



General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 February 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

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 Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment, 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.

[29 January 2024]

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



Systematic Appropriation of Land Belonging to Indigenous Peoples of Sindh by the Pakistan Army and Commercial Entities

The Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment implores your urgent attention to a pervasive and systematic violation of human rights in Sindh, Pakistan. The Pakistan army's acquisition of 1.3 million acres of land in Sindh for corporate farming is a critical part of a broader, long-standing policy that infringes upon the basic human rights of the Indigenous Sindhi people, including their rights to life, food, and economic well-being.

Historically, the coercion and exodus of Sindhi Hindus at the inception of Pakistan marked the beginning of extensive land appropriation in Sindh. The situation was exacerbated post-1955 with the Ghulam Muhammad Barrage completion, leading to the allocation of millions of acres to the army and their affiliates. This process, devoid of transparency and legal propriety, involved an unelected interim government with no public bidding and ambiguous terms of allocation. The military from Punjab does not represent the local Indigenous people.

We wish to highlight that there has been a systematic policy of expropriating land from Sindhi people to benefit commercial entities, often with ties to the military. A recent, alarming example is the plight of residents in the Dhabeji area of Sindh. Scores of centuries-old villages are threatened as over 50,000 acres of their land are being occupied by the army for military manoeuvres and field firing purposes.

Additionally, Bahria Town in Karachi has occupied more than 46,000 acres of land. This occupation was declared illegal by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, yet it exemplifies the ongoing disregard for legal processes and the rights of the indigenous populace.

Considering these developments, the Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment respectfully requests the United Nations to:

1. Urge the Pakistani government to halt the ongoing land grabs in Sindh.
2. Ensure the return of seized lands to their rightful Sindhi owners.
3. Promote the allocation of lands intended for corporate farming to land-less peasants to alleviate poverty and malnutrition in Sindh.
4. Demand transparency, legal compliance, and accountability in all regional land transfers, especially those involving commercial and military entities.

These actions are imperative to address the severe human rights violations and to uphold the dignity and rights of the Indigenous Sindhi people.

We thank the Council for its consideration and look forward to your support in rectifying these grave injustices.
