**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**On Issues Related To**

**HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES and**

**CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION**

**In Pakistan and Around the World**

For the United Nations Human Rights Council,

United States Department of State, and United States Congress



April 2021

**Vision Statement**

Today, humanity faces a number of unprecedented challenges. We write these recommendations in solidarity with the peoples of many nations who disproportionately suffer in the face of these crises, which include the rising frequency of once-in-a-generation climate anomalies and the state-sponsored violence against marginalized people around the world.

These dual threats are amplified in developing countries. In the first two years of this decade alone, wildfires in California, powerful storms along the Gulf Coast, and most recently the polar vortex which inundated the heart of the United States have upended lives alongside a devastating plague of locusts in eastern Africa, rising sea levels across South Asia, and debilitating drought in Central America. Faced with these new realities, billions of people have needed to adapt their daily habits and customs, from what food is consumed and the way food is grown to changing techniques and materials used to build homes. Those who do not adapt, or are unable to, lose their livelihoods or even their lives.

If this were not enough of a challenge for people in the Global South, the changing climate acts as an omnipresent backdrop to human rights violations sponsored by governments around the world, including enforced disappearance. Thousands of students, teachers, activists, and journalists from Mexico to Sri Lanka are forcibly disappeared, or abducted, at the hands of state militant actors each year. The victims of these abductions receive no due process and rarely return to their loved ones, who are forced to wonder if their child, sibling, or spouse is even still alive with each passing day.

Sindh, a southern province in Pakistan, represents a case study in the debilitating impacts that both the changing climate and human rights abuses may inflict on a society when unfolding at once. For decades, the indigenous people of Sindh – Sindhis – have been subject to silenced, inhumane abuse at the hands of the Pakistani Armed Forces. The novel coronavirus pandemic has only accelerated the number of enforced disappearances, as the government acts to suppress would-be opposition. The United Nations Worked Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances recently reported that from May 2019 to May 2020 the number of outstanding cases in Sindh had risen from 731 to 813, and these statistics reflect only cases which have been reported by the family and friends of victims; many go unreported for legitimate fear of violent repercussions from Pakistani authorities. In recent weeks, protests against enforced disappearances have been violently dispersed, and in a tightly controlled media environment no word of these abuses in the region travels beyond the ears of community members. Each day the indigenous people of Sindh wake fearing that their children will be stolen or dreading they may receive confirmation of their loved ones’ unexplained passing.

This pain and uncertainty are exacerbated by government negligence to support citizens who need to adapt to the changing climate. Though the United States allocated billions of dollars in humanitarian aid to Pakistan in the last decade, corrupt government officials redirect what would be life-saving funds to militaristic endeavors, leaving Sindh the beneficiary of precious few resources. Years of land and water mismanagement amidst drought have, thus, brought Pakistan to the brink of a water crisis – the country is projected to be completely water scarce by 2025 – and no region is worse affected than Sindh. The Pakistani government’s “solution” to build new infrastructure in Sindh threatens

existing ecosystems which may otherwise serve as a buffer to climate catastrophe; the Basha Dam that is being constructed along the ancient Indus River with financial support from China, to illustrate, will significantly stem the sacred river’s flow to Sindh’s Delta region. This will have serious economic and ecological consequences, leaving Sindhis with no realistic or sustainable opportunities to adapt.

Sindh is only one microcosm for the threats faced by people around the world who have been disenfranchised and disregarded by their own governments – a category that is only expanding in these troubled times. It is our sincerest hope that one day we may be proud of what we do here, together, at this critical juncture to shape a world that is safer, more prosperous, and more peaceful than the one that we have inherited.

To this end, the Sindhi Foundation, a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is dedicated to building bridges between the diaspora Sindhi community and similarly marginalized groups, as well as between human rights and climate change organizations around the world. The Sindhi Foundation’s 350-mile Long Walk for Freedom, Nature and Love aims to raise public awareness for the dual threats expanded upon in this letter. Human rights advocates, students, and journalists are walking from New York City and will pass through five states before arriving in Washington, D.C. during the month of April 2021.

The recommendations herein are endorsed by participants in the Long Walk for Freedom, Nature and Love and intended as initial steps for the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Human Rights Council, United States, Department of State, and United States Congress to begin to address the roots of atrocities thus identified and elaborated upon below.

**The organizations listed have endorsed the Long Walk for Freedom, Nature and Love and are generally supportive of the ideas, principles and recommendations outlined herein:**

* Ambazonia Recognition Collaborative Council
* American Kurdish Information Network
* Armenian Council of America
* Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, USA
* Center for Victims of Torture
* Hindu American Foundation
* International Campaign for Tibet
* International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances
* International Interfaith Service Initiative
* Psychologists for Social Responsibility
* Sindhi Foundation
* Sunrise Movement, Philadelphia Hub
* Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

**On enforced disappearances…**

*We, the signed, call for an end to enforced disappearance in Pakistan and around the world.*

The United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) defines enforced disappearance according to the following cumulative elements:[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Deprivation of liberty against the will of the person;
2. Involvement of government officials, at least by acquiescence; and
3. Refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person.

The mandate of WGEID is to assist families of disappeared persons to ascertain the fate and whereabouts of their disappeared relatives, to assist States and monitor their compliance with their obligations deriving from the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,[[2]](#footnote-2) and to provide States with assistance in the prevention and eradication of enforced disappearances.

A public August 2020 report from WGEID notes that a total of 58,606 enforced disappearance cases have been transmitted to 109 States since the group’s inception in 1980. [[3]](#footnote-3) The report identifies Pakistan as among the worst offenders; during the reporting period from May 2019 to May 2020, the total number of outstanding cases rose from 731 to 813, effectively representing a the abduction of 82 individuals in one year. It appears that enforced disappearance has become a favored method of quelling anti-government sentiment amid its perceived mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Keep in mind that these are cases that have been reported to WGEID and therefore do not represent the real number of enforced disappearances. It can be inferred that there are many more cases that have gone unreported in Pakistan, in part due to common retaliatory techniques. To illustrate, the Pakistan Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances reported in 2018 that it had received 5,706 complaints since its establishment in 2011, and many traced victims “declined to say anything about their ordeal ‘due to obvious reasons.’”[[4]](#footnote-4)

We, the signed, call for the end of enforced disappearance in Pakistan and around the world. We extend our gratitude to the members of the United Nations WGEID, especially Chair-Rapporteur Luciano Hazan, for the important work they carry. This body acts as an important voice for those who have been forcibly silenced by their governments, and we believe there is more work to be done to secure the safe return of victims to their families as well as end this practice in the future.

**Recommendations** ––

1. WGEID should issue recommendations for the Human Rights Council to pursue a new strategy to end future enforced disappearance, including consequences for Member States not-in-compliance with the Declaration.
2. WGEID should publish a special report on countries with the highest number of outstanding enforced disappearance cases, including Pakistan, and document retaliation techniques leveled against past victims, family members, or allies who speak out against the abuse.
3. WGEID should publish a special report analyzing the correlation and potential causation between the spread of COVID-19 and heightened rates of enforced disappearance in Pakistan and elsewhere.

**On extrajudicial killings…**

*We, the signed, call for an end to extrajudicial killings in Pakistan and around the world.*

Extrajudicial killings were condemned in 1980 by the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders as “the practice of killing and executing political opponents or suspected offenders carried out by armed forces, law enforcement or other governmental agencies or by paramilitary or political groups” acting with the support, tacit or otherwise, of official forces or agencies.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The indigenous people of Sindh, Pakistan – Sindhis – are among the highest persecuted victims of extrajudicial killing in the world. Supplementary to the high volume of enforced disappearance of Sindhi activists, students, and teachers, the bodies of many victims are found charred and bullet ridden. In a Special Report to the Human Rights Council, the Asian Legal Resource Centre and Sindhi Foundation offer insight into the two worst methods of extrajudicial killing frequently used by police in Sindh: “Half fry” and “full fry.” Half fry victims are “maimed by a spray of bullets aimed at [their] arms or legs, but survive, while full fry victims are killed as a result of these encounters.[[6]](#footnote-6)

These actions contradict Pakistan’s status as a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees to everyone the right to life, liberty and security of person.[[7]](#footnote-7) Pakistan is a party, as well, to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, according to which no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.[[8]](#footnote-8) The list goes on of Pakistan’s blatant violation of core international human rights treaties.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions is charged by the Human Rights Council to, among other purposes outlined in their latest mandate:[[9]](#footnote-9)

1. continue to examine situations of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in all circumstances and for whatever reason, and to submit his or her findings on an annual basis, together with conclusions and recommendations, to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, and to draw the attention of the Council to serious situations of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions that warrant immediate attention or where early action might prevent further deterioration; and
2. continue to draw the attention of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to serious situations of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions that warrant immediate attention or where early action might prevent further deterioration.

We, the signed, call for an end to extrajudicial killings in Pakistan and around the world. We recognize the broad responsibilities of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, and arbitrary executions, a role currently held by Mr. Morris Tidball-Binz,[[10]](#footnote-10) and recommend the following steps be taken to bring us closer to the fulfillment of our shared vision.

**Recommendations ––**

1. Launch an inquiry report into the common techniques used to carry out extrajudicial killings in Pakistan and methods to retaliate against those who speak out against the abuse.
2. Send a request for official visit to Pakistan, which has a history of evading such requests.
3. Establish a process with the Human Rights Council which may compel countries to respond to requests for official visits or otherwise cooperate with the Special Rapporteur.

**On forced marriages and conversions…**

*We, the signed, call for an end to abductions and forced conversions of women and girls in Pakistan and around the world.*

Every year, thousands of girls and young women are abducted from their homes in Pakistan and often forced to marry Muslim men, who represent the religious majority. Sindh was once a land where all peoples from all religious backgrounds were able to live in harmony, but no longer.

While no authentic data is available on forced conversions and marriages in Pakistan, in 2019 the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) estimated that around 1,000 Hindu and Christian girls were abducted in one year, an average of more than two cases per day.[[11]](#footnote-11) The volunteer group, Responsible for Equality and Liberty, estimates that between 20 to 25 Hindu girls, which comprise the largest religious minority in Pakistan and are concentrated in Sindh, are forcibly converted every month.[[12]](#footnote-12) Likewise, the Open Door’s World List ranked Pakistan as one of two places where Christians suffer the most violence, estimating that 700 Christian women and girls are abducted and coerced into converting to Islam every year.[[13]](#footnote-13)

According to HRCP, families who try to report their daughters as missing are often ignored by the police and their First Information Report (FIR) is never submitted; “in some cases,” HRPC finds, “the response from law enforcement agencies was appalling.”[[14]](#footnote-14) Therefore, girls are left with their abductors, at times more than three times their age, where they are coerced into silence through use of violence or threats of violence against their families.

To make matters worse, a 2018 report from the University of Birmingham found that the abductor, on behalf of the victim, often files a counter-FIR accusing the victim’s family of harassing the “willingly married and converted” girl and of conspiring to convert the girl back to her original religion. The girl is then asked to testify in court whether she married and converted of her free will or was abducted, but in most cases the girls remain in custody of their abductor throughout the judicial proceedings. They thus remain subject to renewed threats, intimidation and coercion which compel them to testify in favor of the abductor.[[15]](#footnote-15)

We, the signed, call for an end to abductions and forced conversions of women and girls in Pakistan and around the world. We call on the United Nations Human Rights Council to investigate and take action to stop these horrendous crimes against humanity.

**Recommendations ––**

1. The Human Rights Council should adopt by resolution a new thematic mandate to establish a Special Rapporteur on the forced marriage and religious conversion of women and girls. This Special Rapporteur will, among other responsibilities:
	1. Examine situations of abduction and forced conversion of religious minorities in all circumstances and for whatever reason, and to submit their findings on an annual basis, together with conclusions and recommendations, to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly;
	2. Draw the attention of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to serious situations of abduction and forced conversions of religious minorities that warrant immediate attention or where early action might prevent further deterioration;
	3. Respond effectively to information that comes before them, in particular when an abduction or conversion is imminent or threatened or when such a violation has occurred;
	4. Establish dialogue with Governments, and to follow up on recommendations made in reports after visits to particular countries;
	5. Establish dialogue with non-governmental organizations and partners who are committed to ending the forced marriage and religious conversion of women and girls.
2. The newly established Special Rapporteur on the forced marriage and religious conversion of women and girls should request for official visit to Pakistan and publish a report on the ineffectiveness of law enforcement to respond to such violations as well as the failure of the Government to meaningfully implement existing laws meant to prohibit such violations, supplemented with recommendations and expectations to improve.

**On the membership of the United Nations Human Rights Council…**

*We, the signed, call for the creation and implementation of transparent criteria and accountability mechanisms regarding eligibility to serve on the Human Rights Council.*

The United Nations Human Rights Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly on March 15th, 2006 by Resolution 60/251.[[16]](#footnote-16) The resolution reaffirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the values enshrined in said document, including that:

“… all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent, and mutually reinforcing, and that all human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis”; and

“… all States, regardless of their political, economic, and cultural systems, have the duty to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

To recognize these ideals, the Human Rights Council is charged with, among other responsibilities, “address[ing] situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systemic violations, and make recommendations thereon.”

The Council is comprised of forty-seven Member States charged with implementation and of these responsibilities. These states are required to “uphold the highest standards of human rights” and “fully cooperate with the Council.” They are elected directly by the majority of the members of the General Assembly. When voting, Member States are expected to “take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments made thereto.”

Member States are not, however, expected to consider whether a candidate is in violation core international human rights treaties. This is a dangerous omission; a government may espouse a rhetorical commitment to human rights, thus satisfying the criteria necessary to solicit votes from Member States, but in-practice contribute to violations against human rights. This has become, unfortunately, not a theoretical dilemma, but an ongoing reality.[[17]](#footnote-17)

We, the signed, firmly believe that members of the United Nations Human Rights Council must uphold in word as well as in deed the values enshrined within the body’s founding document. If countries with a documented history of violating human rights continue to be enabled and empowered to serve on the Human Rights Council, this not only diminishes the mandate of the body but threatens its ability and will to take meaningful action against the unconscionable human rights abuses which demand attention today, and which shall command that attention tomorrow.

**Recommendations** ––

1. Establish transparent standards that Member States must achieve and maintain in adherence with core international human rights treaties in order to seek candidacy and be elected to serve on the Human Rights Council.
2. Establish transparent criteria and processes to suspend or remove Member States in violation of core international human rights treaties from the Human Rights Council.
3. Suspend or remove Member States in violation of core international human rights treaties from the Human Rights Council, including Pakistan, whose term is set to expire in 2023.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

**On climate change mitigation and natural resource management…**

*We, the signed, call for an end to infrastructure projects which disproportionately threaten marginalized people*

 *around the world and in Pakistan.*

Governments around the world, including the United States, are placing climate change mitigation and natural resource management at the forefront of their agendas, setting goals to reduce carbon emissions, transition to clean and renewable energy sources, and elevate living standards in the process. The moment presents a tremendous opportunity for inter-country collaboration, just as it calls for mechanisms to keep one another accountable to setting and meeting goals in a way that equitably impacts all people.

Unfortunately, under a falsified guise of environmental consciousness, a number of countries, including Pakistan, are using the moment to pursue discredited avenues to achieve sustainability which disproportionately harm marginalized communities. For context, years of land and water mismanagement amidst drought have already brought Pakistan to the brink of a water crisis – the country is projected to be completely water scarce by 2025[[18]](#footnote-18) – and no region is worse affected than Sindh. The Pakistani government’s “solution” to build new “green” infrastructure threatens the country’s most vulnerable populations, including Sindhis. The Basha dam being built along the ancient Indus River, for example, will inundate over 30 villages downstream and leave thousands of people without homes; this fact has been acknowledged by the Minister for Water and Power, Raja Pervez Ashraf.[[19]](#footnote-19) While the government claims that the dam will provide water for agriculture, mitigate floods, and generate hydroelectric energy to advance the country’s economic development,[[20]](#footnote-20) the consequences will only be catastrophic for Sindhis, whose protests against the construction of the dam go unacknowledged.

The TharPak Clean Coal Energy Venture is already beginning to have a disastrous impact on Sindhis as well. The enterprise is framed as “an efficient, environmentally sensitive energy development project” to harness the power of “clean coal,” taking advantage of the massive coal deposits atop which the country is situated[[21]](#footnote-21) – but many argue that coal cannot be “clean,” nor can the process of mining coal. Indigenous residents are protesting against the land seizures, air and water pollution, and broader community displacement which have already begun in connection to the project, but their opposition goes unanswered.[[22]](#footnote-22) This illustrates that the impact of development projects on-the-ground can often contradict their stated aims.

We, the signed, call for an end to infrastructure projects which disproportionately threaten marginalized people around the world and in Pakistan. We believe that the U.S. State Department,

which has established itself as a leading voice on climate change mitigation in the Biden Administration, should use its considerable influence to hold governments accountable which express rhetorical commitment to climate change mitigation but implement discredited projects without care as to their impacts on vulnerable communities on-the-ground. A people-centered approach informed by directly impacted communities must be the foundation of any “green” transition and the Department of State should play a leading role in bringing this to the forefront of the global conversation.

**Recommendations ––**

1. Diplomats, including the Secretary of State, should prioritize and express public support for a people-centered approach to climate change mitigation and in conversations with foreign leaders.
2. Create incentives, including foreign direct investment or aid opportunities, for countries to develop climate change mitigation projects informed by marginalized communities.
3. Conduct analysis of infrastructure projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), particularly in Pakistan, and cease funding for endeavors which are harmful to or not informed by marginalized communities.
4. USAID should fund projects related to water restoration, healthcare infrastructure, and renewable energy in the Sindh, Pakistan; these projects must be conditional and subject to withdrawal pending regular activity reports and active leadership by marginalized communities.

**On human rights…**

*We, the signed, call for human rights to be prioritized when engaging with foreign governments, including Pakistan.*

The U.S. Department of State, in many ways, represents the United States and maintains its image around the world. For decades, the United States has generally been considered the most influential country on Earth and occupies a position of leadership on the proverbial world stage. This is a tremendous platform to prioritize the protection of basic human rights for all people and adherence to core international human rights treaties.

Human rights abuses are rampant around the world, including in Pakistan. The indigenous people of present-day Sindh, Pakistan, Sindhis, are particularly impacted by state-sponsored abuse.[[23]](#footnote-23) Enforced disappearance and the extrajudicial killing of supposed dissidents, namely students, teachers, and activists, take place unchecked by authorities (see above, **on enforced disappearance**). Likewise, an estimated 1,000 Christian and Hindu young girls and women in Sindh are abducted each year and

then forced to convert to Islam and marry their abductors (see above, **on forced marriages and conversions**). Despite their frequency, these atrocities in Sindh are not well-known around the world – in-part due to common retaliatory measures against those who report abuse in Pakistan – but they are no less real.

We, the signed, called for human rights to be prioritized when engaging with foreign governments, including Pakistan. Sindhis are shouting from the mountaintop, desperate to be heard; all they need are allies and a microphone. To become that ally, the U.S. Department of State may consider the following recommendations.

**Recommendations ––**

1. Diplomats, including the Secretary of State, should prioritize human rights in all conversations and negotiations with foreign leaders of countries with poor human rights records, including Prime Minister Imran Khan in Pakistan.
2. The Department of State should set a transparent standard that the United States shall not invest or enter into bi- and multi-lateral trade agreements with countries with poor human rights records, including Pakistan, without enforceable humanitarian conditionals.
3. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor should publish an updated Human Rights Report on Pakistan, or series of special reports, which include:
	1. An analysis the correlation and potential causation between the spread of COVID-19 and heightened human rights abuse, namely enforced disappearance.
	2. Examination of common retaliatory techniques used against victims of human rights abuse, as well as their loved ones or those who would otherwise report abuse.
	3. A comprehensive section detailing what humanitarian aid, investments, and contributions have been made by the United States government to Pakistan in the last ten years, despite a poor human rights record. The degree to which humanitarian aid, investments, and contributions were used or redirected and used for militaristic purposes should be quantified.
	4. Recommendations for the United States to incentivize Pakistan’s adherence to core international human rights treaties.

UNITED STATES CONGRESS

**On human rights enforcement…**

*We, the signed, call for a repeal of blasphemy laws and an end to enforced disappearance in Pakistan and around the world.*

The United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate – together, the United States Congress – are among the world’s greatest deliberative bodies. Generations of lawmakers have shaped not only the United States, but the world, and have carried a burden to uphold the image of the United States and its reputation for freedom. Not all people are so privileged to experience this freedom. Around the world, the rights of countless people are breached.

For many, this translates to an attack on religious liberty. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIR) defines blasphemy as “the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God.”[[24]](#footnote-24) USCIR commissioners identified 71 countries with blasphemy laws, which range from the imposition of fines to imprisonment and death. Pakistan was identified as the second worst country with regard to its prohibitions on blasphemy, just behind Iran.

In Pakistan, the USCIR finds that at least 75 people have been executed since 1990 in connection to these laws and at least 40 people are serving life sentences or are on death row. Those who have been accused of blasphemy may be tried and charged with little objectivity. To illustrate, a Hindu school principal in 2019 – Notan Lal– was accused of blasphemy by a student; the student harbored ill-will against Lal because he had been criticized for not doing his homework, but later admitted that he made up the incident.[[25]](#footnote-25) Nonetheless, the accusation instigated a riot which left the school and a nearby Hindu temple decimated.[[26]](#footnote-26) Notan Lal was arrested and remains in custody, despite evidence that he did not commit the “crime.”

These laws are used to subjugate and oppress religious minorities in Pakistan. For this reason, the U.S. State Department announced in 2019 that it was re-designating Pakistan a “country of particular concern” under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 for “having engaged in or tolerated systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom.”[[27]](#footnote-27)

People are not only marginalized along religious lines in Pakistan. Anyone considered a dissident by the State – including students, teachers, and activists– are routinely targeted for enforced disappearance (see above, **on enforced disappearance**). In Sindh, the southern province of

Pakistan, boys and young men are abducted, sometimes in the cover of night and sometimes in broad daylight, by uniformed figures and never heard from again. Parents, siblings, and friends fear for the safety of their loved ones, and fear for their own safety should they report the incident or otherwise speak out. When they dare to inquire authorities for insight into the disappearance of their loved ones, they receive no answers. Victims occasionally return, but sometimes the bodies of disappeared victims are found badly maimed or even burned (see above, **on extrajudicial killings**).

Aaqib Chandio was seventeen when he was first abducted in northern Sindh on May 30, 2018. A bright student and engaged community member, Chandio was not affiliated with any subversive political movements. His disappearance generated a considerable outcry in Sindh and on social media, and even captured the attention of Congressman Brad Sherman, who called for the release of Chandio on the floor of the House of Representatives. Chandio was released soon after.[[28]](#footnote-28) His became one of those rare cases when loved ones were reunited, at least until he was re-abducted last summer.

The ancient Sindhi people lived in peace for millennia, but today they are forced to live in fear.

We, the signed, call for a repeal of blasphemy laws and an end to enforced disappearance in Pakistan and around the world. The voices that you have as Members of the United States Congress are powerful, and the increase in human rights abuses in Pakistan and around the world which correlates with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic presents an important opportunity to condemn the violation of religious liberties and the right to live. To this end, we recommend the following.

**Recommendations ––**

1. Reintroduce and pass H.Res.512, calling for the global repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws.[[29]](#footnote-29)
2. Reintroduce and pass H.Res.1231, calling for an end to enforced disappearances in Asia and around the world, and calling upon the United States to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.[[30]](#footnote-30)
3. Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
4. Members of Congress are welcomed and encouraged to join the Congressional Sindh Caucus, especially Members with a strong Sindhi-American population.

*We, the signed, call for…*

… an end to enforced disappearance in Pakistan and around the world.

… an end to abductions and forced conversions of women and girls in Pakistan and around the world.

… a repeal of blasphemy laws in Pakistan and around the world.

… the creation and implementation of transparent criteria and accountability mechanisms regarding eligibility to serve on the Human Rights Council.

… an end to infrastructure projects which disproportionately threaten marginalized people

 around the world and in Pakistan.

… human rights to be prioritized when engaging with foreign governments, including Pakistan.



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