



General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 September 2022

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-first session

12 September–7 October 2022

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.

[21 August 2022]

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



Why is Balochistan Facing a Tsunami of Extra-judicial Executions?

On July 14, 2022, the Pakistan Army claimed to have killed 9 militants belonging to the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) during an operation. The Human Rights Council of Balochistan (HRC Balochistan) has noted that the majority of these alleged militants have been identified as people who had been registered as enforced disappearances and who had remained in the custody of the Pakistan Army for months and in some cases, such as that of Shams Satakazai, one of the victims, since 2017.¹ The HRC Balochistan has alluded to the volume of evidence in this case suggesting these people were abducted by the Army and killed in staged encounters. Local remedies having failed, they have called upon the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to take notice of these atrocities.

This is not an isolated event. In July alone, HRC Balochistan noted that 45 people were forcibly disappeared by various forces including the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), Frontier Corps and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). 48 killings were documented by HRC Balochistan in this period. HRC Balochistan claims that enforced disappearances are a tool used by the Pakistani Army to terrorize people or communities that question its activities or call for human rights or accountability for these actions. Typically, those who are most engaged in seeking justice or providing support to victims are targeted by these agencies.

The Pakistani security establishment's practice of extrajudicially executing people in alleged encounters has been noted before on many occasions, and there is good reason to view official accounts with skepticism. For instance, a notorious encounter specialist of the Karachi police, a man named Rao Anwar Ahmed Khan, with strong ties to the security establishment and politicians, killed at least 444 people in encounters between 2011 and 2018. In 745 supposed encounters of his, not even a single policeman was injured, let alone killed.² These statistics strain the credulity of anyone wishing to give the concerned departments, their supervisors or the justice system as a whole, the benefit of doubt.

Rao Anwar, as he is known, has been blacklisted by the United States of America. He was among the 18 people whom the Trump Administration imposed economic sanctions upon for suspected human rights violations. The United States of America Treasury Department in a statement noted that he was involved in over 400 killings and led a network of police and criminal thugs responsible for extortion, land-grabbing, narcotics

trafficking and murder.³ Despite the Pakistan Supreme Court taking suo moto notice over his activities, he soon obtained bail from an anti-terrorism Court and remains at large.⁴

It is self-evident that a man with this sort of record could not have survived and thrived in the absence of an environment where his activities were condoned and encouraged by powerful backers. Even senior officers in the Pakistan Police Service such as former Sindh IGP Afzal Shigri have confirmed that there was in place a policy of allowing extrajudicial killings and giving a free hand to police officers who were seen as effective in dealing with 'troublesome elements'.⁵

Pakistan is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and has ratified it on Jun 23, 2010. Article 14 of the ICCPR provides for the provision for fair trial, the right to be presumed innocent and to have

one's case properly represented and heard.⁷ In its efforts to deal with alleged terrorism or insurgency, Pakistan has utterly abandoned any attempt to provide its citizens with fair trials, instead offering security officers a free hand to kill innocents and target entire communities with the objective of terrorizing them, while refusing to pay any scrutiny whatsoever to claims that these killings occurred in staged encounters.

The policy of encounter killings in Balochistan and elsewhere in Pakistan have taken an enormous toll on the affected communities and cost countless lives while doing little to prevent the spread of terrorism, insurgency and radicalization across Pakistan. As a signatory to the ICCPR it is incumbent upon Pakistan to end this policy of extra-judicial killing, investigate and punish those who have committed murders under the guise of encounters and provide justice and compensation to the affected families and communities.

Baloch Voice Association (BVA), Baloch Voice Foundation (BVF), Voice for Baloch Missing Persons VBMP), Baloch Peoples Congress (BPC), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

1 <https://hrcbalochistan.com/balochistan-48-disappeared-48-killed-in-july/>

2 <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/273313-444-people-killed-in-encounters-led-by-rao-anwar-report>

3 <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm852>

4 <https://www.dawn.com/news/1521511>

5 <https://www.thenews.com.pk/tns/detail/593473-the-making-of-rao-anwar>

6 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Treaty=CCPR&Lang=en

7 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>