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Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Written statement* submitted by Victorious Youths Movement, 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.

[16 August 2023]

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



Killing of School teacher over Blasphemy in Balochistan, Pakistan

Historically known for a multi-ethnic territory, Balochistan is facing threats of being divided on religious grounds. There has been growing apprehension about Pakistan government pushing a religiously polarized identity, as evidenced by incidents like Abdul Rauf's killing over blasphemy.

An English teacher, Abdul Rauf, 22, affiliated with a language centre was shot dead by unknown armed men on an allegation of blasphemy in Turbat town of Kech district.

Dawn reported that students of the language centre had lodged complaints with local clerics, accusing Mr Rauf of committing blasphemy during a lecture.

According to the principal of the school, Sudhir Ahmed, a group of ulema visited the language centre and listened to the students and Mr Rauf on the issue. Mr Rauf denied the allegation and insisted he did not commit blasphemy. He tendered an apology for any objectionable words on the issue. Then, the clerics said they would resolve the issue and asked Mr Rauf to come to the jirga, to be held in a madressah, to explain his position.

"I invited Abdul Rauf to the jirga where over 100 ulema from Turbat were present to resolve the issue amicably, but he was killed by unknown masked men before reaching the madressah," Mufti Shah Mir said.

Yet, was targeted near a graveyard in the Malikabad area very next day when he was going to attend a jirga of ulema to explain his position on the matter.

BNM's human rights department, Paank, remarked on the severity of the situation, raising concerns about the establishment of death squads by the Pakistan Army and the rise of religious extremists in Balochistan.

Teacher Killed on Blasphemy Allegation in Turbat

"The recent distressing event of school teacher Abdul Rauf being murdered in the name of blasphemy is deeply concerning. The formation and support of death squads by the #PakistanArmy, nurturing religious extremists in Balochistan, are highly alarming."

However, killing of educators is not a new thing over blasphemy charges in Pakistan. A notable example is the 2014 assassination of Zahid Askani, founder of The Osis School in Gwadar. His killing by religious extremists stresses the dangers educators and education establishments in the region face.

Attacks on teachers and education institutions in Balochistan have increasingly been manifestation of a dangerous path, bolstering religious intolerance and sectarian conflicts spearheaded by Pakistan government in the region. Today, religious and ethnic minorities such as Hazaras, Hindus, and Zikris bear the brunt of this strategy's adverse effects.

Balochistan Teacher Killing: Signalising Rise of Religious Extremism? — TBP Report
<https://thebalochistanpost.net/2023/08/balochistan-teacher-killing-signalising-rise-of-religious-extremism/>
Ibid.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1768725>