# WORLD SINDHI CONGRESS ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



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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 Sindhis' disadvantaged status in Pakistan and about the Sindhi people's struggles for their human rights, including the right to self-determination. In addition, WSC strives to create an association of Sindhis worldwide. WSC is a registered company in England and Wales, the UK, Louisiana, the US, and Canada organized only to carry out non-profit activities.

#### Mission:

The World Sindhi Congress (WSC) promotes and undertakes the struggle for self-determination for Sindhis. WSC continues to provide a voice to Sindhis and international communities worldwide 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 Sindhis' persecuted status in Pakistan and about Sindhi people's struggles for their human rights, including the right to self-determination.
- To support Sindh's organizations working on human rights, sustainable development, and equal rights for women and religious minorities and 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
  - o Publishing newsletters, reports, and research papers
  - o Presenting the case and plight of Sindhi people within the international community, including the UNHRC, European Commission, the UK, USA, and Canadian legislators
  - Working with media, non-governmental organizations, academics, and other conscientious individuals

#### **Executive Committee**

Asif Panwhar

Farhan Kaghzi

Gul Sanai

Hafeezan Wadhio

Hajan, Kalhoro

Hidayat Bhutto

Imran Baloch

Lakhu Luhana

Rehman Kakepoto

Rubina Shaikh

Saghir Shaikh

Umed Laghari

Zubair Bhambhro

#### Officers

Chairperson: Dr. Rubina Shaikh

Secretary-General: Dr. Lakhu Luhana

Senior Vice-Chairperson: Hajan Kalhoro

Vice-Chairperson: Zubair Bhambhro

Deputy Secretary-General: Umed Laghari

Finance Secretary: Gul Sanai

Information Secretary: Farhan Kaghzi

Cultural Secretary: Hafeezan Wadhio

#### **UK and Europe Organizing Committee**

Hidayat Bhutto (Organizer)

Fahmida Baloch (Deputy Organizer)

Sharjeel Soomro (Secretary)

Abdul Rauf Laghari

Ahmed Nawaz Ansari

Saj Channa

Ali Memon

Fida Jatoi

Haresh Kumar

Moazam Mughul

Sikandar Khaskeli

#### **USA Organizing Committee**

Saghir Shaikh (Organizer)

Malik Dino Shaikh (Deputy Organizer)

Raja Dahar (Secretary)

Paras Shah

Liaquat Panhwar

Mansoor Samo

#### **Canada Organizing Committee**

Asif Panwhar (Organizer)

Dua Kalhoro. (Deputy Organizer)

Yaswant Mahraj

#### The Current Situation in Sindh

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

#### **Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances of Sindhi Activists**

Enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of political and human rights activists are the norm in Pakistan, where security agencies operate with impunity. Released victims are detained for various lengths, undergoing physical and psychological trauma, while others are killed in custody. By August 2021, the Federal Commission for the Recovery and Inquiry of Enforced Disappearances in Pakistan received 8,122 reports of enforced disappearances. Eyewitnesses to these disappearances indicate that most perpetrators are state-sponsored security personnel, i.e., rangers, police, and intelligence agencies. Despite domestic and international pressure, the Commission on Enforced Disappearances remains underfunded and lacks the authority to investigate the hundreds of reported cases properly. While the Criminal Laws Amendment Bill 2021 seeks stricter laws and better avenues of justice for victims, the state is actively undermining these efforts.

#### Massive Infrastructure Projects without Consultation or Consideration

Pakistan's continued dedication to massive infrastructure projects through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) fuels inequity within Sindh. Despite public outcries in Sindh, state agents continue to move forward or support with damn projects. These initiatives will result in the loss of traditional lands, the usurpation, the 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 put the people of Sindh in a disadvantaged and dangerous position.

#### Forced Conversions and Kidnappings of Sindhi Hindus

Sindhi Hindus face targeted discrimination and violence, including. This pervasive violence has resulted in the exodus of the Hindu population out of Pakistan. Numerous cases have been reported of Hindu girls, the majority of whom were under 16, being forcibly abducted and converted. In most instances, the girls were then forcibly married off or kept in the custody of their kidnappers with little to no recourse for the girls or their families. Families who reported the kidnappings were often the targets of violence.

#### Spread of Religious Extremism in Sindh

Islamic militarism across Pakistan is increasing, and Sindh continues to experience unprecedented violence against non-Muslim and non-Sunni sects of Muslims. Underage religious minority girls are the targets of kidnappings and forced conversions, as textbooks and school curriculums teach intolerance and bigotry, further aggravating tensions between these groups. Several incidents of destruction and burning of Christian, Hindu, Sikh, and Ahmadi 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 world's largest oil and gas reserves. These resources contribute to 69% 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. 50% of the population has diseases from 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. Still, it 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

This past year, the World Sindhi Congress (WSC) dedicated its efforts towards advocacy, outreach, and humanitarian aid. Globally, we organized and participated in numerous protests, petitions, fundraisers, and seminars. Our primary focus was to advocate and raise awareness about the human rights violations in Sindh. In addition, our media presence was significantly expanded, facilitating improved communication with members and advocates. This included numerous statements, press releases, and interviews.



Sindh's prevailing scenario is deeply concerning. Marked by continuous human rights violations, it's an environment riddled

with fear, oppression, enforced disappearances, and unchecked extrajudicial killings. Indigenous Sindhi communities suffer the brunt of these abuses, facing the infringement on their lands, resource misappropriation, and loss of livelihoods. Religious extremism is rising, compelling Sindhi Hindus and other religious minorities to flee the province. Abductions and forced conversions of Hindu girls and women remain pressing issues.

The mismanagement of natural resources, coupled with the impacts of manmade climate change, led to a significant humanitarian crisis this year. Starting in June, Pakistan experienced severe monsoon rains, which escalated into high floods, causing widespread destruction. Sindh bore the heaviest brunt: over 1.823 million houses were damaged, with 742,695 destroyed; 414,869 livestock were lost, and 3,773,707 crops were devastated. This disaster impacted over 11 million people in Sindh, causing disruptions in education and healthcare and leading to massive displacements.

In 2022, WSC representatives met with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) to address the issue of disappearances in Sindh. We also attended virtual sessions at the United Nations on widespread human rights abuses in the region. Collaborating with organizations such as AAPG and Voice for Sindhi Missing Persons, we amplified human rights issues within the international community. Seminars were a primary medium, allowing the World Sindhi Congress to educate and engage our community members.

The progress made this year is a testament to the commitment of our members and fellow human rights defenders. We sincerely appreciate and honor their relentless efforts. The World Sindhi Congress extends its gratitude to all human rights advocates, especially those who assisted during the flood crisis.

As Pakistan's democracy continues to be stifled and human rights issues persist, the resulting instability presents a significant regional security threat. WSC remains committed to amplifying our advocacy efforts in the upcoming year. We aim to strengthen our outreach in collaboration with oppressed nations within Pakistan and global non-governmental organizations. With your continued support, we aspire to work even more closely with the United Nations and various international governments to champion human rights in Sindh.

### **Accomplishments**



#### WSC Hosts 34th International Conference on Sindh on 19 November 2022

The World Sindhi Congress organized the 34th annual World Sindh Conference on 19 November 2022 in London, UK. Attendees traveled from the United States, Canada, Europe, India, Great Britain, and beyond to participate. Topics included national determination and the lasting impacts of the monsoon flooding in Sindh.

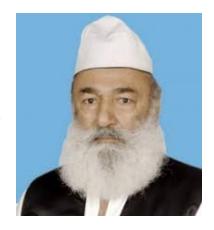


# US Congressman Brad Sherman Gives Statement on Sindh on 30 November 2022

US Congressman Brad Sherman gave a statement on the ongoing situation in Sindh, discussing the harm caused by forced conversions, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings of Sindhi people. He also wrote about the devastating effects of the floods and committed to continuing to work to secure US support for those affected by the floods.

# UK Government Sanctions Mian Mithu on 11 December 2022

One year after the UK's All Parties Parliamentary Committee for Pakistani Minorities released its report on 'Abductions, Forced Conversions and Forced Marriages of Religious Minority Women and Girls in Pakistan,' the UK government has sanctioned Mian Mithu for his role in coordinating the forced conversions of religious minority girls. WSC members have worked tirelessly to submit briefs on the abductions and forced conversions of Sindhi Hindu girls and advocated for the UK government to take action to protect Sindhi religious minorities.





# Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Responds to WSC Petition on 17 December 2022

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Hon' Mélanie Joly responded to a parliamentary petition filed by WSC Canada and sponsored by MP Garnett Genuis about the Notal Lal case and human rights abuses in Sindh. A letter responding to the petition asserted that "the promotion and protection of human rights, including the rights of the child, freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression, is an integral part of Canada's foreign policy. It is also a priority in Canada's engagement with Pakistan. The

High Commission of Canada to Pakistan is aware of and following the Notan Lal case in collaboration with like-minded countries."

# WSC Delegation Attends United Nations UPR Session on 30 January 2023

World Sindhi Congress representatives attended the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review Session on Pakistan in Geneva.



### WSC Attends United Nations on 15 March 2023

A WSC delegation presented to the United Nations on violating human rights in Sindh, including the killing of political activists, the forced conversion of Sindhi girls, and the rehabilitation of flood victims.



#### WSC Delegation Meets with WGEID on 17 May 2023

A delegation from the World Sindhi Congress, Voice for Missing Persons of Sindh, and relatives of the missing met with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances during its 130th Session in Geneva. The UN WGEID intends to visit Pakistan to assess the extent of enforced disappearances and speak with victims, relatives, and human rights organizations.



#### WSC Delegation Presents to UNHRC starting on 27 September 2023

Dr Lakhu Luhana, Secretary General of the World Sindhi Congress, Dr Hidayat Bhutto, Maria Wright, and Hafeezan Wadhio presented on behalf of the World Sindhi Congress at the 54th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. They spoke on ongoing land-grabbing schemes in Sindh, persecution of Sindhi Hindus, the forced conversion of Sindhi Hindu girls, and the destruction of the historical Mountain of the Karoonjhar.



#### **Activities**

# WSC Calls for Justice in Murder Case on 22 October 2022

WSC joined in calling for justice for two young Sindhi workers killed in the Machar Colony of Karachi and called for an investigation and accountability for victims of violence in Sindh.





### WSC Condemns the Arrests of Sindhi Students Celebrating Sindhi Culture Day on 1 December 2022

World Sindhi Congress condemns the filing of an FIR against 300 students at Sindh University, including the leaders of various student organizations, for celebrating Sindhi Cultural Day.

### SBF Conference on International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2022

Human rights defenders and leaders from the World Sindhi Congress, the Baloch Human Rights Council, and the Baloch National Movement attended a conference in London organized by the Sindhi Baloch Forum. The discussion topics included human rights abuses



of the Pakistani and Iranian authorities in Sindh and Balochistan.



# WSC International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide 9 December 2023

Dr. Lakhu Luhana, the Secretary-General of the World Sindhi Congress, attended the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide on 9th December 2023 in Brussels. The Secular Forum of Bangladesh organized the event. Dr Luhana participated in the protest and spoke at the conference in Brussels Press Club.



### WSC Honors International Human Rights Day in Toronto 10 December 2022

WSC Canada joined the Baloch Human Rights Council Canada and Pashtun Council Canada in Toronto to honor International Human Rights Day.

### WSC Canada Celebrates 119th Birth Anniversary of GM Syed on 15 January 2023

Members of the WSC Canada Chapter invited Sindhi, Baloch, Pashtun, and Kashmiri community members to commemorate Saeen GM Syed and his legacy in honor of his 119th birthday anniversary in Peterborough, Canada.



#### WSC Condemns Violence Against Activists in Sann on 17 January 2023

The World Sindhi Congress strongly condemned the firing by rangers and police on the peaceful participants in Sann, who came from across Sindh to pay tribute to Sain GM Syed on his 119th Birthday Anniversary. It also condemned the abductions of Jeay Sindh movement workers and called for the release of all targeted.

### WSC UK Celebrates 119th Birth Anniversary of GM Syed on 21 January 2023

WSC UK hosted an event honoring GM Syed in Sheffield, UK. Participants came together from the UK to hear speeches and celebrate his legacy.



### WSC Hosts GM Syed and His Legacy Event on 21 January 2023

WSC organized a virtual event on Twitter Space honoring the legacy of GM Syed and the impact of his work on connecting Sindhis across the world.

# WSC and GM Syed Memorial Committee Announce GM Syed Conference on 22 January 2023

WSC members and the GM Syed Memorial Committee gathered in Houston, USA, to commemorate the 119th Birthday Anniversary of GM Syed. Participants honored his ongoing legacy with speeches, poetry, and the announcement of the first-ever International Conference on GM Syed, to be held in 2024.



### Digital Census in Pakistan. Challenges, Opportunities, & Threats to the Sindhi Nation on 11 February 2023

WSC organized a virtual panel of experts to discuss the impacts of the digital census on the Sindhi population. Political leaders, intellectuals, and advocates spoke about the undercounting of Sindhis in the census and what can be done for the future.





# WSC Organizes Protest against Enforced Disappearances on 19 February 2023

WSC UK organized a protest against the rising numbers of enforced disappearances of Sindhi and Baloch political and civil society activists. Protestors called for the immediate release of the missing, and a WSC delegation submitted a petition to the British Prime Minister requesting him to press upon Pakistan to stop enforced appearances of Sindhi people and release all the missing persons.

# Interactive Talk on Human Rights in Pakistan on 14 March 2023

WSC Secretary General Dr. Lakhu Luhana participated as one of the speakers in the Global Human Rights Defense's Interactive Talk on Human Rights in Pakistan event in Geneva, Switzerland.



# Assemblea Nacional Catalana Hosts National Self-Determination Event on 20 April 2023



WSC Chairperson Dr. Rubina Greenwood was invited as a speaker for an event organized by the ANC titled "The Struggle for Self-Determination and Independence Around the World: Success, Resilience, and Survival." Dr. Greenwood spoke in Barcelona about the right to selfdetermination and the history of the struggle for independence in Sindh.

# WSC Remembrance Day - Heroes of Sindh on 13 May 2023

WSC members gathered in Bradford, UK, to celebrate the lives of Sindh's brave sons and daughters. Members and young people gave speeches, read poetry, and gave presentations.



# World Sindhi Congress (WSC) Pays Tribute to Raj Kumar Wanjara on 29 May 2023



WSC held a commemorative event on May 28th at the Sindhi Centre in London to honor the life and struggle of Raj Kumar Wanjara. Attendees reflected on his work to end the forced conversions and persecution of Sindhi Hindus in Pakistan and the broader struggle for the rights of Sindhi people.

# Human Rights Film Festival: Women's Rights Edition on 30 June 2023

Global Human Rights Defense (GHRD) hosted a film festival centering on women's rights at The Hague, Netherlands, where WSC Chairperson Dr. Rubina Greenwood participated as one of the speakers. Dr. Greenwood spoke about forced conversions in Sindh and screened the WSC documentary 'Stolen Daughters of Sindh.'



# Interactive Discussion on 'Situation in Pakistan - What the Oppressed Nations Should Do? on 30 June 2023



WSC held an interactive discussion event on 30th June 2023 in Peterborough, Canada. Presenters from around the world and multiple diaspora communities came together to discuss actions for the worsening situation for minorities in Pakistan and work to build unity for the future.



### President of the Sindh United Party Visits WSC on 5 August 2023

World Sindhi Congress hosted the president of the Sindh United Party, Zain Shah, at an event in Sheffield, UK. Attendees from across the UK came to hear speeches about Mr. Shah's life and career, listen to him speak about the political situation in Sindh, and connect.

# 14<sup>th</sup> August Day Protest in London on 14 August 2023

WSC members participated in a protest organized by the Sindhi Baloch Forum against human rights atrocities in Pakistan against Sindhi and Baloch people. They submitted a petition calling for the UK to condemn enforced disappearances and forced conversions.





#### Virtual Webinar on Census Held on 20 August 2023

WSC organized a virtual panel titled "Digital Census and Challenges to Sindh's demographic," where political activists and intellectuals spoke on the failure of the 2023 census and how it misrepresented the population of Sindh.

# An Evening with Prof. Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed on 29 August 2023

WSC Canada organized an interactive session with the renowned historian, social scientist, and author of six books, Prof. Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed, visiting from Sweden at Sindh House, Peterborough, Canada. Dr. Ahmed spoke to Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashtun, Saraiki, and Kashmiri attendees about the history of the creation of Pakistan.



# WSC Attends Human Rights Conference in Washington DC, 19 September 2023.



Dr. Rubina Shaikh, the Chair of WSC, attended the Human Rights Conference organized by the Hindu American Foundation on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. She was part of the panel and presented the case of violence against Sindhi Hindus and Bonded Labor in Sindh. She talked about how the Pakistani military uses various techniques to harass Sindhi Hindus in Pakistan to make Pakistan a Puritan state. She said the Military and other securities agencies are supporting local landlords and criminals to harass Sindhi Hindus and put blind eyes to the bonded labor cases in Sindh.

#### WSC Organizes Protest for Human Rights at UNHRC 26 September 2023



World Sindhi Congress organized a protest during the 54th Session of the UNHRC in Geneva to raise awareness for the continuing human rights violations inflicted upon the Sindhi people. Protestors highlighted enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, persecution of religious minorities, and the plundering of resources in Sindh.

### WSC Organizes Protest Against Marhi Jalbani Killings in London on 3 October 2023

WSC members and supporters protested in London against the Sakrand Incident and other acts of violence against Sindhis.





### WSC and SANA Organize Protest Against Marhi Jalbani Killings in Houston on 3 October 2023

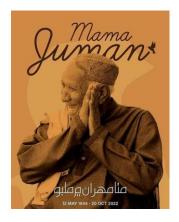
WSC, SANA, and JQSM members gathered before the Pakistani Consulate in Houston, USA, to protest the killing of 8 civilians by Pakistani law enforcement agents on 28 September 2023.

# WSC Organizes Protests in Toronto on 3 October 2023

WSC members organized simultaneous protests in Toronto and London against the killings of civilians in Sakrand and other extrajudicial killings in Sindh.



#### In Memoriam



# WSC Mourns Mama Juman Darbadar on 20 October 2022

WSC mourns the passing of poet and singer Mama Juman Darbadar. His poetry and dedication to the Sindhi nation continue to inspire and provide courage to many now and in the future.



# WSC Grieves Dr. Zarina Memon on 16 November 2021

The World Sindhi Congress expresses deep sorrow over the sudden demise of Dr. Zarina Memon, a distinguished professor of Sindh University, the wife of Sindh's respected Asim Khagizi, and sister of the leader of World Sindhi Congress, Farhan Kaghzi.



# WSC Mourns the Death of Mukhtar Ahmad Zaur on 12 December 2022

The World Sindhi Congress expresses its deep sorrow and condolences on the untimely demise of Nawaz Khan Zaur's brother, Mukhtar Ahmad Zaur.



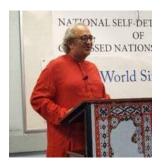
#### WSC Grieves Latif Afridi on 17 January 2023

The World Sindhi Congress offers deep condolences to the family and friends of Latif Afridi, who was murdered on 17 January 2023. A renowned legal expert, he will be remembered for his work against fascism, dictatorship, and oppression to achieve justice and rights for ordinary people. He was a staunch advocate for the rights of the nations of Pakistan.



### WSC Honors Sunder Agnani on 11 April 2023

The World Sindhi Congress grieves the loss of Sunder Agnani, a playwright, cartoonist, poet, and author. He worked to celebrate and share the Sindhi language in India and won numerous awards for his Sindhi language literature. 2007, he was presented with the "GM Syed Memorial Award."



### WSC Mourns Tarek Fatah on 24 April 2023

The World Sindhi Congress is deeply saddened at the death of Tarek Fatah. He worked tirelessly on behalf of the historical, political, and human rights of the Sindhi people and minorities in Pakistan. He spoke at the WSC Conference in Canada in 2022.



#### WSC Grieves Raj Kumar on 30 April 2023

The World Sindhi Congress expresses deep condolences for the news of Raj Kumar's death. He was a passionate advocate against the forced conversion of Sindhi Hindu girls. His fight began when his niece Rinkel was forcibly converted, and he continued to raise his voice against this cruel practice until his last breath.



### WSC Mourns Amar Junejo on 30 April, 2023

The World Sindhi Congress is deeply saddened over the passing of Amar Junejo. He is remembered as a lifelong political worker of the Jeay Sindh movement. He joined the movement alongside Saeen G.M Syed and held various positions within the Jeay Sindh Mahaz over several decades.



#### WSC Honors Gul Hassan Kalmati on 16 May 2023

The World Sindhi Congress expresses condolences to the friends and family of Gul Hassan Kalmati. A renowned writer, historian, and civil rights activist, he worked towards preserving the history of Karachi. He was a member of Jeay Sindh Mahaz. He later worked with the Sindh Indigenous Alliance, tirelessly advocating for the rights of the native Sindhi people and raising awareness about the occupation of their land by Bahria Town.



### WSC Condemns Killing of Jan Muhammad Mehr on 13 August 2023

The World Sindhi Congress strongly condemns and mourns the murder of Sindhi Journalist Jan Muhammad Mehr. The killing of Jan Muhammad Mehr is a loss to his family and the journalistic community and a massive blow to freedom of expression and transparency.

#### WSC Mourns the Loss of Sindhi American Leader Bashir Shahani



In mid-October 2023, the Sindhi American community mourned the loss of a remarkable individual, Mr. Bashir Shahani, who passed away in Wharton, TX. He was a dedicated member of the World Sindhi Congress and served as the Secretary for the G M Syed Memorial Committee. Mr. Shahani was a lifelong admirer and follower of Saeen G M Syed and actively participated in the Jeay Sindh Movements. His remains were sent to Sindh for burial in

Sann, near the resting place of Saeen G M Syed. Sindhi communities across various cities held memorial events to honor and remember the contributions of Mr. Shahani.

### **World Sindhi Congress Media Presence**

WSCs connect Sindhis around the world with social media. WSC shares events, news, and updates daily across eight platforms, including Facebook, X (Formerly Twitter), YouTube, and LinkedIn. World Sindhi Congress continues to grow its social media presence and strengthen the international Sindhi network.

### SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH



**2021:** 131,428 **2022:** 131,275 **2023:** 144,292



**2021:** 5,404 **2022:** 5,642 **2023:** 5,570



**2021:** 12,724 **2022:** 13,404 **2023:** 15,559