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

Written statement* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, 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.

[03 February 2020]

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



Freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan and China

Pakistan... restrictions on freedom of religion and belief

Blasphemy articles have been widely used in the Pakistani Penal Code to restrict freedom of religion and belief. Whereas article 295, paragraph 1, refers to the non-distortion of places of worship, prophets or insulting religious sentiments, while paragraph 3 of this article prohibits defamation of the Prophet by Muslims. Although these articles prohibit insulting religious symbols and distorting religious sanctuaries, which are respectable, they are misplaced and used to impose greater restrictions on freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan and to torture other minorities within it, To give terrorists the opportunity to exploit these materials in order to exercise the commandments of other religions, in the light of the State's inability to protect those minorities, which obligates Pakistan to change this law in compliance with international treaties protecting this right, In the same vein, the Pakistani constitution prevents any non-Muslim citizen from running for the presidency or even for the premiership, and this right is restricted to Muslims only according to article 41 of the Pakistani constitution.

One of the manifestations of extremism against minorities in Pakistan is that of the Hindu community in Sind province, which represents less than 1% of the original population in Pakistan. On September 15, 2019, Nutan Mall, a school director of the Hindu minority in the province, was arrested on the pretext of contempt of Islam and because of complaints that he was engaged in acts related to blasphemy.

However, violations based on freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan against minorities of other religions have not ceased, and even Muslim citizens have been sentenced to death and punished for expressing their views under blasphemy laws. The death sentences against Pakistani citizens of all religions reached 40 sentences from 2018 to the end of 2019 and are still awaiting execution. The last of these sentences was on December 21, 2019, when a Pakistani court in Multan sentenced the academic "Junaid Hafiz" to death for contempt of religion and distortion of Islam during his lectures and for what he writes on the social media website "Facebook" under the blasphemy laws of the Pakistani Penal Code Hafiz was killed in 2014, and more than five years later, those who killed him have yet to be brought to justice.

Targeting Uyghur in China

According to official statistics, the Uyghur in China, who condemn Islam, represent about 10.5 million people out of the total population of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China, whose number reaches 24 million, about 45 % of the self-controlled region's population. The Chinese constitution is considered a guarantor of freedom of religion and belief in the text of article 36 of the Chinese constitution. Which refers to "The people of the Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief, as well as the inadmissibility of forcing citizens to believe in or not to believe in a religion designated by the government, organization or individual, and the inadmissibility of discrimination against citizens who believe or believe in no religion. While States protect natural religious activities, no one may benefit from religion to participate in activities that disrupt public order, weaken citizens' health or interfere with the State's educational system, this provision is inadequate and has not been complied with by the Chinese Government in its dealings with the Uyghur society. Violations against them on the basis of faith have recently increased. The Chinese government has focused on two levels to ensure that the Uyghur give up their culture, the first level, especially for men and women, whom the Chinese government considers to be a threat to communist principles, especially with regard to the "rehabilitation" camps, which China initially denied to establish. But it soon acknowledged that it had been set up to provide vocational training and counter-terrorism as part of the Chinese government's effort to eliminate the three evils of "terrorism, separatist movements and religious extremism", which included more than a million people of Uyghur in the camps. To rehabilitate them and prevent them from extremism and terrorism, according to the Chinese government.

China is using these camps to force detainees into manual labor and those who refuse to do so are subjected to physical violence, as well as to ensure their commitment to the principles

of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and these camps cannot be left voluntarily. In the same context, women hold at least one year in detention until they are tested in accordance with the principles of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and allowed to leave only after these tests are passed, while communication between residents and family members is limited to one phone call per week.

The second level is to focus on weakening the children's belonging to Islam and their integration in a manner consistent with the principles of communism, whereas about half a million children were prevented from their families and placed in private boarding schools that reached two schools in each town in Shenyang province. The cases in which children are sent to these schools are those where one or both parents are detained or where the authorities decide that the parents are not in a proper way of raising children. The aim of these schools is to ensure that these children are loyal to the Chinese government and the communist principles governing the state and to remove from them the affiliation of these children to the culture of Uyghur.

The violations did not stop against the Uyghur at the rehabilitation camps for men and women but went beyond that to include their religious shrines and tombs, where the Chinese government demolished 100 graves from 2018 to January 2020. Saleh Haidar, one of those whose grave was destroyed by the Chinese government, said that China's destruction of graves was "part of the Chinese government's plan to eliminate the identity of the Uyghur."

Recommendations

- Reconsider of blasphemy articles in Pakistan's Penal Code for restricting freedom of religion and belief or attempt to amend these articles to comply with international standards and conventions.
 - Allowing the nominating of other religions and minorities to the position of President of the Republic in Pakistan and to ensure that they are not excluded from senior positions in the State in order to guarantee the principle of citizenship.
 - The Chinese government adheres to Article 36 of the Chinese Constitution, which works to protect freedom of religion and belief, and failure to associate terrorism with a particular religion results in violations that do not comply with the basic principles of human rights.
 - To allow representatives of international human rights bodies to visit rehabilitation camps that the Chinese government claims that its only to provide vocational training for Uyghur, and to stand up to facts denied by the Chinese government that detainees in these camps are subjected to many violations that run counter to the right to freedom of religion and belief.
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