



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fourth session

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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.

[9 August 2023]

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



## **The Alarming Increase in the Cases of Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial Killings in Balochistan**

The Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment would like to bring to the attention of the Human Rights Council of the increasing cases of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of Baloch people in Balochistan, Pakistan.

Enforced disappearances and the extrajudicial killings of socio-political activists continue to be practised by the Pakistani authorities for the last two decades to instil fear and silence all voices of dissent and struggle by the Baloch people for their right to self-determination. Thousands have become victims of target killings by security agencies and their proxy death squads in Balochistan. Many of those who disappeared were tortured and killed in detention, and their mutilated dead bodies were then thrown in desolated areas and on roadsides. This practice is known as Pakistan's "Kill and dump policy".

The fate of most of the disappeared by the State authorities in Balochistan remains officially unknown, despite the fact that their names have been submitted to the authorities with repeated requests for clarification, by families of the disappeared and human rights organisations, including OHCHR. State efforts have often rather aimed to mislead and cover up than to clarify the fate of those who disappeared in Balochistan. The courts in Pakistan appear to be powerless and compromised before the powerful military establishment of Pakistan. In spite of a general climate of fear and insecurity, many relatives of the victims have approached military camps only to be turned away with threats or violence.

According to the recent data collected by various human rights organizations and verified by the Baloch Human Rights Council (BHRC), 160 persons were subjected to enforced disappearances in the first half of the year 2023, while 10 of the missing persons were extrajudicially killed by Pakistani security forces. (1)

In 2008, Pakistan ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and signed both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT); however, it is not respecting its obligations under these treaties. Article 9 of Pakistan's Constitution provides that "no person shall be deprived of life or liberty save by law". Although not a nationally defined law, its components are made illegal through existing laws on abductions, wrongful restraint, and confinement. Despite repeated recommendations by the human rights council, Pakistan has failed to ratify both ICCPR and UNCAT and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED), thus incentivising the perpetrators to commit crimes with impunity.

We request the United Nations to:

1. Press Pakistan to disclose the fate and whereabouts of the victims of enforced disappearances with the families of the victims with appropriate compensation.
2. Hold all those involved or facilitated enforced disappearances in Balochistan and elsewhere in Pakistan.
3. Pakistan be asked to ratify ICCPR and CAT and enact implementing legislation to ensure these treaties become part of Pakistan's domestic law.