

15<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues

**World Sindhi Congress**

By

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Dear Mr President

I want to bring your attention to the dire condition of Sindhis in Pakistan. In particular, the Recent flooding, where Sindh has been most affected. Pakistan's government claims that these floods are the result of climate change. Still, experts have proved that this disaster was the result of pure negligence of the Pakistan state and misappropriation of natural water and lack of necessary infrastructure improvements after the 2010 floods.

For this year's floods, Sindhis, the most affected by these floods, still have not received adequate shelter and healthcare, which are necessities of a human being. At the same time, Pakistan continues to have deals to buy military equipment such as A16.

Challenges faced by Sindhis are not only limited to human-made disasters, land grabbing, and demolition of 100s of indigenous villages of Sindhi to support affluent investors but the rise of extremisms which is still supported by the Pakistani establishment, particularly in Sindh, which has resulted in 100s of Sindhi Hindus to leave their motherland.

Currently, more than 1000 Sindhi Hindu and then Christian underage girls are kidnapped and forced into Muslim marriages. Sindhi Hindus are more likely to face blasphemy charges and frequent targets for mob violence. Police detained a Sindhi Hindu man, Prof Notan Lal, on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2019. He was falsely accused of insulting Prophet Mohamad by a student; He was sentenced to 25 years in Prison under Article 295 © of the Pakistan Penal Code in Feb 2022 despite the student retracting his accusation.

In addition to the systematic violence, Sindhi human rights activists are significantly more likely to be targeted for enforced disappearances than others. Since 2010, more than 1200 Sindhis have gone missing in Sindh.

I urge the international community to put pressure on Pakistan to

- that international aid should go to the most affected people of Sindh,

- Bring all missing Sindhi Human Rights activists to justice
- Abolish all blasphemy laws and allow Prof Notal Lal to be free.
- To put a stopper on the forced conversion practice of underage girls.

Finally, I urge the international community to support Sindhis in their struggle for their right to self-determination as Sindhis, whose history, culture and heritage of 5000 years have suffered, and their existence is under threat under Pakistani occupation.

Thank you, Mr President.