not have access to drinkable water. Year after year, the Federal government appropriates these funds and get approval from the mainly Punjabi dominated military, national assembly, and senate. There is no recourse in a judicial system that is subservient to the legislative assemblies.

Honorable Sir, as described earlier, Sindhi people are facing one of the worst onslaughts from the Pakistani establishment’s agencies in their national history. This includes disappearances and extrajudicial killing of Sindhi political workers, a state-sponsored rise in religious extremism, persecution of religious minorities, complete denial of rights and opportunities for social, economic, cultural and political development. Pakistani Intelligence Agencies encourage and provide hubs to settle Talibans in Sindh and establish madrassahs, which result in systematic discrimination, hostilities and persecution of indigenous non-Muslim Sindhi people.

Sir, we Sindhis, who are historically secular, genuinely believe that together with the international community can play a great role in the fight against the rising threat of religious fascism to global security and peace. We believe that one of the reasons that the Pakistani establishment is attacking Sindhi people is to undermine their potential role in achieving global security and peace.

We Sindhi people, in the light of your commitment to human rights and global peace, request you to press upon the Pakistani government to stop violations of human rights of Sindhi people committed by their agencies and proxies. We also request that you pursue the establishment of an International Enquiry into the human rights violations against Sindhi and Baloch people.

We also request you that any UN and other International aid to Pakistan should be conditioned to its commitment and observation of human rights according to the UN charter.

We look forward to hearing from you, Sir.

Dr. Lakhlu Luhana
Chairman World Sindhi Congress

The World Sindhi Congress (WSC) is based in the UK, USA, Canada, and Sindh and is one of the most prominent human rights advocacy organizations for Sindh and Sindhis. The main objective of WSC is to create a better understanding within the international community about the persecuted status of Sindhis in Pakistan and about the Sindhi people's struggle for human rights, including the right to self-determination. WSC is a registered company in the UK and the USA, and is organized to carry out non-profit activities. For more information, visit www.worldsindhicongress.org