

Annual
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Annual Report 2017- 2018

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ABOUT

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.

Mission:

The World Sindhi Congress (WSC) promotes and undertakes the struggle for the right of self-determination for 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.

Objectives:

- To create a better understanding among the international community about the persecuted status of Sindhis in Pakistan and about Sindhi people’s struggles for their human rights, including the right to self-determination.
- To support all organizations in Sindh working on human rights, sustainable development, equal rights for women, and religious minorities, as well as to 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:
 - Organizing seminars
 - Publishing newsletters, reports, and research papers
 - Working with media, non-governmental organizations, academics, and other conscientious individuals

Registration Information

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 organization with the State of Louisiana (Charter No. 40032259 N). World Sindhi Congress is a registered Corporation in Canada (996593-9).

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Executive Committee

Chairwoman: Dr. Rubina Shaikh

Secretary General, Dr. Lakhu Luhano

Senior Vice Chairperson: Umed Laghari

Vice Chairman: Zubair Bhambhro

Deputy Secretary General: Asif Panhwar

Finance Secretary: Hidayat Bhutto

Information Secretary: Farhan Kaghzi

Cultural Secretary: Gul Sanai

Organizers and Committees for WSC Chapters:

UK and Europe:

Organizer: Hidayat Bhutto

Committee: Abdul Rauf Laghari, Rustam Mirjat, Moazam MughulJabir Shar, Ahmed Nawaz Ansari, Haresh Kumar, Marvi Baloch

USA:

Organizer: Dr. Saghir Shaikh

Committee: Malik Dino Shaikh, Rehman Kakepoto, Mansoor Samo

Canada:

Organizer: Hajan Kalhoro

Committee: Siraj Makhdoom

The Current Situation in Sindh

The people of Sindh continue to suffer numerous rights violations at the hands of the government. This includes disappearances and extrajudicial killings of Sindhi political activists, the state-sponsored rise in religious extremism, persecution of religious minorities, misappropriation of natural resources, and the continued threat of loss of land and livelihoods due to large-scale infrastructure projects without consultation, and the complete denial of rights and opportunities for social, economic, cultural and political development. The government's actions have led to systematic discrimination, hostility, and the persecution of indigenous Sindhi people. At present, the Sindhi people are facing the following rights violations:

Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances of Sindhi Activists

Extrajudicial killing of political and human rights activists have become a norm in Pakistan, where security agencies are operating with impunity. Activists are sometimes killed after being detained for varying degrees of time, or released with clear signs of physical and psychological trauma. Almost all of the eyewitnesses to these disappearances have indicated that the perpetrators seem to be official security personnel – rangers, police, and intelligence agencies. Due to domestic and international pressure, the government established a Commission on Enforced Disappearance however it is underfunded and lacks the power and jurisdiction to properly investigate the hundreds of cases being brought forth. To date, not a single perpetrator has been brought to justice.

Massive Infrastructure Projects without Consultation or Consideration

Pakistan has taken on a number of large-scale national infrastructure projects through CPEC (the China Pakistan Economic Corridor) and is attempting to crowdfund two major dam projects after one was previously put on hold due to the outcry in Sindh. The government has sent rangers into a number of communities in Sindh to stage operations meant to create an atmosphere of fear for Sindhi people in order for them to more easily submit to the highly controversial projects. The government's undertaking of these initiatives has been done without the consultation of local Sindhi communities and will result in loss of traditional lands, the usurpation and degradation of natural resources, and the loss of livelihoods. Historical mismanagement of such infrastructure projects and the lack of consideration given to how these projects will negatively impact local populations, putting the people of Sindh in a disadvantaged and dangerous position.

Forced Conversions and Kidnappings of Sindhi Hindus

Sindhi Hindus are facing increasingly targeted discrimination and violence including kidnappings for extortion, abductions and forced conversions of Hindu girls, and forced servitude. The increasing violence has resulted in the exodus of

the Hindu population out of Pakistan. Within the last year, numerous cases were reported of Hindu girls, the majority under the age of 16, being forcibly abducted and converted. In most instances the girls were also forcibly married off or kept in the custody of their kidnappers with little to no recourse for the girls or their families, even during legal proceedings.

Spread of Religious Extremism in Sindh

There are an estimated 20,000 new madrassahs in Sindh, mostly funded by foreign money and under the patronage of the government. 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 teach intolerance and bigotry, further aggravating tensions between these groups. Several incidents of destruction and burning of Christian, Hindu and Ahmedi places of worship have been reported.

Misappropriation of Sindh's Natural Resources

Sindh remains one of the most resource-rich states of Pakistan with some of the largest oil and gas reserves in the world. These resources contribute to 69% of all of Pakistan's revenue, and Sindh has the only seaport in the country. Sindh has 71% of the gas fields in Pakistan, 62% of the oil of Pakistan, and one of the largest coal deposits in the world and 99% of Pakistan's total coal reserves (worth an estimated \$23 trillion). However, Sindh only receives 11% of federal funding and 60% of Sindhis live below the poverty line. Fifty percent of the population has diseases borne out of inadequate sanitation, and a lack of health facilities and proper infrastructure. More than 60% of Sindhis do not have access to drinkable water. The Federal government relies on Sindh's resources but then appropriates funding unequally and inequitably in favor of Punjab, perpetuating Sindh's status as one of the poorest provinces in the country despite its contributions.



A Message from the Chair

The 2017-2018 year has been a concerted, focused and proactive year for advocacy and outreach. World Sindhi Congress (WSC) organized and participated in a number of meetings and protests around the world to raise awareness about the current human rights violations occurring in Sindh. These activities were enhanced by numerous statements, press releases, and condemnations released to the media and public. Further, WSC's online and social media presence continues to grow as we now utilize eight different platforms.

This current situation in Sindh is marked by continuous human rights violations and an environment of fear and oppression. The Sindhi people are facing one of

the worst onslaughts of violence in their national history at the hands of Pakistani state security agencies. Enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of political and human rights activists have steadily risen. The inconsiderate implementation of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) continues. In recent months there has been a cavalier propagation of dams on the River Indus. It is clear that Sindhi people will be disproportionately and negatively impacted by these projects, including infringement on their lands, misappropriation of their resources, and loss of their livelihoods. Any dam construction on the Indus River will suffocate the Sindhi people as Sindh is already reeling under unprecedented water shortages. Additionally, as religious extremism continues to rise in Pakistan and more madrassas are built in Sindh, the exodus and atrocities against Sindhi Hindus increases. The cases of abduction and forced conversion of Hindu girls and women in Sindh has increased as well. Sindhi people are systematically targeted and discriminated against by the government with no end in sight.

In light of the current situation in Sindh, World Sindhi Congress has been actively organizing and advocating around the world. This year the organization has staged multiple protests in the UK, US, Canada, and Geneva, Switzerland against enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, forced conversions, CPEC, dams, and other human rights violations occurring in Sindh. Additionally, WSC has delivered letters to the Prime Ministers of the UK and Canada, undertaken meetings and advocacy work with Canadian members of Parliament, members of the US Congress, members of the European Parliament, and representatives of the UN Human Rights Council and the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances. The organization has worked closely throughout the year with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) and participated in three UN Human Rights Council Sessions, where representatives of WSC delivered speeches, formally issued statements, and helped organize additional events and protests in Geneva. World Sindhi Congress has also worked to spread more information about Sindhi heritage by hosting a number of events in the US, UK, and Canada such as the GM Sayed Memorial events, Sindhi Cultural Day celebrations, and a Day of Remembrance for Sindhi martyrs. Finally, the organization has issued numerous public statements and condemnations of human rights violations in Sindh. During this year we have strengthened our collaboration with other nations oppressed in Pakistan such as the Balochs, Pashtoons and Kashmiris, and have staged numerous joint events in addition to participating in each other's events and protests.

With your support, WSC looks forward to continuing its advocacy efforts and outreach this coming year with more protests, working closely with other non-governmental organizations, UN, US Congress and EU Parliament, other nations oppressed in Pakistan and with increased media presence.

Activities and Accomplishments



Protest against Enforced Disappearances Ottawa, September 29, 2017

WSC and SANA organized a protest in front of Canadian Parliament to speak out against the tactic of enforced disappearances of political activists and to draw Parliament's attention to the human rights abuses being committed in Pakistan. Community members from Toronto and Ottawa were present to chant slogans and display signs calling for the return of the missing persons. Mr. Tom Kmiec, Member of Parliament, also joined the protest. In addition to the protest, members from WSC and SANA delivered a petition to the Prime Minister's office calling for Canada to pressure Pakistan to end its rights violations against Sindhi people.



Protest against Enforced Disappearance London, September 9, 2017

WSC organized a protest in front of 10 Downing Street, London. The protest's aim was to bring awareness to enforced disappearance in Sindh and urge British policymakers to address the human rights issue with their Pakistani counterparts.



WSC Delegation at the UN Human Rights Council 36th Session Geneva, September 11-29, 2017

WSC sent a seven-person delegation to the 36th Session to bring awareness to the current human rights abuses being perpetrated by Pakistani security forces in Sindh. The delegation participated in meetings with the Committee on Enforced Disappearances as well as the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances. Two members of the delegation delivered public statements during the Session. Dr. Lakhu Luhana spoke on the issue of enforced disappearances of political and human rights activists on September 18th and the following day Dr. Hidayat Bhutto spoke about the human rights violations in Sindh, including forced



conversions and extrajudicial killings. The delegation also organized a protest against enforced disappearance in front of the Palace of Nations on September 20th.



Annual International Conference on Sindh London, October 28, 2017

The 29th International Conference on Sindh was held at the University of Westminster, Harrow Campus, and London, UK. The theme was Self Determination. Several dozen delegates attended the conference and traveled from all over the UK, EU, USA, Canada, India, Afghanistan, Sindh, and Balochistan. Prominent speakers addressed topics such as CPEC, enforced disappearances, the rise of religious extremism in the region,

economic and natural resource exploitation, and Pakistan's policies of oppressing Sindhi people, and the need to advance the Sindhi struggle for self-determination. Several news outlets covered the conference.

G.M. Syed Memorial Awards and Birthday Celebration Houston, January 20, 2018

Sindhi-Americans gathered in Houston, Texas to celebrate the 114th birthday of G M Syed, the revered Sindhi national leader and activist. During the celebration, Dr. Hyder Lashari and Mr. Baseer Naveed were conferred with the prestigious G. M. Syed Memorial Awards in recognition of their contributions to "Sindhi identity, language and culture, and to the movement for the rights of Sindhis."

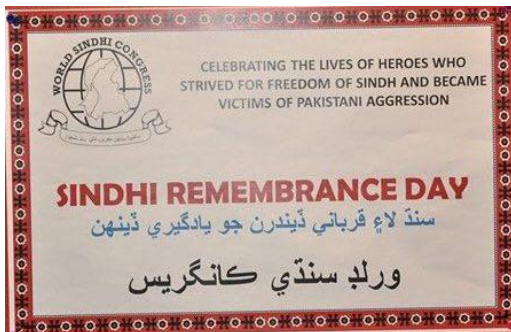


Participation at the UNPFII 2018 Session New York City, April 16-27, 2018

World Sindhi Congress sent a delegation to participate in the 2018 session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at UN Headquarters. Delegates Zubair Bhambhro, Saghir Shaikh, Farhan Soomro, and Maria Hussain attended sessions and met with other delegations as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Issues. WSC delegates also met with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. On April 19th, David Barry, a representative from UNPO, delivered a statement on behalf of the World Sindhi Congress to draw attention to the use of enforced disappearance of Sindhi political and human rights activists and journalists who have spoken out against the misappropriation of Sindh's resources and large-scale development projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

WSC Delegation Attends 37th Session at UNHRC Geneva, February 26 – March 23, 2018

A five-person delegation represented WSC at the 37th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to participate in rallies, discussions, activities, and special meetings. Members of the delegation delivered three statements: Dr. Lakhu Luhana spoke on the enforced disappearances, During the General Debate on Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's attention, Dr. Hidayat Bhutto issued a statement on the current human rights situation in Sindh, and Dr. Rubina Greenwood had the opportunity to submit a statement following the outcomes of Pakistan's Universal Periodic Review. The delegation also staged a protest against rights violations and enforced disappearance in Pakistan. The protest concluded with the submission of signed petitions to the Secretary General and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Members of the delegation also participated in supplementary events during the Session such as a freedom of expression event and an event on indigenous rights.



Sindhi Remembrance Day New York City, April 15, 2018

WSC organized a "Remembrance Day" in New York City to honor the men and women who have worked to empower and uplift the people of Sindh. Community members from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut gathered at Sunshine restaurant to listen to brief speeches and calls to action by WSC members. The honorees for the 2018 G.M. Syed Awards were also announced.

Procession and Protest ahead of Commonwealth Meeting London, April 18, 2018

Members of WSC and Sindhi Baloch Forum organized a procession and protest ahead of the Commonwealth heads of government meeting. The procession started at Trafalgar Square and ended with a protest opposite 10 Downing Street. The event was held to bring awareness to the human rights violations occurring within Sindh and Balochistan, and to call for the heads



JOIN US IN THE PROTEST
ON THE EVE OF COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF
GOVERNMENT MEETING IN LONDON
To Inform the Commonwealth Heads and the World that Pakistan is
Committing Human Rights Violations In Balochistan & Sindh

- Extrajudicial Killings
- Enforced Disappearances
- Forced Construction of CPEC
- Robbing our Resources
- Illegal Land Grabbing
- Violence against Religious Minorities

Wednesday 18th April
Procession will start at 1pm from Trafalgar Square to end
Opposite the 10 Downing Street
Protest Opposite 10 Downing Street 2.4pm

Sindhi Baloch Forum (SBF)

Supported by: WBO, BNM, WSC, BHRC-UK, BSO-AZAD



over governments to take a stand against such aggression towards the Sindhi and Baloch communities.



Book Launch Event London, August 5, 2018

Sindhi Baloch Forum (SBF) hosted a book launch at the Birkbeck College, University of London. Renowned Baloch intellectual and historian Dr. Naseer Dashti promoted two books on Sindh and Balochistan, *The Baloch Conflict with Iran and Pakistan: Aspects of a National Liberation Struggle* and *Tears of Sindhu*. Numerous Balochs and Sindhis from across the UK participated in the event.

Speakers deliberated their views on the work of Dr. Dashti and its significance included Ms. Mehnaz Baloch, Dr. Nagman Baloch, Mehrab Sarjevo, Qambar Baloch, Rahim Bandavi, Dr. Hidayat Bhutto, Hasan Hamdam, Akbar Barakzai, Hamal Haider Baloch, and Dr. Lakhu Luhana.

Multi-City American Protest for the Release of Disappeared Persons June 21-22, 2018

WSC and SANA organized a multi-city protest to call for the release of disappeared workers in Sindh and Pakistan. The protests took place in Los Angeles, New York City, and Houston. Zakir Bulo, Farhan Kagzi, Dr. Hyder Lashari, and Shahid Memon, in New York, Maimood Sahir, Mashooque Malah, Zubair Bhambhro and Masroor Samoon, in Houston, while Sagheer Shaikh, Eijaz Syed, Rahman Kakepoto, Malik Dino Shaikh, and Ubedullah Khowaja in Los Angeles recorded their protests and presented petitions at the New York and Houston consulates.



Sindhi, Baloch, Pashtun Protest Toronto, June 5, 2018

WSC organized a protest with members from the Sindhi, Baloch, and Pashtun communities against enforced disappearances of political activists. The protest was meant to be a show of solidarity and a way for members of those communities to come together and call for the



Canadian government and international community to address the issue and bring the disappeared home.

Hunger Strike

London, May 27, 2018

WSC organized a hunger strike in front of the Pakistan High Commission building to draw attention to the widespread use of enforced disappearance in Pakistan.



Issuing Statements of Condemnation

Throughout the 2017-2018 year, WSC has released numerous statements condemning atrocities and rights violations. The statements included condemning the violence against peaceful protestors in Karachi, standing against major dam projects, and remembering those who are still missing on the International Day of Enforced Disappearance.

World Sindhi Congress Media Presence

World Sindhi Congress connects Sindhis around the world with social media. WSC shares their events, news, and updates every day across eight platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+ and Tumblr. World Sindhi Congress continues to expand their social media presence and strengthen the international Sindhi network.

This year, WSC has:

- 111,195 followers on Facebook (+5,695 followers from last year)
- 7,394 followers on Twitter (+1,394 followers from last year)
- 5,214 followers on Instagram (+214 followers from last year)
- 75 YouTube subscribers (unknown change from last year)