

On the plight of

(World Sindhi Institute)

From the desk of **WSJ**
minorities in province of Sindh, Pakistan

Honourable

Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen and

distinguished Delegates Good Afternoon.

On behalf of World Sindhi institute, its President, Sohail Ansari and General secretary Humaira Rahman, I extend the sincere appreciation for organising this event on minorities issues. Indeed SWI feels privileged and encouraged to be part of this global voice in support of minorities anywhere every where around the globe .

I avail my self here an opportunity to briefly introduce the WSI. The WSI , World Sindhi Institute, is diaspora organisation based in Washington, DC. WSI is committed to achieving human rights for the Sindhis of Sindh in southeastern Pakistan through a nonviolent advocacy, activism and academic campaign. WSI brings together Sindhis of all religious and geographical backgrounds and their supporters in a proactive, progressive movement whose purpose is to inform others of the human rights atrocities occurring in Sindh.

Madam chairperson,

Province of Sindh is increasingly becoming hostile place to minorities living in Sindh , Given the fact that most of the minorities population is settled in province of Sindh, plight of minorities living over there merits immediate attention . To illustrate the atrocities and hate related practices being faced by minorities. I would like to quote here a tragic event of defiling of corpse of Bhooro bheel . Bheel is local lingua for the low caste Hindu minority living in Sindh . His death occurred due to road accident , which happened two days before his death, he was buried in local graveyard where traditionally low caste Hindus and Muslims bury there dead members. However very next day group of armed individuals lead by local cleric of Muslim religious seminary exhumed his grave and threw corpse out of the graveyard claiming it was against Sharia to bury member of any minority member near Muslims' graves. Bhooro Bheel's body remained unprotected near the road for almost eight hours as his family and relatives were scared of the mob . Law enforcement agencies did not bother to intervene and prevent the incident.

It is important to mention here that Hindus are the largest religious minority in Pakistan, and a majority of them dwell in Sindh who consider it their motherland.

For the past decade Minorities have been facing persecution like kidnappings for ransom, forced conversions of young girls. Such events have prompted the exodus of minorities from Sindh.

Legal structure of Pakistan has not proved in practice to completely protect the rights of minorities . In many cases it has miserably failed to prevent the abuse of Hudood ordinance and blasphemy laws. These laws were introduced by late seventy's by dictatorial regime led by General Zia ul haq and still continue to be part of legal codes.

Almost two years back prominent politicians in Pakistan were shot dead over their opposition to Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws. It included the then sitting governor of Punjab province Salman Taseer and a minister for minorities Shahbaz Bhatti, there only crime was to point to the need for public debate of laws on media. Such high profile killings speak of intensity of issue on one hand and intolerance and extremism on the other hand. Abuse of these laws is continuously creating a climate of fear among Pakistan's religious minorities and progressive Muslim population as well .

There is critical and urgent need to de-Islamise the Pakistan's legal system. Pakistani federal and provincial government should be emphasised to review laws to make it more democratic ,

- Violation of basic rights is not only limited to religious minorities it is visible among the ethnic population of Sindhi and Baloch. International organisation like UN has shown and proved sensitivity to enforced disappearances and extra - judicial deaths of political activists from Sindh and Balochistan.

Not long ago the UN sent its fact finding mission related to enforced disappearance and extra judicial deaths to province of sindh and Balochistan .Mission in its report has established the violation of basic rights .

Madam chairperson,

I demand your attention here , I will conclude my brief speech here with the lines that Until and unless in countries like Pakistan the democratic forces are not preferred and supported against anti - democratic forces there is no solution possible to issues related to basic human, social and political rights. Only progressive and democratic forces can have potential and will to impart liberty to populace .let us agree that absence of democratic values opens doors to all forms of atrocities against Human self.

Thank you for your attention.