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Pakistan: Urgent measures required to address climate of impunity

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Pakistan

Amnesty International appeals to the Pakistan government, following the latest UN review of the country's progress on protecting and promoting human rights, to end the almost complete climate of impunity enjoyed by state and non-state perpetrators of human rights abuses.

Pakistan endorsed 126 out of 166 recommendations made to it by other states during its second "Universal Periodic Review" – the four and a half year review held under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Council to track member states' progress in upholding human rights. Amnesty International calls on the Pakistan government to provide regular updates to civil society on the implementation of accepted recommendations and to reconsider its rejection of the remaining recommendations.

Despite repeated promises, including during its 2008 Universal Periodic Review, Pakistan has made little progress in determining the fate of thousands of people subjected to enforced disappearance. Amnesty International strongly urges Pakistan to criminalize enforced disappearances in the Penal Code, to investigate and prosecute those responsible for enforced disappearance, and to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as recommended in the review.

Urgent measures are also needed to prevent attacks on religious minorities. Amnesty International calls on Pakistan to act on recommendations to ensure the protection of religious minorities, to bring to justice those who commit acts of violence in the name of religion, and to continue to consider reform or repeal of the blasphemy laws, which are a profound threat to the rule of law and communal harmony.

The Pakistani Taliban's attack on Malala Yousafzai in October last year underscored the serious risks faced by human rights defenders in the country. The organization urges Pakistan to develop a national policy for the protection of human rights defenders and to prosecute those who perpetrate attacks on human rights defenders, as recommended in the review.

The deteriorating human rights situation in Pakistan reveals an urgent need to address the government's persistent failure to bring perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice. Amnesty International urges the government to demonstrate that it is now making greater effort to meet its obligations to protect the human rights of all people within its borders regardless of their ethnic, religious, political opinion, or other status.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Pakistan on 14 March 2013 during its 22nd Session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome, Amnesty International delivered an oral statement on Pakistan's human rights performance: <http://webtv.un.org/watch/consideration-of-pakistan-upr-report-37th-meeting-22nd-regular-session-human-rights-council/2226108288001>/Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in Pakistan: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA33/003/2012/en>

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