



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 November 2023

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-third session

19 June–14 July 2023

Agenda item 3

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

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.

[28 May 2023]

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



Pakistan: Excessive Use of Force Against Anti-Government Protestors

Pakistan's police have fired on and used excessive force against protesters following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan on corruption charges on May 9, 2023. The government's cutting of mobile internet services, and restrictions on access to Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms, is overbroad and indiscriminate in violation of basic rights.

The Pakistani government should uphold the right to peaceful protest while responding to violence with the minimum force needed. Protestors have also been booked under false cases to intimidate them. Such false charges should be promptly investigated.

The United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials provide that security forces must use the minimum necessary force at all times. In dispersing violent assemblies, firearms may only be used when other less harmful means are not practicable but must still be used to the minimum extent necessary. Law enforcement officers may only intentionally resort to lethal force when strictly unavoidable to protect life.

The government contends that the internet shutdown was necessary to protect public safety and curb the spread of misinformation. Internet and social media platforms remain intermittently functional. However, this sweeping measure denies ordinary people access to lifesaving information, interferes with access to health care, and restricts the ability of journalists to upload photos and videos documenting government overreach and abuse. International human rights law prohibits broad, indiscriminate, and indefinite restrictions on fundamental freedoms, including the right to free expression and to provide and receive information.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/11/pakistan-excessive-force-against-violent-khan-protests>