

**Letter to Michelle Bachelet-
UN high commissioner for
human rights about the
situation Balochistan**



Baloch Students Organization Azad



H.E. Mrs. Michelle Bachelet
United Nations High Commissioner
For Human Rights

Re: Letter to Michelle Bachelet-UN High Commissioner for Human Rights about the situation in Balochistan

Your Excellency,

I congratulate you on your recent appointment as the next United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights you will be faced with the world's most difficult challenges at this difficult juncture of worse state of human rights around the globe: the ongoing wars and conflicts, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions and due to which mass displacement of people all around the world. However, I trust you will make a serious effort and address all these challenges.

I would like to draw your attention towards unheard and serious human rights situation in Balochistan, Pakistan. The Baloch people have been systematically marginalized and deprived of basic rights. Moreover, those who stand against state's discriminate and brutal policies towards Baloch people, are subjected to enforced disappearance and most of the time executed extrajudicially. Over the years, Baloch human rights groups and international human rights institutions on the situation of Balochistan have reported serious continuing human rights violations against Baloch people.

For last one decade, we are witnessing a barrage of indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians and crackdown against political activists, human rights defenders, journalists and intellectuals including members and leadership of Baloch Students Organization-Azad. On June 9, 2009, Zakir Majeed, Ex-Vice Chairman of Baloch Students Organization-Azad (BSO-A) was forcibly disappeared by security forces and is still missing. On August 14, 2013, Ex-General Secretary of BSO-A, Raza Jahangir was extra judicially executed by forces in Turbat. On March 18, 2014, Ex-Chairman of BSO-A, Zahid Baloch was forcibly disappeared in daylight in front of several eyewitnesses from Quetta, capital of Balochistan. His whereabouts are unknown to this date. Similarly, the Ex-Information Secretary, Shabir Baloch was abducted by forces on October 4, 2016 and Ex-General Secretary, Sanaullah, Ex-Central Committee Members, Naseer Ahmed and Hassam are forcibly disappeared by law enforcement agencies on November 15, 2017.

The human rights institutions in Balochistan have reported more than 20,000 enforced disappeared persons in Balochistan. On the contrary, the Pakistan Government and security establishment's response to these documented reports have ranged from blanket of denials of any wrongdoing by security forces to numerous attempts to discredit reports of abuses by human rights organizations, eyewitnesses and survivors. Pakistan's security forces have direct control over operations in Balochistan and are granted authority from the civilian government and immunity from justice. To date, no one has been investigated, charged or tried for these offenses.

A commission, Commission on Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, is formed led by Justice(r) Javed Iqbal to investigate into cases of enforced disappearances. Instead of investigating the enforced disappearances cases and involvement of law enforcement agencies in abduction and execution of people, the commission has distorted the data to deceive international community about the serious human rights situation in Balochistan. According to the commission report, there are only 125 enforced disappearance cases in Balochistan. However, Baloch Human Rights Organization (BHRO) has published the list of 1809 enforced disappeared people in 2016, 2114 in 2017 and 485 enforced disappearances in the first half of 2018.

Students have always remained the most vital organ of any nation and considered future pillars of the society. However, the performance of the education department in Balochistan has never been satisfactory. According to the United Nations Education Monitoring Report, 70% of students in Balochistan are out of schools. There are more than 5000 ghost schools which only exist in Government records. Moreover, for last few years, with the increase in deployment of soldiers in Balochistan, forces have occupied the majority of school buildings in Makran region and utilizing them for military purposes. Forces are present in almost all major educational institutions including the University of Balochistan which reflects a military camp more than an educational institution. The students are continuing their studies in deep distress.

Callous attacks against women, children continue to occur in recent months as part of widespread "Collective Punishment" policy of security forces in Balochistan. Last month on July 22, 2018, forces raided house of Allah Bakhsh in district Awaran of Balochistan and whisked away her wife, Noor Malik and two daughters, Hasina, 20, and Samina, 18. His teenage son, Zameer was later abducted from district Panjgur. In the following month on August 8, 2018, forces raided Sanaullah's home in Greshag, district Khuzdar and took away his wife Adeela and her three minor daughters, Soorat, 6, Sammo, 4, and an infant Chammi. Their father, Sanaullah is abducted by forces before and is still in the custody of forces.

I urge you to proactively engage with Government of Pakistan and Chief of Army Staff through possible visit to Balochistan and convey your concern about the gravity of the situation in Balochistan and strongly encourage them to allow an international independent investigation into allegations of human rights abuses and enforced disappearances of thousands of activists by security forces in Balochistan and effectively address the systematic genocide of Baloch people. I believe that your leadership on this matter would send a powerful message to the government and military and could prevent further atrocities and violations in Balochistan.

Sincerely,

Sohrab Baloch
Chairman
Baloch Students Organization Azad