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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 Nord-Sud XXI - North-South XXI, 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.

[22 May 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Killings of minorities groups in Pakistan

On May 14, 2022, two Sikh businessmen were shot dead by unidentified assailants in broad daylight in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in Pakistan. These murders add to an increasing list of fatal violence against the minority Sikh community in Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Province is home to a large population of the Sikh minority community and has been the situs of targeted killings of this vulnerable group. These recent shootings follow closely on the heels of the murder of a Sikh doctor in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in September last year, and a Sikh journalist in the year 2020.

While officials of Pakistan as well the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has been quick to condemn these incidents, precious little appears to have been achieved in terms of bringing the perpetrators to justice. No sustained efforts are forthcoming from the State to prevent escalation of these killings, which in turn have the chilling effect of creating a climate of fear for Sikhs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular, and minorities in Pakistan in general. Such incidents also create inter-faith disharmony, and have the potential of causing internal displacement of the Sikh minority community in Pakistan.

Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Adopted by General Assembly Resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992 (Minorities Declaration), enjoin States to protect the existence of ethnic minorities within their territory. Continuing inaction and apathy on the part of Pakistan to curb violence against Sikh minorities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is a gross violation of Article 27 of the ICCPR as well as the Minorities Declaration.

Considering that the issue of recurrent targeted violence against Sikhs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has gone unaddressed by Pakistan, this Council is urged to take urgent intervening measures and call for swift and efficacious measures on the part of Pakistan to live up to its commitments under international human rights instruments.

Illegal invocation of blasphemy laws against 8 –year old Hindu child in Pakistan

In perhaps the most invidious invocation of draconian blasphemy laws in Pakistan, an eight year old Hindu boy was charged with committing blasphemy. The boy potentially faces a sentence of hanging unto death if the charges are believed by the courts in the State. Currently, the plight of the boy and their family is unknown as the boy is in protective custody, and the family are believed to be in hiding.

Blasphemy laws in Pakistan are notoriously abused. Often employed against minorities, blasphemy laws in the State carry heavy sentences including the death penalty. The Hindu boy, in this case, has been alleged to have ‘urinated’ inside a mosque where religious books were kept.

While the true version of events will be subject to judicial scrutiny, it is the common experience of a minority charged with blasphemy in the State to be subjected to mob/vigilante justice. Previous gruesome incidents have resulted in the lynching of blasphemy accused, even before a competent court could preside over the allegations.

Blasphemy laws in Pakistan have come under critical scrutiny by various international organizations, including Human Rights Council. Yet, being a Muslim majority country, the State has done precious little to reign in the abuse of these laws. Moreover, the State appears to have resorted to appease the majoritarian sentiment by invoking the heft of criminal law against the Hindu boy.

Legal commentators have claimed that this incident is egregious and has no precedent in the history of the State-never has a child been charged with having committed blasphemy in the State. Pakistan is signatory to both the International Convention on CPR as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Given that the boy is either likely to face a death

penalty if found guilty, or societal violence in the hands of fanatic mobs, Pakistan is miserably failing in its obligations under these conventions by not dropping the charges.

Nord Sud XXI beseeches this Council to take urgent note of the plight of this 8 year old Hindu boy, and Pakistan is required to be called upon to urgently drop the blasphemy charges on him and ensure adequate protection to the life and property of the boy and his family.

We are deeply concerned about the plight of the Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan. Nord Sud XXI invites the Council to take immediate steps to hold Pakistan accountable for the continued discrimination, harassment and violence faced by the the Ahmadiyya community. In addition, our organization urges the council's mandate holders to visit the country to shed light on the atrocities to which Ahmadiyyas continue to suffer.
