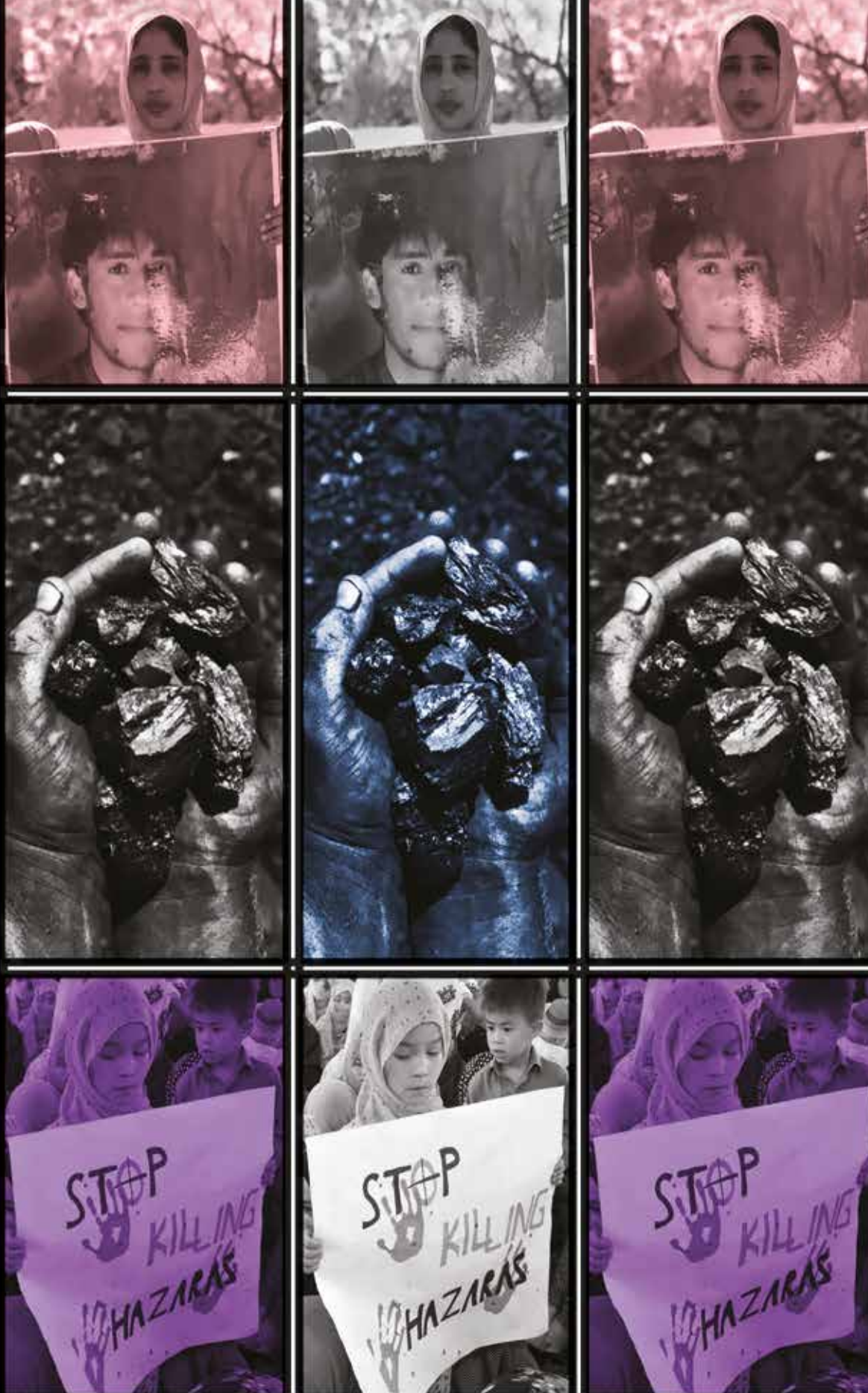


Balochistan: Neglected Still



An HRCP Fact-Finding Report



Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

BALUCHISTAN: NEGLECTED STILL

AN HRCP FACT-FINDING REPORT



Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

© 2019 Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

All rights reserved. Any part of this publication may be reproduced by duly acknowledging the source.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this publication. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan takes no responsibility for any unintentional omissions.

The title page contains images from online sources that may be copyrighted material. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has reproduced these images under a fair-use policy, intending no copyright infringement, and would like to credit the following online sources: Balochistan Point, Hakkpaan and the Pakistan Tribune.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

Aiwan-e-Jamhoor

107 Tipu Block, New Garden Town

Lahore 54600

T: +92 42 3583 8341, 3586 4994, 3586 9969

F: +92 42 3588 3582

E: hrcp@hrcp-web.org

www.hrcp-web.org

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANP	Awami National Party
BAP	Balochistan Awami Party
BNP-M	Balochistan National Party (Mengal)
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSO	civil society organization
DHQ	district headquarter
EOBI	Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FC	Frontier Corps
FIR	first information report
HDP	Hazara Democratic Party
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
LEA	law enforcement agency
MS	medical superintendent
NOC	no-objection certificate
NP	National Party
PkMAP	Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PMDC	Pakistan Mineral Department Corporation
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PTM	Pashtun Tahafuz Movement
SSP	Senior Superintendent of Police
VC	Vice-Chancellor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is grateful to the following Council members and general body members for being part of this fact-finding mission and for their input to this report: Mr Tahir Hussain Khan, Dr Naazir Mahmood, Mr Husain Naqi, Mr I A Rehman, Justice (Retd) Zahoor Ahmed Shahwani and Mr Habib Tahir. HRCP would also like to thank its staff at the head office and regional offices in Quetta and Islamabad for helping organize the mission and prepare the report.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Background	2
The HRCP Mission	3
Political Parties and the Political Process	4
Enforced Disappearances / Missing Persons	6
Religious and Ethnic Communities	8
The Shia Hazara Community	8
The Zikri Community	9
The Hindu and Christian Communities	9
Civil Society	11
The Legal Community	11
Civil Society Organizations	11
The Media	12
The State of Education	13
Balochistan University, Quetta	13
Turbat and Gwadar	14
Agriculture, Energy and the Climate Crisis	16
Healthcare Services	17
The Coalmining Sector	18
Coalminers	18
Mine Owners	19
Labour Unions	20
The Fishing Community	21
Parliamentarians and State Functionaries	22
Governor Balochistan	22
Finance Minister Balochistan	22
Member of the Provincial Assembly	23
Additional Home Secretary Balochistan	23
Commissioner Makran Division	23
Senior Superintendent Police Gwadar	23
Recommendations	24

INTRODUCTION

The popular Balochistan narrative remains a dirge on the wrongs done to the people of the province since 1947, with the addition of a widespread grievance against the large-scale manipulation of the 2018 general election. Just as Balochistan did not witness a return to democratic rule in 2008, it seems to have been short-changed in the 2018 election too. In August 2019, the Senate chairmanship election result proved controversial when a no-confidence motion against the incumbent chair failed, although the president of the Balochistan National Party was widely expected to win. This impression of manipulation is strengthened by the level of the Frontier Corps' (FC) presence in the province and its degree of control over almost all matters.

Balochistan's people feel relieved that law and order has improved somewhat, but the fear of attacks by religious militants persists. The challenge from militant nationalists, described by officials as 'separatist insurgents', has subsided considerably, but reports keep coming in of the disproportionate use of force against dissidents, such as penalizing a whole village for a random shot fired from its direction.

From the public point of view, enforced disappearances is still the biggest issue in Balochistan. Incidents of disappearance continue unabated and, in most cases, victims' families are afraid of communicating their cases to the authorities.

Inquiries into the recent accidents that have occurred in Balochistan's coalmines reveal a chaotic state of affairs, with reportedly at least 160 mine-related deaths in 2018–19 alone¹. Hundreds of mines are being operated by people who possess neither the financial resources nor the technological skills to provide for safety in mines or to deal with emergencies.

The banning of 62 labour unions by the Registrar of Trade Unions, in pursuance of a decision by the Balochistan High Court, has deprived the province's labour – already marginalized – of their basic rights and is causing them unnecessary frustration.

Balochistan's coalmines reveal a chaotic state of affairs. Hundreds of mines are being operated by people who possess neither the financial resources nor the technological skills to provide for safety in mines or to deal with emergencies.

The mission led by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) was happy to note that, except for some unsavoury incidents here and there, Balochistan's educational institutions are functioning regularly, although the occupation of campuses and hostels by the FC poses serious problems. The curtailment of facilities for the staff and students at the large Balochistan University and the institution of criminal cases against an ethnic association are matters of grave concern.

The mission is grateful to the large number of people – officials as well as members of political parties and citizens – who gave us their time and answered our questions. Thanks are due to the Balochistan Governor and the provincial finance minister for meeting the mission members. Their treatment of the mission was in sharp contrast with the attitude of the Chief Minister and the Inspector General of Police, who evidently did not realize that a human rights mission could have anything to discuss with them.

¹ See <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/03/20/164-balochistan-coal-miners-killed-in-one-year/>

BACKGROUND

Geographically, Balochistan is Pakistan's largest province, comprising 43% of its total land area. It is also the country's least populated province. Despite being immensely rich in mineral resources, it remains one of the poorest regions of Pakistan. Since Pakistan gained independence from the British in 1947, Balochistan has witnessed several phases of conflict with the centre. The current violent conflict with nationalist dissidents – officially described as a 'separatist insurgency' – in the Baloch-majority areas of the province began with the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti in a military operation in 2006.

Over the past decade or so, there has been an alarming escalation of religious extremism in the province with the emergence of militants who continue to target non-Muslim and minority Muslim sects. The Shia Hazara community has, in particular, borne the brunt of extremist violence. Indeed, the rise in extremist violence has forced many non-Muslims and members of minority Muslim sects to migrate to other regions in the country or overseas for safety.

Regrettably, law and order has remained unsatisfactory over the years. Although there have been brief periods of relative calm, the overall security situation remains tense. Several military operations have been conducted against Baloch dissident groups and extremist militant outfits. Law enforcement agency (LEA) personnel have also been targeted and killed for their involvement in such operations.

Following the 18th Constitutional Amendment, there was some hope that the provincial government would have more say in running its affairs. Yet, the general perception remains that the state's security agencies continue to be the decision makers in Balochistan.

There are also grave allegations of human rights violations by the state's security agencies present in Balochistan. One of the most serious accusations against the agencies concerns their alleged role in enforced disappearances and the dumping of mutilated bodies of persons who have been 'disappeared'. Over the years, the provincial governments and federal agencies have failed to hold any state functionaries accountable for their role in enforced disappearances and other such gross human rights violations in the province. Following the 18th Constitutional Amendment, there was some hope that the provincial government would have more say in running its affairs. Yet, the general perception remains that the state's security agencies continue to be the decision makers in Balochistan.

HRCF has been monitoring the human rights situation in Balochistan for many years and has reported periodically on violations by both state and non-state actors. It sends high-profile fact-finding missions to the province at regular intervals to document people's testimonies and report their concerns objectively. In addition, HRCF has consistently issued public statements and shared its recommendations urging the state to respect, promote and fulfil the rights of the people of Balochistan.

¹ See <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/03/20/164-balochistan-coal-miners-killed-in-one-year/>

THE HRCP MISSION

During 19–24 August 2019, HRCP conducted a fact-finding mission to assess the state of human rights in Balochistan. The mission's aim was primarily to investigate enforced disappearances, the targeting of the Shia Hazara community, the shrinking space for civil society organizations working on human rights, the clampdown on freedoms of expression and association, and the plight of coal miners and coal mine owners.

The mission visited Quetta, Turbat and Gwadar, meeting with representatives of political parties, civil society, the media, trade unions, professional associations, senior government officials and public office holders such as the Additional Home Secretary and the Governor of the province. The mission also met representatives of the Zameendar Action Committee, mine owners, coal miners and visited camps held for Baloch missing persons.

The team comprised I. A. Rehman (Honorary Spokesperson HRCP), Harris Khalique (Secretary-General HRCP), Habib Tahir (Vice-Chair, HRCP Balochistan), Husain Naqi (senior journalist and HRCP member), Justice (Retd) Zahoor Ahmed Shahwani, Tahir Hussain Khan (HRCP Council member), Dr Naazir Mahmood (HRCP member), Fareed Ahmad, Nadeem Abbas and Khushal Khan (HRCP staff members).



The fact-finding mission meets HRCP-trained human rights defenders from different districts of Balochistan

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

The HRCP mission met a number of political party representatives in Quetta and Makran, including the Awami National Party (ANP), Balochistan National Party (Mengal) (BNP-M), Hazara Democratic Party (HDP), National Party (NP), Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Pakistan National Party (Awami), Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N). The consensus appeared to be that Balochistan's political climate had deteriorated. Party representatives felt that the 2018 general elections were marked by fear and rampant horse-trading. Almost all the political parties HRCP consulted had reservations concerning the democratic credentials of the current provincial government, including allegations of the security apparatus being used against democratic forces and the elections having been manipulated in favour of candidates with 'pro-establishment' credentials.



HRCP's mission met representatives of the PkMAP

The PkMAP expressed its reservations concerning the delimitation of constituencies carried out after the last census (the delimitation according to which the 2018 elections were held); they had registered this concern earlier with the relevant authorities, including the Balochistan High Court. The party has also alleged that state agencies, including security forces, intelligence agencies and the FC, were involved in manipulating the elections in favour of the current provincial government led by the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP). The NP made similar assertions concerning the credibility of the elections. According to the BNP-M, when the state suppresses democratic voices, it paves the way for the kind of armed insurgencies that the province has seen for decades. There were also alarming allegations that the BAP was essentially a political front for state agencies.

Many political parties are aggravated by the large proportion of Balochistan's provincial budget that is allocated to security, and channelled through the FC. This has stalled development works in the province.

A chief concern among the political activists and leaders the mission met was the constant sense of intimidation effected by security forces and agencies, for example, in the shape of numerous security check-posts. Respondents were also aggravated by the large proportion of Balochistan's provincial budget that is allocated to security, and channelled through the FC. This has stalled development works in the province: health and education, for instance, do not appear to be a priority.

In addition, there are widespread allegations of state agency intervention in almost all aspects of Balochistan's administrative and political affairs, including curbs on freedom of association and expression. There are concerns that the perpetrators of several of the terrorist attacks targeting the Shia Hazara community and others – such as the attack that killed over 70 lawyers in Quetta in August 2016 – have yet to be brought to justice.

There is also considerable trepidation about the presence of the Taliban in the province, especially after the 16 August attack in Kuchlak, near Quetta, in which Hafiz Hamdullah – said to be the brother of Afghan Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhunzada – was killed. Both the BNP-M and PkMAP cited this attack as an example of the Taliban’s presence in Balochistan, adding that the presence of such militant outfits was not possible without the patronage of state institutions. The HDP, NP and BNP-M all remain concerned about threats to their political cadres and leaders.

Political parties allege that voices supporting democracy, equal rights and justice are not given any space in the mainstream media – thereby compounding Balochistan’s sense of isolation within the country.

Almost all the political parties the mission met criticized the lack of coverage given to Balochistan by the mainstream electronic and print media. They allege that the political narrative is controlled by state institutions and that voices supporting democracy, equal rights and justice are not given any space in the mainstream – thereby compounding Balochistan’s sense of isolation within the country.

The PkMAP shared its reservations concerning the way the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) has been targeted and harassed by security forces in Balochistan, citing the death of Arman Loni, a well-known PTM member (also associated with the PkMAP), who was killed allegedly by a police official at a protest in Loralai in February 2019. The party also criticized the arrest of Waziristan parliamentarians Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar, and felt that such developments were augmenting anger and frustration among the Pashtuns of the region.

The BNP and PkMAP remain apprehensive about replacing the levies force with the police, claiming that the crime rate is lower in areas under the levies force than in those controlled by the police. The parties claim that the police force is perceived as being less effective and less responsive to the local population, relative to the levies.

Political parties allege that the FC and security agencies have patronized the drug mafia, and used them to prevent people from attending political rallies.

The PkMAP and NP also spoke about the growing influence of the drug mafia in Balochistan. They allege that the FC and security agencies have patronized the drug mafia, using them as a political extension. They claim that individuals with strong ties to the drug mafia were elected to the provincial assembly in the 2018 elections, with support from the FC and security agencies. The PkMAP alleges that, when the opposition parties were preparing for a public rally in Quetta on 25 July 2019 against the incumbent provincial and federal governments, the security agencies and the FC relied on the drug mafia to prevent people from attending the rally from other districts such as Pishin and Killa Abdullah. Armed individuals associated with the drug mafia blocked roads on the outskirts of Quetta while the FC stood by. The provincial and federal governments have yet to respond to these serious allegations.

The people of the province feel they have yet to see any benefits accruing from CPEC and are not aware of the details of its projects or objectives.

Almost all the political parties HRCP spoke to expressed their reservations about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Baloch nationalist parties such as the NP view CPEC as a way for the state to enable the influx of foreigners into Balochistan, displacing local populations and depriving them of any viable opportunities that the CPEC projects might offer. There are also concerns about the future of the people of Gwadar, given that the port city is central to CPEC. At the time of writing this report, no CPEC-related project had been launched in Turbat. The impression is that the former Chief Minister of Balochistan, Dr Abdul Malik and his government were pressured into agreement on CPEC to prove that the people of Balochistan were on board with the project’s terms and conditions. However, the people of the province feel they have yet to see any benefits accruing from CPEC and are not aware of the details of its projects or objectives.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES / MISSING PERSONS

The stain of enforced disappearances and missing persons remains a recurrent feature of human rights violations in Balochistan. Representatives of the NP, BNP-M and PkMAP as well as many human rights activists informed the mission that, while some missing persons had returned home in recent months, many Baloch activists – including youth activists and those identified as dissidents or deemed associated with such elements – remained missing. Representatives of the NP claimed that, prior to the general elections in July 2018, some missing persons were ‘handed over’ to certain candidates of the BAP returned them to their families. The NP claims this was done to garner support in some areas for the BAP’s candidates by creating goodwill through such gestures.

While some missing persons were returned through the BNP-M in Turbat and certain other areas, these instances are viewed with scepticism because the elements responsible for enforced disappearances are not identified or held accountable.

More recently, some missing persons were returned through the BNP-M in Turbat and certain other areas. However, these instances are viewed with scepticism because the elements responsible for enforced disappearances are not identified or held accountable. More to the point, the practice of enforced disappearances has not stopped. The mission was told that four individuals, including a 10–12-year-old child, were picked up from Turbat recently. The child has yet to be recovered. In most cases, local police stations in such areas refuse to lodge a first information report (FIR).

The BNP-M has signed a six-point agreement with the federal government, which includes steps to recover missing persons. The party has continually emphasized that the federal government must legislate to criminalize enforced disappearances. Alarming, in Turbat, the mission was made aware of concerns that security agencies were using criminal elements involved in drug-related crimes to ‘disappear’ people.

HRCP visited a camp set up for missing persons adjacent to the Press Club in Quetta and met with rights activist Mama Qadeer and the families of missing persons. While the camp was set up over ten years ago, the provincial government of Balochistan has recently asked the organizers to obtain a no-objection certificate (NOC). Mama Qadeer told the mission that he and his supporters had tried to obtain an NOC from the authorities, but their behaviour had been very discouraging. He claimed they intended to keep the protest camp going regardless of whether the provincial authorities chose to issue an NOC.

A disconcerting trend is that of women being ‘disappeared’ in certain areas, such as Dera Bugti and Awaran. Yet these cases tend not to be reported or recorded, least of all by the mainstream media.

The numbers they cite are unsettling. Mama Qadeer claims that around 47,000 Baloch and around 35,000 Pashtuns are ‘missing’. The missing Pashtuns include people who have been ‘disappeared’ from the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Worryingly, the protest camp continues to receive threats from various quarters, including state agencies, according to the families of missing persons who join the protest camp regularly. Many family members shared stories of how their loved ones has been abducted and not heard from since. A disconcerting trend is that of women being ‘disappeared’ in certain areas of the Baloch belt such as Dera Bugti and Awaran. Yet these cases tend not to be reported or recorded, least of all by the mainstream media.

The duration of an enforced disappearance varies. In many cases, people have been missing for years – in some instances, for up to 18 years. It is worth noting that the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, which issues a monthly press release and records brief details of the number of cases pending before the Commission as well as missing persons that have been recovered, claims that Balochistan has the least number of missing persons (at the time of writing this report).



HRCP's mission members listen to victims' families at the missing persons camp in Quetta

Yet the figures do not reflect the reality on the ground. Victims' families complain that they are mistreated at the Commission's hearings and are far from satisfied with the progress the Commission claims to have made. Mama Qadeer and many families of missing persons feel that a great deal more must be done to address this thorny issue. Civil society organizations working in this area, for example, should consider organizing conferences and compelling political parties to engage openly with civil society to focus on enforced disappearances.

RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

THE SHIA HAZARA COMMUNITY

The mission met with a delegation of the HDP at their party office on Alamdar Road to discuss the situation of the Shia Hazara community, which remains persecuted to the point that it has been virtually ghettoised in the city of Quetta. Target killings and other attacks have taken a major toll on the community. While the number of attacks has decreased over the last four or five years, there are still enough instances of targeted violence that compel them to live with a sense of perpetual fear.

In Quetta, the Shia Hazara community resides primarily on Alamdar Road and Hazara Town. Their movement outside these areas is managed by security forces, including the FC. Their access to education and employment remains limited, their businesses have suffered and many other aspects of their lives have been affected severely. There is insufficient access to well-functioning hospitals and universities in these areas. A campus of Balochistan University was to have been set up on Alamdar Road, but there has been no progress in this regard. HDP leaders were of the view that this was because no land was available; they claimed that the authorities of the cantonment area, which is adjacent to Alamdar Road, should be approached and asked to provide land to make the prospect of a campus viable as soon as possible.

A primary concern expressed at this meeting was the lack of follow-up with, and support for, the families of victims of sectarian or terrorist attacks against the community. While victims' families are assured they will receive compensation as announced by the government, they say this is sporadic at best. The Hazara community has constantly urged the state, the provincial government and civil society organizations to support victims' families. The HDP demands that a commission be set up to focus on this issue.



Members of the Shia Hazara community express their concerns to the mission

It is worth noting that members of the community continue to seek asylum or migrate overseas, citing threats to their survival here. Those who choose to migrate face their own set of issues, given tightening policies among transit countries and destination countries. Recent changes in the immigration and refugee policies of European countries, Australia and the US have perforce decreased the number of Shia Hazara migrants, but it has not deterred the community in general from wanting to leave Pakistan.

Obstacles to what should be tasks the average Pakistani citizen might take for granted – such as having passports and national identity cards issued – remain a key problem for the Shia Hazara community. Government authorities ask them to prove that they are indeed ‘Pakistanis’ and that they have not ‘emigrated’ from Afghanistan. The community believes this is indicative of systemic discrimination.

Government authorities tend to ask members of the Shia Hazara community to prove that they are indeed ‘Pakistanis’ and that they have not ‘emigrated’ from Afghanistan. The community believes this is indicative of systemic discrimination.

The mission was informed that, after the recent census in 2017, the delimitation carried out in Quetta, as in other parts of the country, had led to an increase of one provincial assembly seat for the Hazara community. At present, of the nine provincial assembly seats for Quetta, two are from Hazara areas. Despite this increase in their representation in the provincial assembly, the community feels that their mandate is undermined repeatedly, which they believe is symptomatic of the negative way in which they are perceived in wider society.

While Shia Hazara representatives have tried to raise their community’s concerns in the provincial assembly, the HDP contends that the provincial government has not been able to do much for them because the latter are limited to managing civil affairs such as the construction of roads and buildings – the primary issue of security, which affects the Hazara community most, is controlled directly by the FC and other LEAs.

The mission was also told that the Hazara community at large and their youth in particular have become increasingly prone to mental health problems and post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the fear that surrounds their community and their ghettoization in the name of security. There is concern about growing aggression among Hazara youth, given their frustration and helplessness in the circumstances. They feel that the state has simply not done enough to address their legitimate concerns.

THE ZIKRI COMMUNITY

HRCP’s mission met with representatives of the Zikri community in Gwadar. Over the years, there has been an increase in discrimination against the community both by mainstream society and certain state institutions. A Zikri respondent to whom HRCP spoke alleged that some of the community’s youth had joined the military. However, after a few months, they returned home, claiming they had left because they were not allowed to worship according to their own faith and had been forced to offer their prayers according to the practices of the majority sect who served with them.

Allegedly, non-Zikri individuals and local clerics are promoting hate against the Zikri community – to the extent that locals had begun to avoid carrying out economic and social transactions with them.

Representatives of the community also said that some non-Zikri individuals and local clerics were engaged in promoting hate against the Zikri community – to the extent that locals had begun to avoid carrying out economic and social transactions with them because of their faith. The practice of *zabeeha*² for example by Zikri butchers, had been declared *haram* (unlawful).

THE HINDU AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

HRCP’s team met representatives of the Hindu and Christian communities in Quetta and with representatives of the Hindu community in Gwadar to assess the situation of religious minorities in Balochistan. Although there has been a decrease in the number of attacks against religious minorities in recent years, these communities continue to live with an inherent sense of fear.

² The Zikri method of slaughtering animals for meat.

Over the years, successive provincial governments have attempted to provide security to them and to their places of religious significance and worship, but the respondents to whom HRCP spoke felt that these were merely temporary measures and not long-term solutions that would protect their constitutional freedoms and security. While no reported cases have been registered under the blasphemy laws against members of religious minorities in Balochistan, this is no guarantee that Balochistan's minorities will remain safe from the misuse of these laws in the future.

The mission was told that the 5% job quota for religious minorities in the government sector was not being implemented properly in Balochistan. Representatives of the Christian community complained that they were still relegated to menial jobs such as janitorial services when they applied for employment. Discrimination against these communities is not limited to employment opportunities. There are serious reservations about the hate material that continues to surface in the educational curriculum. Indeed, no serious attempts have been made to address these issues.

Although there has been a decrease in the number of attacks against religious minorities in recent years, these communities continue to live with an inherent sense of fear.

Representatives of both the Hindu and Christian communities expressed their dissatisfaction with the current electoral process for minority communities. A common concern among these communities is that, even when their representatives are elected to Parliament, they do not do a great deal for their electorates because they have been elected to reserved seats, based on nominations by their political party. As such, many candidates adhere to their party's priorities, which may not necessarily include addressing issues specific to their religious communities.

Complaints of forced conversions are not as common in Balochistan as elsewhere for example, but there have been some such cases in the Hindu community. There are about 100 Hindu families settled in Gwadar, most of whom migrated from Sindh in the hope of finding work in Gwadar. A minority union councillor who met the mission said that Hindu children were still taught Islamic Studies at school. The community has been targeted several times. In 2009, a hand grenade was thrown at the house of a community member, killing two children. In 2013, another house belonging to a Hindu resident was targeted, killing two people. The perpetrators have not been traced.

Lack of space for burial grounds for Christians and *shamshanghats* for Hindus is another serious matter that requires urgent attention from the government authorities.

CIVIL SOCIETY

THE LEGAL COMMUNITY

HRCP's team visited the Balochistan High Court and met with lawyers to discuss the human rights situation in the province. While most lawyers agree that the overall security situation in Balochistan has improved slightly in the last few years, concerns about the security situation remain. The lack of progress on the implementation of the National Action Plan is cause for serious concern. Lawyers claim that the number of reported missing person cases has decreased, but this could also be because families are reluctant to report disappearances. In some cases, it is alleged that local police officials advise the families to remain silent because any protests might put the missing person's life at risk.

Many lawyers expressed their dissatisfaction with the judiciary and judicial processes in the province, claiming that they do not appear to be free to exercise their judgment.

Many lawyers shared their reservations about the credibility of the general elections of July 2018 and contended that the extent of rigging in Balochistan had been far more acute than in most other parts of the country. They questioned the legitimacy of the current provincial and federal governments and alleged that security forces had played an influential role before, during and after the elections.

Some lawyers also expressed concerns about the presence of the FC in Balochistan. They felt that the FC is allocated a large portion of the budget and that the police force appears to be almost redundant since the FC has taken charge. Many lawyers expressed their dissatisfaction with the judiciary and judicial processes in the province, claiming that they do not appear to be free to exercise their judgment. Many decisions and verdicts, they say, carry undertones of covert or even blatant arm-twisting, resulting in judgments that are deemed unfair. Some claimed that the judiciary and armed forces are given exemptions from accountability, and that no action is taken on important complaints filed in the Supreme Judicial Council.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Civil society organizations (CSOs) that met the mission said there was an increase in pressure not to work on human rights issues in the province. Intelligence personnel visit CSO offices regularly and demand to see documents related to their staff and the projects they are working on – such visits have become more frequent in recent years. Meanwhile, the process of registration for new CSOs has been made very complicated to the extent of discouraging them from registering at all.



HRCP's mission meets members of civil society in Quetta

Similarly, the process of registration renewal for existing CSOs has been made very cumbersome: they are required to submit many more additional documents, including audit reports, work plans, employee details and even travel documents. The mission was told that CSOs are now required to obtain clearance from local authorities in the form of NOCs to operate in certain districts.

Even projects related to health and education – which have no direct link to immediate ‘national security concerns’ – are monitored very closely. Working on ‘sensitive’ issues such as enforced disappearances and missing persons is even more difficult. Most CSOs that work in Balochistan are based in Quetta and, given these circumstances, their scope of work has contracted – as has their outreach to remote communities who may be in greater need of aid.

CSOs say there has been an increase in pressure not to work on human rights issues in the province. Intelligence personnel visit their offices regularly and demand to see documents related to their staff and the projects they are working on.

Similarly, foreign donors are finding it increasingly difficult to work in Balochistan: most have either shut down their operations or are in the process of doing so. As a result, thousands of CSO staff have lost their jobs in recent years, with no alternative job opportunities. The Balochistan government has yet to acknowledge and address this immediate concern, given that such organisations often fill the service delivery gap when the state is unable – or unwilling – to do so.

THE MEDIA

Several journalists met HRCP’s mission in Quetta and Gwadar to share their concerns about increasing censorship in the province. They alleged that it was increasingly impossible to report on ‘real’ issues in Balochistan in the prevailing atmosphere, with the underlying threat of abduction or even death for reporters who might be deemed to have ‘crossed the line’. They said there were restrictions on Balochi news publications: media houses were forced to submit dummies and refrain from circulating newspapers or magazines in Balochi. Respondents also complained about job losses and salary reductions and delays.

THE STATE OF EDUCATION

BALUCHISTAN UNIVERSITY, QUETTA

The mission visited Balochistan University in Quetta and met with members of the faculty and students on campus. The mission was told that there were around 10,000 students associated with the university. However, HRCF was perturbed to learn that the university had been declared the FC's zonal Chiltan Headquarter – the FC has been present at the university since 2016. At any given time, HRCF learnt that there are between 400 and 700 FC personnel deployed at the university. The mission was also informed that the FC was using the official living quarters of the Vice-Chancellor (VC) on the university premises. The university's sports complex has been turned into an interrogation cell. The hostels are manned by FC personnel and students are compelled to undergo security checks every time they enter the hostel.

Over the years, about ten university teachers and members of the administration have been killed in different incidents of violence. Security remains a concern, given the overall situation of the province, and this has been used to justify the deployment of FC personnel on campus. Several teachers and students complained that CCTV cameras had also been installed in different locations on campus. They allege that, while these cameras have been installed to improve campus security, the footage is used to invade the privacy of students and faculty. If, for instance, male and female students are found interacting, they are blackmailed by elements within the university's administration.

HRCF is perturbed to learn that Balochistan University has been declared the FC's zonal Chiltan Headquarter. At any given time, there are between 400 and 700 FC personnel deployed at the university.

According to the students who met the mission on campus, no major sports events have been organized at the university for the last ten or eleven years. Students who are involved in any political activities or are part of political parties' student wings are harassed by the university administration and are not allowed to organize any political or cultural activities on campus. According to Clause 8 of the Balochistan University Act 1996, student associations are not only permitted, but are also supposed to be represented on various administrative forums of the university, including its senate. This does not appear to be the case.

The mission was informed that only one students' association was currently functional. Referred to as the 'UBians', it had been set up and was managed by the university's administration. It is alleged that this association is used to de-politicize students on campus and that it does not represent their aspirations. Similarly, teachers who are thought to be sympathetic to the PTM or considered 'politically active' in any way are also harassed by the university's administration. The teachers who met the mission claimed that there were several outstanding complaints against the current VC on grounds of 'gross incompetence' and 'negligence of official duties'. Yet, the VC and elements within the administration continued to target and harass teachers who were perceived as not supporting the VC's position on several administrative affairs. Some teachers also alleged that the university was not being run according to its charter.

One students' association is currently functional. Referred to as the 'UBians', it has been set up and is managed by the university's administration.

The mission also met several students who had been barred from entering the campus. These included representatives of the Pashtun Student Organisation, the student wing of the PkMAP; the Pakhtun Students Federation, the student wing of the ANP; and students who are actively associated with the PTM. The university administration has filed cases against some of these students, accusing them of involvement in 'anti-state' activities and claiming that they have 'disturbed the peace' on campus.

While the university has not issued any official notification barring the entry of these students, the latter claim that their names and photographs have been circulated and are available at the check-posts set up at campus entry and exit points – as a result, these students are not allowed to enter the university. They also face cases registered against them in the lower courts in Quetta. Unsurprisingly, these circumstances have severely affected their access to higher education.

TURBAT AND GWADAR

The mission also met several teachers and students at various educational institutions in Turbat and Gwadar. Here, the government has banned the formation of student organizations and imposed restrictions on student campus activities through a notification.

In general, educational institutions in this area from the primary to higher level – including the Makran Medical College in Turbat – lack adequate infrastructure, such as well-resourced science laboratories and libraries, and human resources, including qualified teachers and postgraduate supervisors. Higher education students claimed that the sheer lack of research material available in libraries in Turbat and Gwadar meant they had to visit Quetta or Karachi to obtain the books and journals they needed to complete their theses. On visiting the Government High School in Gwadar, the mission noted that children were sitting under the open sky – the headmaster explained that the school had no electrical fans. In extreme cases, many schools have only one teacher.

One headmaster interviewed by the mission in southern Balochistan claimed that school funds are audited by military personnel – usually, junior army officials who visit the school and ask questions about expenditures.

The hostel at the Girls Degree College in Turbat has been occupied by faculty members, with obvious implications for female students who may have nowhere else to live if they wish to study. Moreover, the drop-out ratio at the secondary level in Makran Division is alarming. Many girls in this area do not go to school, despite which the government has done little to address the situation. The number of ‘ghost’ schools is also very high in Makran, with teachers receiving salaries without having performed their duties.

In Gwadar, too, many children remain out of school. The mission was told that students enrolled in these schools were earlier provided with food and a fixed stipend, giving both children and their parents an incentive to pursue their schooling. However, this practice has ceased, with an adverse impact on school enrolment.

One headmaster interviewed by the mission in southern Balochistan claimed that school funds are audited by military personnel – usually, junior army officials who visit the school and ask questions about expenditures. The headmaster and other faculty members are allegedly called in and asked to explain how the school budget is being spent. In one instance, a staff member claimed that an army official deployed in the city had said that the school could not use some newly acquired laboratory equipment until it had received an ‘order’ from the army official concerned.

Many students felt that poor governance had built sympathy for nationalist dissidents and that people were losing trust in parliamentary politics.

There is a general feeling of resentment whereby teachers claim they are ‘summoned’ by army officials to their offices and occasionally ‘humiliated’, although it is not clear on what grounds. Similarly, some portions of the building of the Technical College in Turbat have been taken over by the military. Ironically, despite being a sea-port, the area has no institution to provide marine engineering education.

The complex relationship between education and politics, as described in Turbat and Gwadar, merits some discussion. During its interaction with students, the mission inferred that most students held one of two political approaches. The first is that only peaceful political struggle within the confines of the Constitution will help resolve Balochistan's problems. This entails upholding the democratic process and participating in electoral politics. The second view is that the grievances of the people of Balochistan can only be resolved through armed struggle because the Constitution has been unable to accommodate people's needs and aspirations – that is, the view held by persons whom the state terms 'nationalist dissidents.'

Students who met the mission in Turbat felt that elections in Pakistan in general and those in Balochistan in particular tended to be manipulated, with the exception of the general elections held in 1970. They questioned why certain individuals were holding key ministries without any political background to their credit, and alleged that vested interests were at play.

Many students felt that poor governance had built sympathy for nationalist dissidents and that people were losing trust in parliamentary politics. The impression in some quarters is that neither provincial autonomy nor a strong federation can resolve Balochistan's problems. Some students told the mission that enforced disappearances and the recovery of mutilated bodies had encouraged people to take up arms against security forces. Indeed, some students felt that the Baloch were facing the same treatment that was meted out to the Bengalis in the 1960s, and feared grim repercussions. Some students claimed it had become near-impossible to speak up against alleged atrocities by state agencies against the local population for fear of enforced disappearances – including those of their family members. Meanwhile, the mainstream media has remained silent on this issue.

AGRICULTURE, ENERGY AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The mission met representatives of the Zameendar Action Committee who shared details of the problems faced by landlords in the province. The agriculture sector in Balochistan is heavily dependent on tube-wells. The water table has gone down to below 1,000 feet in several areas. Most cultivators continue to use flood irrigation to water their crops, while other relatively modern techniques, such as drip irrigation, are rarely used. The acute water shortage remains a major concern for cultivators. Balochistan has suffered prolonged periods of drought, the most recent heat wave dating back to 1997. Thousands of trees and different crop varieties have died, while farmers have lost thousands of farm animals to drought-related disease.

The acute water shortage remains a major concern for cultivators. Thousands of trees and different crop varieties have died, while farmers have lost thousands of farm animals to drought-related disease.

The delegation that met the mission claimed that the agriculture sector had suffered billions of rupees in annual losses because these issues remained unresolved. No previous government, they said, had indicated any serious intention to address these problems. They also claimed that most members of the current provincial assembly had not shown much interest in addressing their concerns.

At the time of writing this report, Habibullah Coastal Power Company Ltd is the only power plant in the province that generates electricity, implying that Balochistan must rely on the other provinces for its electricity supply. As such, electricity outages are common and the agriculture sector suffers as a result. The mission was told that the Zameendar Action Committee and other associations of landowners and farmers had staged demonstrations over the years against the neglect of Balochistan's agriculture sector. Representatives of the committee claimed that the government and LEAs had never stopped them from registering their protests.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

The mission discovered that there were nine vacant posts for specialist doctors at the district headquarter (DHQ) hospital in Gwadar – posts that have long since lain vacant. The hospital does not have specialist doctors, including a gynaecologist, a paediatrician and a cardiologist. The medical superintendent (MS) of the hospital told HRCP’s mission that locals are still not qualified to serve in these posts, whereas qualified doctors from elsewhere are reluctant to serve in Balochistan at all, given the prevailing sense of insecurity and lack of facilities such as access to proper residential quarters and education for family members.

While not enough locals are qualified to serve in medical positions, qualified doctors from elsewhere are reluctant to serve in Balochistan at all, given the prevailing sense of insecurity and lack of facilities such as proper residential quarters and education.

The medical facility does not have even the basic medical equipment needed to conduct tests such as MRIs and CT scans. The hospital’s CBC machine is defective and has evidently not been repaired in years. The MS claims that the hospital requires about PKR 115,000 to repair the CBC machine but simply does not have the funds available. Every patient that suffers a complicated health issue is referred either to Karachi or Quetta after being provided first aid. Essentially, the DHQ has become merely a first-aid facility.

The hospital building was in deplorable condition. The MS claims that the provincial chief minister has recently approved PKR 150 million for the construction of a new building. If this comes to fruition, the hospital will have at least enough rooms to accommodate in-patients and service out-patients. The mission was also told that a sizeable piece of land adjacent to the hospital, which is owned by the government, has not been used in about 40 years. The hospital administration has requested the district administration to donate this land to the hospital.

THE COALMINING SECTOR

COALMINERS

The mission met representatives of the United Mines Workers Union and Pakistan Mine Workers Federation to investigate the issues faced by coalminers in Balochistan. The mission visited a mine in the Sor Range owned and managed by the Pakistan Mineral Department Corporation (PMDC), an autonomous corporation under the administrative control of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources. The mission was informed that this was one of the better equipped mines in the province: miners were provided basic health facilities and there were ambulances available in cases of emergency.

The nearest hospitals are at least two hours' drive from most mines, making it very difficult to manage emergencies if miners meet serious accidents during their work.

Most other mines in the province, however, do not have such facilities available for miners. Lack of protective gear, medical facilities, ambulances and hospitals make the work hazardous. Most miners are not local and come from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa to find work. As a result, they have no local support base. They work on a contract basis and lack job security. Although miners are supposed to work no longer than eight-hour shifts, they are not stopped from working 10–12 hours a day. Working conditions are grim: little attention is given to health or safety, nor is clean drinking water and quality food provided.



Mission members speak to mine workers at a coal mine in the Sor Range

The nearest hospitals are at least two hours' drive from most mines, making it very difficult to manage emergencies if miners meet serious accidents during their work. Most mines are vulnerable to accidents because of improper scaffolding and can collapse suddenly due to seepage and earth movements inside. The government authorities responsible for ensuring safety and better working conditions in mines do not carry out regular inspections as they are supposed to. Every year, scores of miners are injured or killed during their work.

Moreover, there are no support systems in place for miners and their families in case of work-related injury or death. Miners cannot avail social security schemes such as those offered by the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) because they do not meet the criteria. Respondents felt that the EOBI should change its rules to make it possible for miners to register and avail the assistance offered by its schemes.

Allegedly, the FC charges a minimum of Rs 250 per ton of coal extracted from the mines, ostensibly as the 'cost' of providing security; this sum increases with the size of the mine. However, there appears to be no official provision for such a charge.

Union officials also told the mission that the FC charges a minimum of Rs 250 per ton of coal extracted from the mines; this sum increases with the size of the mine. This is in addition to the Rs 120–150 per ton charge levied by the government. The money that is charged by the FC is ostensibly the 'cost' of providing security. However, from what the mission could understand, there is no official provision for such a charge. It is not clear where this money is channelled since there are no proper auditing mechanisms in place. Many respondents said they considered this extortion, but the government has yet to address this grave problem.

MINE OWNERS

Several private mine owners shared their concerns with the mission, chiefly regarding the lack of concrete support from the government in the shape of facilities such as ambulances and hospitals to deal with emergencies – despite the royalties and taxes that are collected from mine owners. Mine owners said that the coal produced in Balochistan competes in quality with coal imports. Their argument is that, if billions of dollars are spent on importing coal, the same funds could be used to improve the state of the domestic mining sector. Owners claim that about 50,000–55,000 tons of coal are produced locally, although the demand is almost double this amount.

The mission was told that 90% of the people involved in the mining sector are unskilled labour: they are not provided sufficient training and end up learning on the job, which may compromise their safety. The Labour Department and Mines and Minerals Department have made no substantial effort to develop the capacity of the labour force in this sector. There is no support for the use of modern (and safer) techniques that would enhance the efficiency of the work. Most mine owners also complained about the irregular supply of electricity: this poses a significant risk to the lives of miners, who depend on the ventilation systems powered by electricity to prevent methane accumulation.

Most mine owners complained about the irregular supply of electricity: this poses a significant risk to the lives of miners, who depend on the ventilation systems powered by electricity to prevent methane accumulation.

Private coal mine owners expressed their reservations about being nominated in cases of accidents that result in miners' deaths. They claim that when such tragedies occur, they too suffer and cannot be held responsible if the government itself is doing so little to improve the mining infrastructure – which would otherwise save lives in the long term.

According to the mine owners who met the mission, the government authorities do not verify the required capacity and other necessary details of private companies and individuals before allotting them lands for mining. Some felt that the PMDC should not exist, following the 18th Amendment, because the revenue generated through mines should go to the province according to the formula set out in the amendment. The private mine owners, like the union officials to whom HRCP spoke, claimed that the FC collects about Rs 250–500 per ton of coal from them, which they deem extortion.

LABOUR UNIONS

The labour union representatives that met HRCP's mission said that 62 unions had been banned. They believe this infringes on their fundamental right to association. In several areas, such as the mines in Saindak in Chaghi District, workers are not allowed to form labour unions. Labour leaders believe that unions are disallowed, or at the very least discouraged, in areas where foreigners are involved. They also claim that any labour demonstrations they might try and organize to highlight their concerns are actively disrupted by the FC or other LEAs.



The mission meeting labour union members

The depth of the mines in the province remain a serious concern: some go as deep as 6,000 feet or more: the deeper a mine, the more vulnerable miners are to collapsing shafts. It is worth noting that Pakistan has not ratified ILO Convention 176, which specifies the maximum depth of a mine in relation to workers' safety³.

Labour leaders believe that unions are disallowed, or at the very least discouraged, in areas where foreigners are involved.

Some labour leaders felt that, instead of leasing out most of their mines, the PMDC should take charge of all of them. They believe this will benefit the miners who work there because the PMDC tends to provide basic facilities such as ambulances and access to hospitals – unlike most other mines, which do not. They also emphasized the need for the government to improve the infrastructure of the mining sector and provide training programs for miners. Almost all the labour unions the mission met complained about what they termed 'extortion' on the part of the FC, which allegedly collects money per ton of coal extracted. In some instances, non-state actors do the same, threatening or even attacking labour leaders who do not comply.

³ https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C176

THE FISHING COMMUNITY

Members of the fishing community in Gwadar shared their concerns in relation to the ongoing construction of the East Bay Express that is to connect the coastal highway to Gwadar Port under CPEC. If this is completed without providing an alternative route to the fishing community in the area, they will be at risk of losing their livelihoods. This could affect up to 70,000 people whose daily household expenditure and needs are met by fishing. Respondents said they also feared the fishing auction hall may be demolished due to the construction of East Bay.

PARLIAMENTARIANS AND STATE FUNCTIONARIES

The HRCP mission met several key parliamentarians and government functionaries, who discussed their view of the human rights situation in Balochistan.

GOVERNOR BALOCHISTAN

On meeting the Governor of Balochistan, Amanullah Khan Yasinzai, at his office in Quetta, the Governor said he appreciated the efforts HRCP was making in this regard. The mission raised several issues with the Governor, including the presence of the FC in Balochistan, the plight of coalminers, enforced disappearances and missing persons, and the overall state of human rights in the province. The Governor assured the mission that his office would investigate these matters. On the issue of missing persons, the Governor claimed that the number of enforced disappearances has decreased, adding that, for the time being, the focus should remain on those missing persons who have returned home and that the circumstances were not suitable for pursuing those responsible for perpetrating these acts.

The Governor claimed that the number of enforced disappearances has decreased, adding that, the focus should remain on those missing persons who have returned home as the circumstances were not suitable for pursuing those responsible for perpetrating these acts.

The mission briefly discussed the impact of CPEC on Balochistan. The Governor observed that the pace of work on projects related to CPEC would soon gain momentum and that the people of Balochistan – in particular, its youth – would benefit from the ensuing job opportunities. While discussing the issues faced by the agricultural sector, the Governor told the mission that the federal and provincial governments were considering building more small dams in the province to help farmers.



HRCP's mission meets the Governor of Balochistan, Amanullah Khan Yasinzai

FINANCE MINISTER BALOCHISTAN

The mission met Balochistan's Finance Minister Zahoor Buleidi in Turbat. Contending that no one political party can be blamed for the situation in the province, the minister claimed that most of the responsibility for the deteriorating situation in Balochistan lies with Baloch dissidents. He alleged that they do not want development in the province and threaten and attack individuals and groups who want to participate in the democratic process. He told the mission that, in his village, militants had killed several innocent people. Mr Buleidi's view was that Balochistan was experiencing a war-like situation and that such conditions were not conducive to human rights. He claimed that a doctor was killed by militants

recently; when the minister condemned the killing, he received a call from a militant leader who threatened him with dire consequences. The minister felt strongly that the state could not afford to ignore the prevailing circumstances and must act now.

MEMBER OF THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

HRCP's mission met a member of Balochistan's provincial assembly, Lala Rashid, in Turbat. He claimed that, although the state was doing its best to improve conditions in the province, Baloch insurgents were attempting to prolong the deteriorating law and order situation because it benefitted them. He said that militants did not even spare doctors and teachers, instead targeting them regularly, as well as other civilians. The fear this created, he alleged, discouraged qualified people from serving in Balochistan. However, he also claimed that law and order was improving due to the efforts of the current provincial government.

ADDITIONAL HOME SECRETARY BALOCHISTAN

The Additional Home Secretary Bashir Bangulzai met HRCP's mission at his office in Quetta. The secretary briefed the mission on the human rights situation in the province. Speaking about the 2018 general elections, he agreed that some irregularities may have occurred. The secretary informed the mission that the number of cases of missing persons had decreased. He echoed concerns about the slow pace of work on CPEC-related projects in the province. The mission also discussed problems related to Balochistan's drug mafia; the secretary said that the government was aware of this problem and was attempting to address it.

COMMISSIONER MAKRAN DIVISION

HRCP's mission met the Commissioner of the Makran Division, Capt (Retd) Tariq Zehri, in Turbat. The Commissioner observed that, for the first time in the country and Balochistan's history, the post of Chief Minister had been granted to the people of Makran Division through the democratic process. He felt this was a key development and hoped it would lead to the political empowerment of the Makran region. He claimed that some disgruntled Baloch leaders were working against the interests of Balochistan and Pakistan, adding that they were being used as pawns of certain foreign countries hostile to Pakistan.

The Commissioner termed CPEC a 'game changer' for the people of Balochistan. He believes the projects under CPEC will produce some 100,000 jobs for locals. He informed the mission that the construction of 13 markets in the border region are in the pipeline and once they are built, there will be numerous job and business opportunities for the local population. He was also hopeful that industrial zones would also be established in this region.

He said the state of Pakistan had taken some harsh actions in the province that had irked the locals, citing the killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti. His view was that the state had realized its error and tried to reform its way of dealing with the people of Balochistan. The state had offered the locals job opportunities in the armed forces. He claimed that the share of Baloch people in the armed forces had increased from 6% percent to 22%.

SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT POLICE GWADAR

On meeting the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) of Gwadar at his office, the mission was told that enforced disappearances did not occur in Gwadar District. The SSP also claimed that civil society was very active in the area and that, apart from occasional attacks – such as the attacks on the Pearl Continental Hotel in Gwadar and in Ormara – the law and order situation was satisfactory. He claimed the police was very cooperative and tried to provide relief to the local population. Although there are separate women's desks established at every police station, there are no separate women's police stations in Gwadar. The SSP informed the mission that a complaint registration mechanism had also been launched, which would soon be digitized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its findings, the HRCF fact-finding mission has made the following recommendations:

- Enforced disappearances must cease. For this to happen, the following measures are needed: the provincial government of Balochistan and the federal government must ensure the recovery of all missing persons. A law that criminalizes enforced disappearances, punishes the perpetrators and compensates victims' families must be enacted expeditiously. Those involved in cases of enforced disappearances must be identified and held accountable for their actions. If there are allegations against any missing persons of being involved in criminal or anti-state activities, they should be produced in court and the law should be allowed to take its course.
- The FC should stop using Balochistan University as a base. Control of the university should revert to the civilian administration. Similarly, the Technical College in Turbat should not be used by LEAs and its control should revert to the college administration. The provincial government should take immediate notice of these cases and any other instances where LEAs have taken control of colleges or universities, and should ensure that educational facilities are no longer used as bases by LEAs.
- The provincial government should improve its inspection mechanisms for coalmines. Coalminers should be provided with social security as well as access to health facilities in emergencies. The provincial authorities should ensure that mines become far safer workplaces and that training programs are devised for coalminers, taking safety measures into account. In addition, well-equipped and/or mobile hospitals should be set up in mining areas with adequate resources to take care of burn injuries.
- The provincial government and federal government must take notice of the charges levied by the FC on the coal being extracted from mines in the province. This practice must be checked.
- Balochistan needs more small dams to facilitate farmers, given the long spells of drought that the province experiences.
- The provincial government needs to focus on improving the health and education sectors by investing its resources more effectively and with a view to reaching those on the margins. In addition, it should consider setting up technical institutions that cater to the mining and fishing sectors.
- The Shia Hazara community deserves to live in peace and safety. The provincial government should engage with the community and devise ways that allow the community to live in the province in peace, without needing to be relegated to ghetto-like areas.
- The Zikri community should be provided protection against harassment and attacks; they must be allowed to freely practice their religious beliefs. In addition, seminaries that may be preaching hatred against the Zikri community should be monitored and this practice checked.
- Discrimination against religious minorities needs to be checked: the provincial authorities must do more to ensure that these communities can live in peace as part of wider society in Balochistan. As one example, the curricula in schools and colleges should be revised in accordance with local culture and historical facts, and all hate material removed.
- The provincial authorities must address women's concerns, key among them being that women are still deprived of their inheritance rights in many areas.
- The undue and unwarranted interference of law enforcement and security agencies in political affairs and civilian administrative matters needs to be eliminated. The provincial government and civilian administration must be in charge of running the affairs of the province to ensure Balochistan's provincial autonomy.
- The harassment of civil society organizations and human rights defenders must end: they must be allowed to continue their much-needed relief, development and human rights work in the province.
- The fishing community in Gwadar should be allowed to continue to earn their livelihood through fishing, despite any ongoing or planned projects under CPEC. If the scope of any such projects is likely to affect their access to the sea, such projects should be reshaped in accordance with the

concerns of the fishing community. In addition, their children should be afforded scholarships for education to give them access to other livelihoods.

- The provincial government must take notice of the threats to freedom of expression and association in Balochistan. Media freedoms should be protected and journalists allowed to report on issues that matter to the people of Balochistan.
- The federal and provincial governments should do more to ensure that the people of Balochistan are taken on board with regard to projects that have either been initiated or that are planned for the province. This is critical if the CPEC projects are to be implemented successfully from a pro-people perspective.
- Publications, including newspapers and periodicals, in Balochistan's ethnic languages, such as Balochi and Brahui, should be encouraged.



Human Rights Commission of Pakistan