



Pakistan **Monthly Report** September 2020

Christian Worker Sentenced to Death in Blasphemy Case



On September 8th, the Court of Lahore has sentenced the Christian man, former factory worker Asif Parvaiz, to death on blasphemy charges. Mr. Parvaiz has been in custody since 2013.

In 2013 Mr. Parvaiz supervisor Saeed Ahmad lodged an FIR against him at the Green Town police under Sections 295-B and 295-C of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and 25-D of the Telegraph Act. The factory supervisor accused Pervez Masih of sending him blasphemous text messages on his mobile phone. While Mr. Parvaiz denied the charges, the defense counsel argued that the complainant used to persuade the convict to embrace Islam. The defense further added that Mr. Parvaiz also had to quit the job due to his supervisor's constant pressure. The defense further argued that the suspect was falsely implicated in the case with mala fide intention. It would not be the first time an innocent person falls prey to misuse of the blasphemy laws. These laws are often misused to persecute minorities or even against Muslims to settle personal rivalries.

The defense counsel announced he would file an appeal against the conviction in the Lahore High Court. Additional District and Sessions Judge Mansoor Ahmad Qureshi, who found the factory worker guilty of the offense under Section 295-C, sentenced him to death and imposed a fine of PKR 50,000. The judge also sentenced him to three-year imprisonment under Section 25-D of the Telegraph Act. According to the court order, the factory worker will first serve a three-year prison term for "misusing" his phone to send the derogatory text message, and after that, he would be hanged to death

Source: Dawn News

(<https://www.dw.com/en/pakistan-lahore-court-sentences-christian-to-death-on-blasphemy-charges/a-54856401>)

It reads: "Whoever wilfully defiles, damages or desecrates a copy of the Holy Quran or of an extract therefrom or uses it in any derogatory manner or for any unlawful purpose shall be punishable with imprisonment for life who punishes blasphemy against any recognized religion, providing penalties ranging from a fine to death.
 any person transmits or causes to be transmitted by telegraph a message which he knows or has reason to believe to be false and fabricated, or a message which is indecent or obscene, he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.
 A body (1952) active in five continents, it is comprising of 3 eminent judges and lawyers from all regions of the world, promote and protects human rights through the rule of law by using its unique legal expertise to develop and strengthen national and international justice systems.
 Bareilly constituted the majority of Sunnis who migrated to Pakistan from the Indian provinces of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, following partition in 1947.
 is an Islamic revivalist movement within Sunni (primarily Hanafi) Islam that formed around the Darul Uloom Islamic seminary in the town of Deoband, India Meaning disbeliever.
 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Pakistan Movement for Justice is a centrist Pakistani political party and current ruling party of Pakistan.
 Frontier Crimes Regulation is not effective anymore.
 Petitions against the conviction of suspected militants, petitions filed by convicts or their close family members for the rejection of conviction and release of convicts.
 Social movement for Pashtun human rights based in Khyber, Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.
 Exit control list, a system of border control maintained by the Government of Pakistan under Exit from Pakistan.
 An internally displaced person is someone who is forced to flee his or her home but who remains within his or her countries' borders.

Christian Activists Stage Hunger Strike Against Abuse of Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws



On September 9th 2020, Shabbir Shafqat, the Chairman of the National Christian Party, led a group of supporters in a hunger strike in front of the Karachi Press Club. The demonstration condemned both the abuse of the Pakistans blasphemy laws and the death sentence awarded to Asif Pervaiz.

Mr. Shafqat took and stand for Mr. Pervaiz and stated, "We strongly condemn the capital punishment awarded to Asif Pervaiz, who is being punished for refusing to convert to Islam," he further added, "there was no evidence to convict Asif. No proper investigation was carried out to establish the facts. Police simply acted on false accusations from the complainant.

Currently, 25 Christians are imprisoned on blasphemy charges in Pakistan, including Asif Pervaiz. These 25 Christians are defendants in 22 blasphemy cases represented at various levels of Pakistan's judicial process.

Source: Persecution

<https://www.persecution.org/2020/09/13/Christian-activists-stage-hunger-strike-abuse-pakistans-blasphemy-laws>

Blasphemy Suspect Remanded in Police Custody



In the FIR the SHO claimed that a video had gone viral wherein the suspect could be seen making false claim of his being a prophet. — AFP/File

On September 8th, Bashir Mastan was produced before a judicial magistrate amid tight security and was brought to the court in an armored personnel carrier. The investigation officer said that he was arrested after his video went viral on social media, which had resulted in public outcry. He requested the court for physical remand of the suspect to interrogate him further. The court remanded the suspect into three-day police custody with the direction to produce him on September 11th again.

The FIR of the occurrence registered with the Inqilab Police station in Peshawar on September 7th claimed that a video had gone viral wherein the suspect could be seen making a false claim of his being a prophet. The FIR was registered under sections 295-C (derogatory remarks regarding the Holy Prophet) and 298 (uttering words to wound religious feelings) of the Pakistan Penal Code and section 15 of the Arms Act.

source: Dawn

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1578686/blasphemy-suspect-remanded-in-police-custody>

Witch hunt on Journalists September 2020

UNHCHR Calls for Protection of Journalists In Pakistan



(Geneva, September 8th) In a statement, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet urged Pakistan's government to take concrete steps to ensure the protection of journalists and human rights defenders who have been subjected to threats in the country. She emphasized that most cases of violence and killings of journalists and rights activists have not been investigated. She expressed her concern at numerous incitement instances to violence, both online and offline, against journalists and human rights defenders in Pakistan, particularly against women and minorities. In her statement, Bachelet emphasized that especially worrying were accusations of blasphemy, which can put accused individuals at imminent risk of violence. According to the statement issued in Geneva, Pakistani women journalists last month had publicly warned of what they described as a "coordinated campaign" of social media attacks against those who have been critical of government policies. Bachelet also cited the case of journalist and human rights defender Marvi Sirmed who had received numerous messages on social media containing highly derogatory and violent language, including gender-based slurs and death threats. The UN High Commissioner said that accusations of blasphemy on social media were followed by actual police complaints filed against Sirmed, whose personal details were also revealed on Twitter.

Bachelet further referred to cases of four journalists and bloggers killed last year. Among them was Arooj Iqbal, a woman who was shot dead in Lahore as she sought to launch her local newspaper, she added. She also expressed concern about the recent killing of journalist Shaheena Shaheen in Kech district on September 5th, when her husband killed her. The UN High Commissioner called for prompt, effective, thorough, and impartial investigations to ensure accountability in cases of violence and killings. Michelle Bachelet also called on the Pakistani leadership to unequivocally condemn incitement to violence against religious minorities, adding an apparent increase in the use of blasphemy laws for personal or political score-settling.

The Pakistani leadership should encourage respect for diversity of opinion, the statement said. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also urged the Pakistani government to address impediments to the active protection of the right to freedom of expression, including by carrying out legal reforms such as those recommended by the UN Human Rights Committee and other international human rights mechanisms.

Source: Voicepk : <https://voicepk.net/protect-journalists-activists-facing-threats/>

Cybercrime Cases Against Senior Journalists



On September 11th, Bilal Farooqi, an editor with The Express Tribune, was charged with spreading hatred and defaming the military after a factory worker complained about the journalist's social media posts allegedly criticizing the Pakistani Army, according to media reports. He was later released. Soon after that, the police in the district of Jhelum registered a complaint against AbarAlam, a senior journalist and former chairman of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), who was accused by a lawyer of publishing allegedly derogatory tweets against Prime Minister Imran Khan and state institutions.

On September 14th, an FIR was registered against journalist Asad Toor for posting "negative propaganda against the state, Pakistani institutions, and the Pakistan Army" on his social media account

The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists has condemned the allegations in both cases as "fabricated" and "are concocted," local media reported.

AbarAlam

Former PEMRA chief and journalist AbarAlam called the case against him a work of a fascist regime that was trampling the fundamental right to freedom of expression. He said there had been nothing in his tweets that could have been derogatory and defamatory towards the Pakistan military and the Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said it was the right of every citizen to express his views. The former PEMRA chief said he did not know the complainant Naveed Ahmed who, according to the FIR, was president of the local chapter of the Insaf Lawyers Forum. He said that the complainant might have used his connection in the government to have the case registered.

Bilal Farooqi

Journalist Bilal Farooqi said the complainant in the case was an unknown person. Farooqi appeared in the Court of the Judicial Magistrate South. The court reprimanded police officials for the insertion of incorrect sections in the FIR. The court questioned how and whose orders the police officials register complaints, adding that if a correct FIR was not submitted next time, police officials would be sent to jail.

According to Jibran Nasir, a human rights activist, the case was another instance of media suppression adding that Bilal Farooqi was charged under PPC 500 and 505 which can be done without the provincial order or federal government or authorized officer. The complainant in Bilal Farooqi was one Javed Khan, who in the FIR is said to be a machine operator at a factory in Landhi.

Bilal Farooqi, who worked at the Express Tribune, was arrested from his home in DHA by Defence police on September 11th. He was released on bail in the early hours of September 12th on personal surety after the provincial government's intervention. The Young Journalists of Pakistan staged a protest outside the Karachi press club in support of Bilal Farooqi. In a statement, the Karachi Union of Journalists (KUJ) said that Bilal's arrest was part of a nefarious and concerted campaign to gag free and independent voices. Human Rights Commission Pakistan (HRCP) also condemned the filing of a sedition case against a renowned journalist and former chairman, Absar Alam.

We believe this is yet another attempt by the government to silence any dissent voices and curb freedom of expression.

Asad Toor

In a separate incident, an FIR was registered against journalist Asad Toor for posting "negative propaganda against the state, Pakistani institutions, and the Pakistan Army" on his social media account, it emerged on September 14th. Toor, who is based in Islamabad, shared a copy of the FIR registered on a complaint by Hafiz Ehtesham Ahmed, a Rawalpindi resident. In the last few days, the latter claimed that Toor had used derogatory language for high-level government institutions, including the Pakistan Army, which is a grave crime according to the law. The FIR was registered under sections 499 (defamation), 500 (punishment for defamation) and 505 (statements conducting to public mischief) of the Pakistan Penal Code and section 11 (hate speech), 20 (offenses against the dignity of a person) and 37 (unlawful online content) of the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) 2016.

The case against Toor thus became the third such complaint to be registered against a journalist in the past few days.

Source: Viocepk.net

<http://voicepk.net/2020/09/12/cybercrime-cases-against-senior-journalists-widely-condemned/>

PFUJ Concerned Over Fictitious Cases Against 49 Journalists

On September 29th, the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) expressed serious concern and anger over fictitious, fabricated, and concocted cases against 49 journalists and social media activists on frivolous charges under Pakistan Electronic Crime Act (PECA) by FIA. In a joint statement, President PFUJ Shahzada Zulfiqar and Secretary-General Nasir Zaidi called upon the government to immediately withdraw cases against all journalists and social media activists. Otherwise, there will be a countrywide protest against such a brutal, ill-conceived, and ill-designed act by authorities on fictitious charges.

PFUJ leadership urged the Parliament of Pakistan, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and the international community and international human rights organizations to take urgent notice of the worst ever situation and working conditions in a country like Pakistan. "We have tackled and countered such conditions and high handedness against media and journalists community in the past. Defeated forces of suppression and anti-media and freedom of speech and expression agents, and we are committed to defeat them even today for safeguarding our constitutional rights, they warned.

Amnesty International also slammed the attempt to gag the media. "Intimidating journalists through the draconian Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act is the latest and most brazen attack on freedom of expression in the country. We call upon authorities to withdraw these charges immediately," it said.

A few days prior, on the 25th September, Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari refuted reports that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had registered cases against journalists and rights activists under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016. She urged anyone with contrary evidence in terms of FIRs to inform her to follow up. The minister responded to a tweet by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). It was alarmed by reports that the FIA registered cases against 49 journalists and social media activists under PECA. Amnesty International had also reacted to the news reports, calling upon authorities to immediately withdraw the alleged charges.

It needs to be noted that: At least 91 attacks on journalists were recorded in Pakistan between May 2019 and April 2020, according to Freedom Network Pakistan.

Source: the News

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/720376-pfuj-concerned-over-fictitious-cases-against-49-journalists>

Enforced disappearances September 2020

Government Official Undergoes Enforced Disappearance



On the night of September 3rd, Sajid Godal, a former journalist and the joint director of Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, hereinafter mentioned as SECP, went missing from Islamabad.

According to his family, on the night of 3 September, Gondal visited a family-owned dairy farm in Chak Shahzad, but the farm staff said he left later in the evening. According to the family, the SECP official may have left the farm, but he never arrived home. Gondal's wife submitted a complaint of the incident in the Shazad Town police station, expressing suspicion that her husband had been" kidnapped by unidentified persons.

Bring back Sajid Gondal was the top trend on Twitter in Pakistan after reports of him going missing started circulation on social media (September 3rd)

Human Rights Minister Shireen Marazi noticed the incident and said in a tweet that the police have been directed to register an FIR. Even Amnesty International South Asia expressed concern over the incident and urged authorities to establish Gondal's whereabouts immediately.

On September 4th, Sajid Gondal's mother, Asmat Bibi, approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC), seeking her son's recovery from unknown abductors. The petition expressed apprehensions that her son may be put to mental and physical torture. During the hearing of the petition, the court expressed concern over a rise in cases of enforced disappearances in Islamabad and remarked that impunity in case of alleged abductions and failure of the state in protecting citizens against this crime was intolerable.

The court ordered Gondal's production in the court. IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah warned that failure to do so would attract action against the interior secretary, the Chief Commissioner, and the Inspector General of Islamabad.

The court also directed that the matter be referred to the federal cabinet, stating that it should be taken up at the next cabinet meeting if Gondal is not found.

Following the court directive, the Islamabad Police registered a case against the the alleged abduction of Gondal.

Eventually, Gondal was recovered on September 8th. He took a Twitter to announce his return. Gondal was released near Rawat, a suburb of Islamabad, but those responsible for his abduction are yet to be held accountable

Source: Dawn News

(<https://www.dawn.com/news/print/1577896/>)

(<https://www.dawn.com/news/print/1578163/>)

Missing Person Released Due to Critical Condition, Dies in Karachi



On September 2nd, Hameed Anwar was released from detention of the Pakistan Army. When he was released, it was evident that he was subjected to torture. According to relatives, there were cigarette burns and other torture marks implemented on his body. Upon his release, he was in a critical condition and had to be shifted to a hospital in Karachi. Unfortunately, due to the severe torture, his body could not recover, and he died on September 5th in the hospital.

Hameed was abducted on August 25th and was shifted to an unknown location. However, this was not the first time Hameed has been abducted on the first occasion, he was detained by the Pakistan Army during a military operation in Balgather on March 14th, 2019, and later released after two days of torture. While confirming the incident, Baloch National Movement's information secretary, Dil Murad Baloch, said in a tweet that Hameed, a resident of AhuriBalgathar, had gone missing twice and lost his life due to severe torture in the second instance.

Source: Balochistan post

<https://thebalochistanpost.net/2020/09/missing-person-released-due-to-critical-condition-dies-in-karachi/>

Baloch Yakjehti Committee Karachi Supports Protests for Missing Abdul Majeed's Recovery



On September 8th, the representatives of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee Karachi said in a statement on that their committee supports the protests for missing Abdul Majeed Shahdad's recovery. They requested the public to participate in the protest, held on September 12th by his family.

On July 30th, Abdul Majeed Shahdad, a resident of Saakram in Hub Chowki, worked as a watchman at a mil to make a living for his family, when several armed persons, including two police personnel, detained Majeed and moved him to an unknown location. His whereabouts and condition remained unknown. Majeed's family was barred from filing a First Information Report in the Police station. They then pleaded the law enforcement agencies for the recovery of Majeed, but to no avail. His family then resorted to organizing a protest for his safe recovery on September 12th.

When an enforced disappearance occurs, it is not only the disappeared person who is a victim, but the whole family of that person can be classified as a victim. These families are living in indescribable agony while looking for their loved ones. The disappearance of a laborer like Majeed demonstrates that no one, regardless of which class they come from, is safe in Balochistan. This widespread insecurity puts a question mark on the state-run institutions.

Source: Balochistanpost

<https://thebalochistanpost.net/2020/09/baloch-yakjehti-committee-karachi-supports-protests-for-missing-abdul-majeeds-recovery/>

Baloch Killed through kill-and-dump policy, despite Pak Army's Confession Regarding Abduction



Hafizullah, a farmer by profession, went missing on August 30th, 2016, and was allegedly killed by the Pakistan army. His body was buried near a bridge in Chaghi.

Hafizullah's younger brother Naimatullah had said in a conference that the security forces had abducted his brother from his house in KiliQasim Khan. Hafizullah's mother, while speaking to BBC Urdu and the Voice Baloch Missing person camp in Quetta, alleged that a Pakistani army official, Major Naveed, had demanded 6.8 million rupees in ransom for her son. Despite the payment, Hafizullah was never recovered. The statement further said that it was claimed that Major Naveed would be court-martialed, but the military's announcement was met with suspicion from the Baloch nation and Pakistani journalists. ISPR announced in 2019 that the Chief of Army Staff Gen. Qamar JavedBajwa had upheld Major Naveed's sentence. Despite the conviction, Hafizullah was never released but was allegedly killed by the Army. The Army confessed his abduction. After that, they killed him through its kill-and-dump policy.

Hafizullah's homicide is a clear message if anyone tried to expose the ugly side of the Pakistani military establishment, he will pay the price with his life. The incidents of recovery of mutilated bodies and mass graves are not uncommon in Balochistan. Mass graves were discovered before in Tootak, Panjgur, DeraBugti, and Pishin areas of Balochistan, where according to reports, the victims of enforced disappearance were found buried. Baloch political activists claim that "Human rights situation in Balochistan has set alarm bells ringing for human rights activists as enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings continue for many years. International media and human rights bodies have been denied access to the affected areas by the government, while the victim families also blame Pakistan's military for human rights violations". Family members of hundreds of missing persons are on a sit-in protest for two decades in Quetta, capital of Balochistan, to demand the safe release of their loved ones and, in case of any criminal offense demanding the fundamental right of a fair trial

Source: Balochistanpost

<https://thebalochistanpost.net/2020/09/despite-the-confession-the-pakistani-army-killed-hafizullah-mohd-hassai-says-bnm/>

Family Reveals Details of Sana Baloch's Enforced Disappearance



Sitting in the Voice for Baloch Missing Persons camp in front of Quetta Press Club on Sunday, the family members disclosed the details of Sana Baloch's disappearance. Baloch, an MPhil student at Allama Iqbal Open University, went missing in May this year in Kharan. According to his family members, he was traveling on a bike to his hometown, Banap. During his travel, he was reportedly abducted by the Pakistani Military Intelligence (MI) on the way.

The family members said that they then approached the prominent tribal and political figures of their area—the latter directed them to Colonel Umer Farooq of the Pakistani military. Farooq reportedly confessed that Mr. Baloch was in their custody and said he would be released once the investigation is over. Fourth months after the confession, Sana Baloch remains missing.

Enforced disappearances constitute a significant issue in Balochistan and are aggravating overtime. According to statistics, thousands of Baloch and Pashtun remain missing from Balochistan. The Voice for Baloch Missing Persons, led by Mama Qadeer Baloch and Nasrullah Baloch, has been protesting against enforced disappearances and the safe recovery of Baloch missing persons in Quetta for than a decade now.

Source: Balochistan post

<https://thebalochistanpost.net/2020/09/despite-the-armys-confession-sana-baloch-remains-incommunicado/>

Islamabad High Court Concerned at Rising in Missing Persons



On September 14th, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) expressed concern over the increase in the number of cases of missing persons and observed that under the law, the only legitimate reason to make an arrest is for security reasons. Police, counterterrorism department, and the Federal Investigation Agency are all subjected to that law. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of the IHC stated that a citizen's detention by these law enforcement agencies other than to ensure law and order was illegal. He also mentioned that if it was any other agency, then the later noted, the federal government would be responsible for such illegality.

Justice Kayani also pointed out that the superintendent investigation had disclosed that about 50 cases of missing persons had been reported within Islamabad. He termed it alarming and reminded that the federal government was responsible for protecting citizens' life and dignity.

In the week of Mr. Gondal's abduction in that same week, another person went missing, Mr. Abdul Qadoos. After a petition was brought to the court seeking the recovery of Mr, Qadoos, Mr. Qadoos was released by unknown abductors.

Source: Dawn News

https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1579766?_twitter-impression=true

UN Experts Call Upon Pakistan to End Enforced Disappearance of Human Rights Defenders



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS

(Geneva, September 4th) A group of UN human rights experts called on the Pakistani authorities to end the secret detention of human rights defender Idris Khattak, who has not been heard in more than nine months. The experts included Nils Melzer, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances: Luciano Hazan (Chair-Rapporteur), Tea-Ung Baik (Vice-Chair), Bernard Duhaime, Houria Es-Slami, and Henrikas Mickevicius; Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Fernand de Varennes RP, Special Rapporteur on minority issues.

The experts said that mere acknowledgment that Khattak is in custody does not absolve Pakistan's human rights obligations and adds that Pakistani authorities must produce Khattak and guarantee a fair trial. The experts expressed serious concern for his life as he has not had contact with the outside world since he was taken into custody by Pakistani Military Intelligence on November 13th, 2019. The concealment of Khattak's fate and whereabouts to this day constitutes a continued offense of enforced disappearance, the experts said.

A letter written by the experts emphasized that Khattak is a former consultant for Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and has worked on several reports on disappearances in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. He was abducted and disappeared for seven months before the government acknowledged custody of him and reportedly is facing charges under the Official Secrets Act and Army Act as a civilian. Use of the Official Secrets Act is yet another means of silencing dissent from human rights defenders, including those working on minority issues in Pakistan, the experts underlined. They also said that the flagrant abuse of authority and lack of cooperation by the Military Intelligence to produce Khattak before the Peshawar High Court during

the habeas corpus petition is a violation of their obligations under international human rights law, said the experts. The High Court dismissed his case, saying it did not have jurisdiction, and the Joint Investigations Tribunal constituted to probe into cases of enforced disappearances closed the Khattak case reportedly because he was no longer considered a missing person. The experts were concerned that the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances disposed of the case prematurely without an adequate investigation or recommendation to the respective authorities for criminal responsibility or ordering compensation.

Comment: The Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts, and Working Groups are part of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's

independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work voluntarily; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent of any government or organization and serve in their capacity.

Source: Ohchr

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26207&LangID=E>

International Commission of Jurists Assails Performance of Commission of Inquiry on enforced disappearances



Advocates for Justice & Human Rights

On September 8th, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) expressed its disappointment that the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (COIED) had failed to address the issue of entrenched impunity, leaving the victims and their loved ones without any redress.

The COIED was constituted in March 2011 with a mandate to trace the whereabouts of missing persons and fix responsibility on individuals or organizations responsible for disappearances. The Commission is headed by Justice (Retd.) Javed Iqbal. The COIED, in its working activities, did manage to trace the whereabouts of missing persons in several cases. However, there had been no apparent effort to fix responsibility for this heinous crime.

Ian Seiderman, the ICJ legal and policy director, stated, "This Commission (COIED) has failed in holding even a single perpetrator of enforced disappearance responsible in its nine years. He further added an accusation that does not address impunity, not facilitate justice for victims and their families, can certainly not be considered as effective."

The ICJ expressed its disappointment that hundreds, if not thousands, of people, continued to be "missing" in Pakistan following their apparent arrest or abduction by or with the state's complicity.

Despite COIED's failure to meet the given objectives, its mandate was extended multiple times without any consultation with victims' groups as to whether or under what conditions its operations should be continued. Its present mandate is set to expire on September 14th.

The failure of COIED also demonstrates a larger problem, the ICJ said, that though ostensibly formed to provide a measure of public accountability, more often than not the COIED had allegedly promoted impunity by diverting investigation of human rights violations and crimes through the criminal justice process into a parallel ad hoc mechanism vulnerable to political interference and manipulation.

Recent experiences in Pakistan, the South Asia region, and around the world suggested that without substantial reform to the existing law and practice, continued use of the COIED would not provide effective remedies to the victims of human rights violations, the ICJ noted.

The ICJ recommended that the COIED mandate should not be extended beyond September 14th when its current tenure expires, and make public the final report of the Commission. While the existing Commission in mandate, form, and practical function is beyond reform, parliament should take immediate steps towards the establishment of a new commission on enforced disappearances, it suggested. However, despite the criticism, the Government of Pakistan extended the tenure of COIED by another three years.

Source: Dawn News

(<https://www.dawn.com/news/1578622>)

Abduction and forced conversions September 2020

Aasia Bibi Urges PM Imran to Act Against Forced Conversions



Aasia Bibi, a Christian woman who spent ten years on death row over blasphemy charges before being acquitted by Supreme Court, has urged Prime Minister Imran Khan to take notice of the forced conversions and marriages of young Christian girls in Pakistan. In an interview with a foreign media outlet, Bibi said there are many cases in Pakistan where girls have been forced to accept Islam and marry their abductors against their will. They were also raped after the abduction, said Bibi.

In a plea to the PM, Bibi asked him to help these persecuted girls because 'no one should suffer like that.' She also urged mothers never to leave their daughters alone

Aasia Bibi further said that Pakistan was not 'just about minorities or majority, it is for all citizens of the country.' She added that every citizen has the freedom to live and practice their way of life as per the constitution of Pakistan.

On August 25th, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Javed Abbasi tabled a bill against forced conversions in the Senate that proposed seven-year imprisonment and Rs100,000 fine if an accused is found guilty of forced proselytization.

According to the draft of the Protection of the Rights of Religious Minorities Bill, the state would take measures to curb the forced conversion of minority communities and support the victims in such an incident. The bill also proposed ten years imprisonment and a fine of Rs100,000 in case of forcing someone to change religion for marriage.

Source: Nayadaur

<https://nayadaur.tv/2020/09/aasia-bibi-urges-pm-imran-to-act-against-forced-conversions-marriages-of-christian-girls/>

**Center for Social Justice Reports on
 Forced Conversion in Punjab Province**



Center for Social Justice (CSJ), an advocacy forum in Pakistan, has called on September 4th, the country's parliament to investigate the growing number of abductions, forced marriages, and forced conversions of religious minorities in Punjab province. This request was made in a letter sent to the Parliamentary Committee for Protection from Forced Conversion on August 31st. CSJ documented at least 74 cases of abduction and forced conversion of girls from religious minority communities in Punjab since 2014. These included 55 Christian girls, 18 Hindu girls, and one girl from the Kalash community. The abuse of religion and law is a growing phenomenon in Punjab. A press statement by CSJ and the People's Commission on Minorities Rights said, "Minorities feel insecure due to the incidents of forced conversions, particularly of young Christian and Hindu girls." It is wrong to say that only the Sindh province is affected by the abuse of religion and law, the press statement continued. This misconception may be due to the fact that the Sindh Assembly passed a bill in 2016 to address the issue, but that failed because the governor of Sindh refused to permit due to pressure from extremist groups. According to a 2014 study by The Movement for Solidarity and Peace Pakistan, an estimated 1,000 women and girls from Pakistan's Hindu and Christian communities are abducted, forcefully married to their captors, and forcibly converted to Islam every year.

Religion is also often injected into cases of sexual assault to place victims from religious minority communities at a disadvantage. Playing upon religious biases, perpetrators know they can cover up and justify their crimes by introducing an element of religion.

Source: Persecution

<https://www.persecution.org/2020/09/04advocacy-forum-documents-74-cases-forced-conversion-pakistans-punjab-province>



On September 10th, a 14-year-old Hindu girl has been allegedly kidnapped and forcefully married in Pakistan by faking her actual age on the documents. The girl named Parsha Kumari was abducted from the Mori district of Khaipur in Sindh in Pakistan. The family had immediately filed a missing person report with the local police. However, the local police did not take any action.

The abductor, named Abdul Saboor, faked Kumari's age on the affidavit, claiming that she is 18-years-old, making her an adult. However, the documents submitted by her parents indicated that her birth date was 15th September 2005, which makes Kumar 14 years old. She was a student of class IX.

The local media reported that an affidavit was presented from the girl's side in which she claimed that her old name was Parsha Kumari, and she has accepted Islam. However, Kumar's family believes she has been forced into converting and marrying Saboor, an adult.

Source: WION

<https://www.wionews.com/south-asia/pakistan-14-year-old-forcefully-converted-and-married-to-her-abductor-327201>



On August 28th, a married woman named Rita (age 22) was abducted from Manjusharo, Islamkot, by Muslim youths and was taken to Nasirabad Balochistan. Her subsequent whereabouts remain unavailable

Atrocities against minorities September 2020

Persecution of Shia Community in Pakistan



Shias account for 15- 20 % of the Muslim population in Pakistan. The country is home to the second-largest Shia population after Iran. Shias in Pakistan are geographically spread across the country. Over the years, the Shias of Pakistan have been specifically targeted and killed by machine guns and suicide bombers. They have been killed inside mosques and shopping markets while on pilgrimage to Iran at funerals. Recent developments suggest that Barelvi and Deobandi Sunni sects have united to persecute the Shia community in Pakistan. Since Muharram(August 2020), there has been an increase in hate campaigns and blasphemy allegations against Shia groups for reciting Ziya-e-Ashura. This prayer denounces the killers of Imam Hussain.

Touching upon a recent hate campaign organized in Karachi on September 11th 2020 by Tehreek- e- Labbaik (Barelvi political party) and Ahl-e-Sunna Wal Jamat (A Deobandi political party). During the rally, the participants chanted hate slogans, such as 'Shia Kafir' against the Shia community members, and demanded a ban on Muharram processions. A social media user shared the rally video, wherein participants can be heard chanting 'Shias are infidel.' The Twitter user also claimed that the radical Sunni parties allegedly attacked an imambargah in the Imamia Lines area.

Furthermore, in a single month, at least 42 cases were registered across Pakistan, most of them were charged against people belonging to the Shia community. This included renowned Shia scholars such as Allama Ghanzafar and Hafiz Tassadug Hussain.

The Human rights Commission of Pakistan even expressed its concern at the recent surge in blasphemy being registered against religious minorities, particularly the Shia community. The Commission also requested the police to refrain from registering blasphemy cases promptly because such complaints are often fabricated and spurred on by personal vendettas.

Source: Nayadaur

(<https://nayadaur.tv/2020/09/extremist-outfits-hold-anti-shia-rally-in-karachi-pelt-stones-at-imambargah/>)

Punjab and KPK Assemblies Pass Resolutions Against Report by UK Parliamentarians on Ahmadiyas

On July 20th, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the British Parliament had published a report on the state-sponsored persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, titled "Suffocation of the Faithful." The report had highlighted that it is no exaggeration to describe the life of an Ahmadi Muslim in Pakistan as one that faces persecution from the cradle to the grave. They remain ever at risk of arrest, attack, or harassment at every step of their lives. Ahmadis have been denied their fundamental right to vote, they cannot possess their religious texts, and even after death, their graves are targeted and bodies exhumed, the report emphasized. Among the range of human rights violations, the report also found evidence of Pakistani textbooks promoting extremism by inciting hatred against other religious communities. School textbooks incite hatred against the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community by labeling Ahmadis as "Kafir" (disbelievers) and apostates, for which they prescribe the death penalty.

Furthermore, textbook stickers are distributed in schools stating that any communication or friendship with Ahmadis is entirely haram (forbidden) and calling for students to send names of Ahmadi students to Khatm-e-Nabuwwat (finality of prophethood). This organization has been at the forefront of violent anti-Ahmadi hostilities. Additionally, the report revealed how Ahmadi Muslim students of primary school age regularly face threats at school. It was not uncommon for teachers to seclude students from minority backgrounds, i.e., they would be forced to eat, sit, and play separately. During the report's launch, Lord David Alton highlighted that millions of pounds in British taxpayers' money are given in aid to Pakistan and pointed out that the UK government must not do so blindly. It must ensure that UK aid is not being used inadvertently to teach hatred through textbooks, which nurture intolerance and extremism, the report added.

Reacting to this report's release, the Punjab Assembly passed on September 8th a unanimous resolution terming it as a conspiracy against Pakistan and Muslims. The resolution moved in the Punjab Assembly by PML (Q) MPA Abdullah Yusuf Warriach, PML-N MPA and former Speaker Rana Muhammad Iqbal, Samiullah Khan, Malik Muhammad Ahmad, and PPP's Syed Hassan Murtaza read that the All-Party Parliamentary Group had blamed Pakistan for cruelties against Ahmadis under the state patronage and asked the UK government to make financial assistance to Pakistan conditional with acceptance of recommendations of the report. The resolution emphasized that the report had demanded the Government of Pakistan amend laws in favor of Ahmadis and permit them to preach in the educational institutions. Still, Pakistan's view in this regard was not included in the report. This house recommended to the Federal Government of Pakistan and the Foreign Office to get the report withdrawn from the UK Parliament so as the "conspiracy" against Muslims and Pakistan's sovereignty could be foiled. The resolution claimed that if not rooted out, this conspiracy would hurt Muslims' emotions worldwide and would cause the beginning of a new fitnah (internal war) in the country. The resolution also condemned the incidents of discretion of the Holy Quran and the publication of blasphemous sketches in Sweden and France. A day earlier, the Provincial Assembly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had also passed a similar resolution, moved by Mufti Obaidur Rahman of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), to condemn the report.

Source: Business Recorder, Religion news, and voicepk

<https://religionnews.com/2020/08/14pakistan-persecution-of-ahmadi-muslims-must-end-says-new-report/>;

voicepk.net/2020/09/10/provincial-assemblies-pass-a-resolution-against-uk-mps-pro-ahmadi-report/

Christian Brick Kiln Workers Abused



Rubina, a Christian mother of three, reported on social media that she and her husband had been abused by their employer for praying in their own home and refusing their employer's invitations to convert to Islam. Rubina and her husband work and live on a brick kiln in Khudian, located in the Kasur district of Pakistan's Punjab province.

Their Muslim employer and his staff forbade them to go to church. Therefore this couple started praying in their home. Their employer did not tolerate even this. The employer began to behave more aggressively with them, and the employer's staff started to abuse them and Christianity. Rubina stated that the owner invites Christians to work for him with attractive packages, but then he beats and abuses them to force them to convert.

Due to widespread religious discrimination, Christians in Pakistan are viewed as second-class citizens. Often associated with this second-class status is the idea that Christians are untouchable and dirty because of their religious identity. This discrimination often relegates Pakistan's Christian population to the lowest rungs of society.

Most Christians get work in work, which is viewed as low work, such as brick kilns. Christians are getting stuck in forms of bounded labors where abuses are common. In many cases, the laborers are treated as property by the owners of factories and subjected to many forms of abuse.

Source: persecution

<https://www.persecution.org/2020/09/06/Christian-brick-kiln-workers-claim-abused-praying-home/>

Another hindu doctor murdered



Another Hindu community doctor was murdered in Sindh, province of Pakistan. Lal Chand Bagri was a practicing doctor at TandoAllihar (Sindh). According to media reports, on the evening of September 14th, some people entered his house and stabbed doctor Bagri with multiple stabs, and Bagri's throat was brutally sanded. After the incident, the accused absconded.

This is not the first time a Hindu doctor was brutally murdered. On September 16th, the body of Dr. Namrata Chandni was found in the Medical College Hostel of Larkana. She was a student at Bibi Asifa Medical College, run by Benazir Bhutto's family. It was clear from the postmortem report that Namrata was raped before he was killed. Two people were arrested in this case. Later he was released.

Source:bhaaghitv

<https://en.baaghitv.com/hindu-doctor-murdered-in-tando-allahyar-khan/>

Hindus Seeks Completion of Probe Into Temple Demolition



On the 16th of September, Hindu families gave the relevant authorities an ultimatum to complete an inquiry into the demolition of a pre-partition Hindu temple in Lyari (Karachi). On the 16th of August, the temple was allegedly demolished by a builder named Maqadar Khan (private contractor). As a result, the temple site, located on Fida Hussain Sheikh Road, was sealed on August 17th, in the presence of Lyari assistant commissioner Abdul Karim Memon, members of the local Hindu community, and area residents.

Following the outcry over the demolition, the district administration had formed a committee to probe into the matter. The committee was to submit a conclusive report within seven days. However, the inquiry remains incomplete hitherto. Mohan Lal, a Hindu resident of the area, warned that if the inquiry is not completed soon, they would march to the Chief Minister's House and stage a sit-in there. On the other hand, the private contractor, Khan, maintained that the inquiry was underway and would likely, take up to a year to complete.

According to Khan, the coveted site where Hindu residents of the area say a temple was built is private property. Plus, he added, "It was a small temple that I did not demolish. It was destroyed by the rains."

Meanwhile, assistant commissioner Memon attributed the delay in the inquiry's completion to "the prevalent situation in the city," including heavy rains.

He further claimed that no Hindu families had recorded their statements for the probe, which, according to him, was another cause for the delay.

According to Memon, authorities needed to record at least 18 Hindu families' statements to prepare a "fair report."

He also mentioned that the inquiry was underway, and authorities were trying to approach all Hindu families that were living in the area, he assured. However, he said that it is hard to locate all the families.

Many had left the area and were living elsewhere, he explained. "But the relevant police have been told to provide assistance in locating them. We want to provide justice to all," he said.

Source: tribune

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2264316/hindus-see-completion-of-temple-demolition-probe>

Pakistan Hindu Council Demands Est Ablishment of Temple in Islamabad



On September, the 19th Members of Pakistan Hindu Council demanded a crematorium and temple setting in the capital, adding that the issue should not be politicized as it was an essential requirement of the Hindu community. Talking to media with Krishan Sharma, a civil society activist said the PML-N government allotted the plot for the crematory and temple in 2018 after recognizing the needs of the Hindus. Sharma said around 3000 Hindus were living in Islamabad who had shifted mostly from Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to severe law and order situations in their native areas.

As Mr. Sharma stated, "This is not a political or religious issue but a social need for us," he said, adding: "We are ready to listen to the concerns of the Muslim brothers or organizations that have raised objections against the construction of the temple in H-9."

He said: "Besides, there has to be a place in the federal capital for ceremonies related to marriages and festivals like Holi and Diwali."

Mr. Sharma said the construction of a temple in Islamabad would improve Pakistan's image worldwide, especially when the Modi-led extremist government in India was busy persecuting religious minorities.

PTI MNA Lal Chand Malhi said one of the main objections was that Muslim taxpayers' money could not be used to build a temple.

"We too are the taxpayers in this country, adding billions of rupees to the national kitty, and the government has not used much of our tax money on building temples in the last 70 years. So a part of that money can be utilized for the construction of the temple," he said.

He said the second objection the Muslim clerics had raised was that a new temple could not be built in an Islamic state.

"If UAE, an Islamic state, can build a temple, why not Pakistan," he said, adding that clerics have asked the government to renovate existing places of worship and make them functional.

"If they want six temples renovated in Islamabad city, why are they opposing construction of just one temple," he said.

He also decried the delay by the CDA in the grant of permission to construct a boundary wall on the plot for the crematorium in H-9.

Source: Dawn news

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1580609>

Senate Panel Rejects Bill for Minorities



On the 24th of September, a Senate panel rejected the bills to protect minorities and the other seeking amendments to the Muslim family laws. The Protection of Rights of Minorities Bill, 2020, was introduced in Senate last month (August 2020) by Senator Javed Abbasi. Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Minister NoorulHaq Qadir informed the panel that a committee was already working to prevent the forced conversion of minorities as a Hindu had been made Chairman of the National Commission for Minorities. Senator Hafiz Abdul Karim, a member of the committee, said a bill for protecting the rights of Muslims should be presented instead as Minorities in Pakistan have already been granted several rights. He added that much fuss is made when some Hindu girls convert to Islam and marry Muslim boys adding that everybody has the right to freedom of religion. Senator Raja ZafarulHaq noted that there were very instances of forced conversions in Pakistan. However, Hindu Senator Kishoo Bai noted that Hindu girls were abducted and forcibly converted. Later, when they appeared before the court, they changed their statement under duress. The senator stressed the need for legislation to protect minorities. Later, the bill was rejected with a majority vote.

Source:tribune

Other violations September 2020

South Waziristan Tehsil Under Curfew



On September 3rd, security forces had been attacked using an improvised explosive device (IED) in South Waziristan, resulting in three personnel's death, six others were wounded, and the destruction of an office. A search operation was started in the area subsequently, and arrests were made based on the concept of collective responsibility.

Reports circulating on social media claimed that upwards of 100 people had been arrested in the search operation, and locals had been subjected to mistreatment. A journalist from Waziristan, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Naya Daur Media that arrests were continuing in the name of investigating the attack on security forces, and people were being subjected to violence. Further, the journalist stated that although the concept of collective responsibility for crimes has come to an end in the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, people have not only been taken into custody, but there has also been violence against residents on this principle.

Journalist SheheryarMehsud, who belongs to South Waziristan, shared a video of Wajihullah, a 12-year-old boy from the Shaktoi area, on the social media, in which he claims that dozens of people in the area were not only arrested but also tortured after the blast. In the video, the boy says, "Security forces also beat me, and I fled to another area." He adds: "Children and the elderly have been arrested and dragged out, and we have been subjected to a lot of oppression."

SheryarMehsud told Naya Daur Media that there was a complete curfew in the area. There was no cellular phone network access, which resulted in no reliable news about details of what was happening. He added that the Shaktoi area is so remote that it was difficult to ascertain how people obtained food and medicines under the curfew.

Source: Nayadaur

<https://nayadaur.tv/2020/09south-waziristan-tehsil-under-curfew-for-a-week/>

Peshawar High Court Seeks Records Of Military Court Convictions



On June 16th, 2020, the Peshawar High Court accepted 198 petitions filed mostly by close relatives of the military court convicts, the majority of whom were awarded death sentence or life imprisonment over illegal involvement in different acts of terrorism. The Supreme Court had suspended those high court judgments after the provincial government filed appeals against them. The appeals of the government have pending with the apex court since then. Most of the petitioners have claimed that the convicts were taken into custody by the security forces many years ago, and they are held incommunicado. Some petitioners claimed that after their relatives went missing, they came to know about their detention in interment centers. They contended that convictions came without the production of any evidence of involvement in militant activities and based on the convicts' so-called confessional statements, which were recorded contrary to the laws' provisions.

Their lawyers said while the convicts remained in the security forces' custody, their so-called confessional statements were recorded after a delay of many years.

The High Court, in the earlier judgments about the acquittal of convicts, had ruled that during the proceedings before the military courts, the relevant provisions of the Pakistan Army Act and Rules were violated and that the suspected militants were not provided with an opportunity to avail themselves of the counsel of own choice.

Learning from the past incidents on September 8th, the High Court of Peshawar requested the government to produce relevant records. These records are required for a fair procession of cases. The court stated that it would hear around the 110 petitions against the conviction of suspected militants by military courts until October 13th.

The petitions were filed against the conviction of suspected militants by military courts. The suspected militants were handed down death penalties related to alleged acts of terrorism. The court has already granted interim relief to those convicts by staying their execution on different dates.

Source: Dawn news

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1578682/record-sought-over-military-court-convictions>

MNA Mohsin Dawar was barred From entering Quetta city



MNA Mohsin Dawar and his associates sitting on the floor in Quetta City. Photo provided by PIRI/PTI

On September 14th, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) expressed concern over the increase in the number of cases of missing persons and observed that under the law, the only legitimate reason to make an arrest is for security reasons. Police, counterterrorism department, and the Federal Investigation Agency are all subjected to that law. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of the IHC stated that a citizen's detention by these law enforcement agencies other than to ensure law and order was illegal. He also mentioned that if it was any other agency, then the later noted, the federal government would be responsible for such illegality.

Justice Kayani also pointed out that the superintendent investigation had disclosed that about 50 cases of missing persons had been reported within Islamabad. He termed it alarming and reminded that the federal government was responsible for protecting citizens' life and dignity.

In the week of Mr. Gondal's abduction in that same week, another person went missing, Mr. Abdul Qadoos. After a petition was brought to the court seeking the recovery of Mr, Qadoos, Mr. Qadoos was released by unknown abductors.

Source: Dawn News

https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1579766?_twitter-impression=true

Persons Dislocated From Teera **Demand Return To Home**



In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, people from Teera Koki Khel have been staging sit-ins outside the Khyber Pass gate for almost three months. They were pressuring the local authorities into expediting the process of resettlement of those who had been displaced by the "war on terror" around a decade back. Almost 20,000 people had left their homes in Teera when the operation began. The protestors have been waiting to go back to their homes for the last ten years. The protestors say that they had left their homes based on the Pak army's assurances at the time, but to date, there seems to be no hope of their return to their homes. They also complained that they have not been granted Internally Displaced person(IDPs) status and are thus not eligible for any government aid announced for IDPs.

Providing further details, the protestors added that all houses and markets in the valley of TeeraRaajgal had been destroyed due to the military operation against the Taliban. Protestors also claim that majority of other IDP's from the Malakand tribal areas have been resettled, but the authorities are neglecting residents of TeeraRaajgal. Dawood Shah Afridi, President of the QabalistanTahaffuz Movement (QTM), claimed that officials have never seriously tried to address Teera residents' issues. Three years ago, the military establishment announced that the Teera area had been completely cleared. But despite repeated announcements like these, we are not even allowed to visit our homeland, let alone resettle there, said Dawood Shah Afridi. Zarghoon Shah Afridi, President of the Jamrood Political Alliance (JPA) and a local leader of the Jamat-e-Islami (JI), says that Teera residents have made immense sacrifices for the country but are yet to be resettled even after a lapse of a decade. Zarghoon has been protesting along with the affectees at the protest camp. Zarghoon demanded that the affectees be awarded rations, the PKR 12,000 package that they were promised earlier, and tents to live in.

Additionally, the Army has taken over pieces of land in the area which natives want back, said one protestor present at the camp. Meanwhile, Jawad Ali Shah, Assistant Commissioner (AC) of Jamrood district, has claimed that the area has not yet been completely cleared of militants and cites it as the reason authorities have not begun resettlement efforts. He claimed that as soon as the area is cleared, the IDPs will be sent home.

Source: Voice pk

<https://voicepk.net/teera-idps-demand-to-be-allowed-to-return-back-home/>

Orakzai Tribesmen Await Compensation



The Orakzai and Kurram offensive, also known as operation Khawakh Ba De Sham, is a Pakistani military operation against the Tehreek- e Taliban in the Orakzai Agency and Kurram Agency of the Federally administrated tribal areas. It is part of an ongoing war in Northwest Pakistan. Most of the Orazakai people displaced almost six years ago are living in miserable conditions awaiting for the construction of their houses and the release of compensation to start a new life.

A family from the Orakzai district headed by a blind man, Sabir Khan, told this correspondent that the administration had conducted surveys of many areas, but his village was neglected. He said that when he appealed to the administration for survey and construction of his ancestral house, the low cadre officials demanded Rs30,000 as a bribe from him, which he could not pay. Sabir's son has been affected by paralysis. His wife lamented that the government was running from discharging its duty to provide shelter to them. She said the ration supply had also been stopped to the displaced people for a year now.

The Mamozai tribesmen in upper Orakzai have also expressed their distraught over the delay in due compensation for structural damage to the houses and shops in the area during the clashes between Pak Army and Tehreek-e-Taliban clashes between 2008 and 2015. Around 1,500 buildings were damaged or destroyed during the operation. So far, around 500 people have been awarded checks worth PKR 20.6 million. However, the remaining 1,000 affectees are yet to receive any monetary compensation.

Source: Viocepk

<https://voicepk.net/2020/09/07/rights-watch-september-7th-2020/>

Despite Court Orders



The Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016 were passed by Sindh Assembly on March 13th, 2017, and was assented by Governor Sindh on April 8th, 2017. Using this law, any Pakistan citizen can seek information and acquire a record held by any provincial government department or organization using public funds. The public body is bound to respond to the application within 15 working days. The department shall not charge any fee for making an information request other than the cost of reproducing or sending the information in accordance with a schedule of costs notified by the Commission. In case a public body does not respond to the information request or refuses to provide the information, the citizen can lodge a complaint with the SIC. The SIC will then resolve the complaint within 45 days of its receipt and ensure to pass the appropriate orders, including recommending disciplinary proceedings against the delinquent officials. Further, the Act granted powers of a civil court to the Commission to "summon and enforce the attendance of persons, compel them to give oral or written evidence on oath. But also to produce documents or information; examine and inspect information; receive evidence on affidavits; request relevant information from any office, and to issue a summons for witnesses or documents".

In May 2018, after the Sindh High Court ordered, the Sindh government had notified the three members' Sindh Information Commission to ensure the implementation of the Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016. The Commission comprised Shahid Gulzar Shaikh as Chief Information Commissioner, Syed Gul Muneer Shah, and Sikandar Ali Hullio as information commissioners. The provincial government had allocated a PKR 55 million grant for the SIC for the fiscal year 2019-20, and almost eight months ago, the Commission established its office in Karachi. In its latest budget, the Sindh Government again allocated PKR 55 million to the Commission. Further, in January 2020, the SIC published notices in different leading English and Sindhi newspapers inviting complaints from the citizens in cases where they did not receive the information requested under the Sindh Transparency and Right to Information Act 2016 from any provincial department.

Sikandar Ali Hullio, Information Commissioner in SIC, conceded in media that the Commission has received more than 100 complaints against different provincial departments and claimed that the Commission had issued notices to the public bodies but did not receive any response from these. In response to a question, he said that the details of complaints and actions taken against them are noted in a register at SIC.

However, the Commission does not send any acknowledgment or copy of the notice to citizens. Further, the Commission has not conducted any hearing so far. Hullio also complained that the funds earmarked for the Commission were not released last year due to non-approval of terms of reference (TORs) for the commissioners by the provincial cabinet, non-activation of bank account, and other procedural delays.

Meanwhile, Dr. Raza Gardezi, a social activist, has filed a constitutional petition in the Sindh High Court and pleaded the court to direct the provincial government to ensure the Sindh Information Commission's smooth functioning. Entailing other things, providing office address and telephone number to be accessible to the general public, and widely publicizing all such information.

The right to information law is meant to empower citizens and bring transparency in government bodies. However, it appears to be losing credibility as Sindh Information Commission (SIC) is unable to entertain citizens' complaints.

Source: Nayadaur

<https://nayadaur.tv/2020/09/Sindh-right-to-information-commission-is-still-ineffective-despite-court-orders/>

Pakistani troops are advancing In the Bolan area of Balochistan



A large number of Pakistani troops are advancing in the Bolan area of Balochistan. Locals fear of a military operation.

Reports of the Pakistan Army conducting large scale operations in different parts of Balochistan were received last month. As per the reports, military operations were carried out in Gichk and surrounding areas of Panjgur district, Mazband, and other areas of Kech in which gunship helicopters also took part.

Baloch social and political circles say that Pakistani forces targeted civilians in Gichk and Mazband operations. Meanwhile, women and children were taken into custody from Gichk and shifted to an unknown location while locals' houses were also set on fire.

In the same period, Mehrab Jatoi, a Sibi resident, had come on the 5th to Quetta for some work but later went missing a day later. Mehrab Jatoi had earlier been disappeared forcefully by Pakistani intelligence personnel in 2013 and was released six months later.

Source: the balochistanpost

<https://thebalochistanpost.net/2020/09/bolan-pakistani-forces-advance-in-vicinity-of-mach/>

Victims of 2013 Bomb Attack on Church Yet to be Compensated



PESHAWAR: The members of the Christian community on Wednesday protested the government's failure to compensate the families of the people who were killed on September 22nd, 2013, in twin bomb blasts at the All Saints Church Kohati.

Holding banners and placards, the protesters demanded compensation for the families concerned, treatment of those suffered injuries in the bombing, and employment for the relatives of the deceased employees of Town-1 and Peshawar district council.

Nazeer Masih, Amna Bhatti, and Shahid Iqbal, who led the protest, said 83 of the people, who were injured in the church blasts, had yet to be paid compensation amount.

They said the federal government had announced the Rs200 million package for the families of the deceased but did not fulfill its commitment.

The speakers said the Sindh government, too, had not provided the financial support it had announced for the bombing victims.

He blamed the federal and provincial governments for not paying heed to their demands despite repeated protests and meetings with the relevant departments' officials.

The UCM chief pointed out that families of most of the victims were poor and needed ration and other items of daily use on an urgent basis. He said the government should allocate a fixed amount of money as financial relief for the families to ease their misery.

Now also The Implementation of Minority Rights Forum has demanded that the government should create and disburse an endowment fund for families of victims of the All Saints Church bomb attack in 2013. As per the Supreme Court's directives, the victims' families were to receive compensation and rehabilitation funds. However, the government has yet to move on constituting the endowment funds.

Source: voicepk.net & dawn news

voicepk.net/2020/09/10/rights-watch-september-10th-2020/

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1285275/no-compensation-for-2013-church-bombing-victims-yet>



Pakistan Monthly Report September 2020

Referential

This report aimed to highlight the various human rights violations that occurred in Pakistan in September 2020. In compiling this report, GHRD used information from various sources that covered these grave inhuman violations.

Therefore GHRD wants to pay their gratitude to the following sources:

Dawn news

Pakistan's English – language paper, published by Pakistan Herald Publications

Christian persecution

Online newspaper that highlights all the human rights violations against Christians

The Balochistanpost

The Balochistan Post is the largest and most authentic online news network of Balochistan

Nayadaur

Digital media platform covering news from Pakistan

The tribune

Indian English- language daily newspaper, published from Amritsar, Jalandar, Ludhiana, Bathinda, Chandigarh, and New Delhi.

Viocepk

An open platform which is dedicated to broadcasting events related to human rights concerns within Pakistan and the rest of the world.