



General Assembly

Distr.: General
XX January 2023

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-second session

27 February–31 March 2023

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

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.

[23 January 2023]

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

Written statement on the continued human rights violations in Balochistan.

The Centre for Women Empowerment and Gender Justice would like to draw the council's attention to Pakistan's widespread and systematic human rights violations in Balochistan.

Since 2002, the Pakistani state has committed massacres and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan as a policy matter. With the help of their auxiliary militias, death squads and religious outfits, military and civil intelligence agencies are involved in forced disappearances, illegal detentions of Baloch intellectuals, and social and political activists in thousands. Dumping the victims' bodies of enforced disappearances with visible marks of inhuman torture has become a routine matter in Balochistan. The verified numbers of extrajudicially killed and missing persons during the last 17 years exceed 15 thousand. Nearly a million people have been internally displaced. Thousands have fled the country and now live as refugees in various countries.

Why is all this happening in Balochistan? To understand this, understanding the context of the Baloch-Pakistan relationship is imperative.

After the second world war, the British Empire withdrew from India. Still, for the region's national entities, such as the Baloch, Sindhis, and Pashtuns, only there was a change of colonial masters. They were incorporated against their will into a newly created client state of Pakistan created by the colonial power.

With the newly created state facing a crisis of legitimacy, its ruling establishment employed numerous socio-cultural, political, and militant strategies to eliminate everything that might suggest a multinational picture for the state. As a result, state violence became necessary. The state established a ramified military structure with its affiliated political and religious outfits to combat the national aspirations of the subjugated nations.

Since 2005, the dumping of mutilated bodies of missing persons has increased exponentially. The security agencies physically eliminated the Baloch society's cream in a planned way. They are carrying out the abduction of political activists, keeping them in illegal detention, inflicting inhuman torture and then dumping their mutilated bodies in remote and desolate areas. They are doing this in collaboration with their local agents. These hired agents are primarily anti-social and extremist religious elements organized by state security agencies in various parts of Balochistan. They are popularly known in Balochistan as the army's 'death squads'.

The "kill and dump" policy is among the most gruesome actions of the security forces in Balochistan. Various human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, reported that there had been an upsurge in the number of missing persons and mutilated bodies in recent months. According to data collected by the Baloch Human Rights Council (BHRC), the "kill and dump policy" had brought brutality in the province to an unprecedented level. BHRC sources verified that:

1. In January 2022, 48 persons went missing while nine were extrajudicially killed or their mutilated bodies found.
2. In February 2022, the number of missing persons was 29, while seven were extrajudicially killed or mutilated bodies recovered.
3. In March 2022, the cases of enforced disappearances were 26, while cases of extrajudicial killings and mutilated bodies were 11.
4. In April 2022, the cases of enforced disappearances were 33, and the number of extrajudicial killings and mutilated bodies was 14.

5. In May 2022, the number of enforced disappearances was 27, and the number of extrajudicial killings or mutilated bodies was 10.

6. In June 2022, the number of enforced disappearances was 21. The number of verified mutilated bodies of missing persons is four, while 55 cases of mutilated bodies found in Lahore are being confirmed. However, it is believed that they are from the missing persons picked up by the security forces in Balochistan on various occasions.

7. In July 2022, 21 persons became the victims of enforced disappearances; eight were killed extrajudicially. In addition, three mutilated bodies dumped by the security forces were unrecognizable.

8. Thirty-four persons became the victims of enforced disappearances, and the security forces extra-judicially killed 5 in Balochistan in August 2022.

9. BHRC verified 13 cases of enforced disappearances during September 2022.

10. In October 2022, the Pakistani security forces picked up 35 persons from various parts of Balochistan and Sindh. However, their whereabouts are not known. Moreover, 15 bodies of the victims of enforced disappearances were found in different places.

11. BHRC verified 23 cases of enforced disappearances in Balochistan during November 2022

12. BHRC verified 36 cases of forcibly disappeared persons and one extrajudicial killing during December 2022 in Balochistan

The most disgusting aspect of the phenomena of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings is the harassment of family members who endeavour to know the whereabouts of their loved ones. The family members and legal personnel who dared to knock at the Pakistan courts' door are told in unambiguous terms the dire consequences of their activities.

Plundering the Baloch wealth is another aspect of the human rights violations in Balochistan. The Baloch have been living in abject poverty because of Pakistan's ruthless exploitation of their natural resources. China has encroached on Balochistan for the previous two decades as a new colonial power. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a new collaborative project aiming at the economic exploitation of Baloch resources. Extraction and depletion of natural resources in the guise of developing Balochistan are the main objectives of CPEC. By all accounts, CPEC has become a corridor of death and destruction for the Baloch. Pakistani security forces have dismantled or burned hundreds of villages and settlements to secure the proposed CPEC rail and road links from Gwadar to China. As a result, thousands of the Baloch are internally displaced, living in miserable conditions in various parts of the country.

Pakistan is waging war in Balochistan without witnesses. Balochistan has been an undeclared no-go area for international media and human rights organizations. Even the diplomats of donor countries, on whose donations Pakistan has sustained itself, cannot go to the interior of Balochistan. As a result, there has been a total blackout of what is happening in Balochistan.

In the face of heinous crimes being committed by the Pakistani security forces in Balochistan, it is imperative that:

1. The UN should establish a fact-finding mission to investigate the extrajudicial killings and mass disappearances of the Baloch political and social activists.

2. The UN should bring the perpetrators of the heinous crimes against humanity in Balochistan to justice by initiating cases against them in the international court of justice in The Hague.
