



General Assembly

Distr.: General
XX February 2023

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-second session

27 February–31 March 2023

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[5 February 2023]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Baloch Lives Matter: The State-Sponsored Crackdown on Baloch Activists

Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment would like to draw the attention of the Council to the repressive measures against Baloch social and political activists in Pakistan.

There is documentary proof of the brutal treatment of Baloch activists in various parts of Pakistan. For example, in June 2022, several videos making the rounds on social media showed the police manhandling and forcefully dispersing peaceful Baloch protesters in Karachi. In this demonstration, people from the civil society, including women, took to the streets near the main gate of the Sindh Assembly against the alleged abduction of two Baloch students, Doda Baloch and Ghamshad Baloch, by law enforcement agencies. They took the two Karachi University's Philosophy Department students away from their homes on June 7.

This incident was so heinous that Amnesty International issued a statement condemning the use of excessive force by the police to disperse peaceful protesters. In addition, human rights organizations and Amnesty International condemned the violent crackdown on families demanding answers to the whereabouts of their loved ones. While calling for swift accountability for using excessive force on the protesters, they stated that these actions only compound the cruelty of the heinous practice of enforced disappearances.

Balochistan, Pakistan's geographically largest but poorest province, has been the centre of recurring independence movements since 1948. In the ongoing movement, enforced disappearances in the province are rampant and used as a tool by security agencies to counter the resistance movement. Various human rights organizations, including Voice for the Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP), Baloch Human Rights Council, the Human Rights Council of Balochistan and many nationalist political parties, documented the number of missing persons in Balochistan exceeding five thousand. These organizations confirmed that from January 2022 to December 2022, 367 persons went missing, and 79 bodies of extrajudicially killed missing persons were identified. While this saga of enforced disappearances in Balochistan has been continuing for decades without respite, the increase in abductions of women and the subsequent crackdown is very concerning.

Pakistan is a party to ICCPR, CEDAW, and CRC. Thus, it is obligated to provide due process of law and protection of fundamental rights, including life and liberty, to all its citizens, especially vulnerable groups such as women and children.

We want to stress that as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Pakistan must uphold the highest standards in the Promotion and protection of human rights. The perpetrators of heinous crimes must not be immune to any punishment. We call upon the Council to immediately intervene and address the continuous persecution of Baloch people in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

1. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1694760>

2. https://twitter.com/amnestysasia/status/1536578336704581633?ref_src=twsrc%25Etfw%257Ctwcamp%25Etweetembed%257Ctwterm%25SE1536578336704581633%257Ctwgr%25EfcObb7d4665c6fcc76c79d96542a3ec206f4fcf6%257Ctwcon%25Es1_c10&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dawn.com%2Fnews%2F1694760

3. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/06/as-baloch-women-raise-their-voices-the-state-cracks-down/>