

Statement by Pakistan in Response to False Allegations by NGOs during the Seventh
Session of Minority Forum

(26 November 2014)

Mr. Chairman,

In our statement, we would like to exercise right of reply to the baseless allegations leveled against Pakistan by a couple of NGOs.

Lawyer Adel Ghaffar

The Government of Pakistan is committed to ensure protection and promotion of human rights of all citizens, without discrimination on any ground including ethnicity or political affiliation. The allegations of discrimination and persecution of Muhajirs are preposterous. Muhajirs have been and are actively participating in all walks of national life, i.e., business, media, academia, state institutions including armed forces and other specialized fields. There is no victimization of Muhajirs on the basis of their political affiliation. MQM one of the political parties mentioned in the intervention, was part of coalition during the tenure of previous government which completed its term in 2013. On 22 April 2014 MQM formally re-joined the Government of Sindh with slots of two Ministers, two Advisors and one Special Assistant. It should also be noted that Mr. Ishrat-ul-Ebad who has the distinction of the longest-serving governor of the Province of Sindh i.e., since 2002, also belongs to MQM. Persecution of a political party which has been and is still in power defies reason and logic.

We would also like to highlight that the politically motivated complaint by MQM to one of the Mechanisms of HRC was dropped by Working Group on situations which demonstrates that charges leveled against the country are baseless and fabricated.

Baloch National Movement

Regarding enforced disappearances and missing persons in Balochistan, the issue has been at the forefront of national debate in Pakistan. The Supreme Court took *Suo Motu* notice of reports of missing persons and directed all institutions of the state to take concrete measures for recovery of the missing persons.

Upon orders of the Supreme Court, a Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances was established with the responsibility to inquire into these cases. It is chaired by a retired Justice of the Supreme Court. With the help of the Commission hundreds of missing persons had been traced.

At the international level, Pakistan continues to cooperate with the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. As a result of this close cooperation, a large number of cases have been clarified. As part of our ongoing engagement, at the invitation of Government of Pakistan, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances visited Pakistan from 10-20 September 2012. The WGEID appreciated the efforts of the Government and acknowledged the declared will of the Government to tackle the issue of missing persons.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to draw the attention to a minority which has been largely neglected in the deliberations of the Minority Forum. Muslims are in minority in many countries of the world including European states. Due to rise of extremism and terrorism in the recent years, they are labeled as terrorists and are subjected to hate speech, violence, discrimination and acts of xenophobia. Infact, Islamophobia is the new and contemporary form of racism. In this regard, the extremist political rhetoric which is on the rise against Muslims is extremely regrettable in particular, xenophobic political discourse. Therefore, we would like to recommend that recommendations on curbing Islamophobia and Xenophobia should be included in the final recommendations of the deliberations of this Forum which would be presented to the Human Rights Council.

I thank you.