

UNREPRESENTED NATIONS AND PEOPLES ORGANIZATION

# UNPO | NEWSLETTER

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**In the spotlight**

**The Land of Violence and Impunity:  
Human Rights in Pakistan**

# The Land of Violence and Impunity: Human Rights in Pakistan

1 May 2017

Pakistan is home to a variety of ethnic and religious groups, speaking more than twenty different languages. The country is not, however, a safe place for minorities: communities in Sindh, Balochistan, and Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan have been suffering for decades. They are being exposed to state-sponsored intolerance and cruelty, their dignity is constantly under attack and even their most basic rights are systematically being denied. Sadly, human rights violations against these communities completely nullify the benefits of diversity which – if made use of – has enormous potential. A wide range of abuses affects minorities in Pakistan, especially children and women. These include enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence, forced marriages, forced religious conversions, honour killings, evictions without compensation, and the non-observance of the rights to a fair trial and freedom of assembly. In spite of the efforts of national and international human rights organizations to denounce these violations and to bring them to the attention of the international community, the Pakistani government denies to address these issues. Rather, the country continues to enjoy tariff benefits from the European Union under the GSP+ framework, while deliberately failing to conform to any of the human rights conventions it has ratified.

Gilgit-Baltistan, for instance, is a territory occupied by Pakistan since the 1940s, whose local communities – to this day – are not provided with a working legal system. As a result, minorities are victims of frequent abuses and growing sectarian violence, while impunity is the rule. Due to the brutal implementation of infrastructural mammoth projects, such as the US\$46-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), state-sponsored human rights violations in Pakistan are likely to increase even further. Local communities are generally denied a say in the decision-making processes regarding these projects – even though their implementation has severe impacts on local communities' environment, livelihood systems and cultural heritage. To make way for construction and military camps, families are being evicted from their ancestral lands by Pakistani and Chinese forces without receiving any form of compensation

In light of recent developments, UNPO has increased its efforts to raise awareness about human rights violations in Pakistan. In March 2017, UNPO submitted two reports on the human rights situation as part of the UN Universal Periodic Review of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Additionally, the report "From Occupied Gilgit-Baltistan to Gwadar: Human Rights in Pakistan", for instance, provides an in-depth overview of the current situation. In May 2017, a European Parliament conference will provide a platform for scholars, organisations and EU officials to discuss how to approach the grave situation and how to prompt an effective reaction from the Pakistani authorities. UNPO will continue to denounce the suffering of minorities in the country until effective measures are taken by national authorities, holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring the protection of human rights for its local indigenous communities and ethnic and religious minorities.

## LAUNCH OF #HMONGINISOLATION SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

6 April 2017

UNPO launched the #HmongInIsolation social media campaign in order to fill the existing information gap on the oft-forgotten plight of the Hmong living in northern Laos. The campaign builds on the momentum of two screenings of a documentary on the plight of the Hmong, and seeks to raise even more awareness of the Hmong's situation. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to stay up-to-date with the campaign.

## UNPO SUBMITS UPR REPORTS ON PAKISTAN

30 March 2017

UNPO submitted two reports to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the occasion of its 28th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Session scheduled to take place in November 2017. While one report looked in general into the human rights situation, the other focused on forced conversions in the country. This second report is a joint submission of UNPO and its member, the World Sindhi Congress (WSC), and focuses on human rights violations occurring in the Sindh region. UNPO's contribution draws attention specifically to the Hindu minority affected by the systematic use of forced conversions. Read more [here](#).

## UNPO REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN

13 April 2017

UNPO is pleased to present its new report: "From Occupied Gilgit-Baltistan to Gwadar: Human Rights in Pakistan". From enforced disappearances to extrajudicial killings, torture, the persecution of activists, violence against children and women, evictions without compensation and non-observance of the rights to fair trial or to freedom of speech and assembly, Pakistan has been systematically violating international law. UNPO's latest report sheds light on how the human rights situation for ethnic and religious minorities in Pakistan has regrettably not improved in recent years, especially for those living in Sindh, Balochistan, and Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan. Download the report [here](#).



## BIRAM DAH ABEID ON TIME MAGAZINE'S LIST OF 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

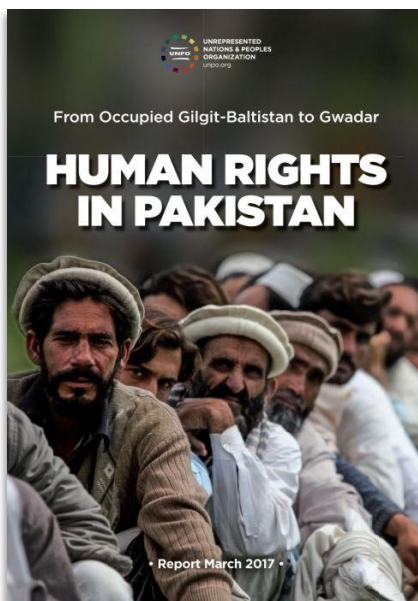
6 April 2017

UNPO congratulates Biram Dah Abeid, founder and President of IRA-Mauritania, for making it on TIME Magazine's list of the 100 most influential people. Being on a list with actors, musicians, politicians, business leaders and other activists, Mr. Abeid's inclusion is clearly a recognition of his incredible work of raising awareness for slavery in Mauritania. Mr. Abeid reaped praise from his profile writer Aidan McQuade, the director of Anti-Slavery International, who calls him "an inspiration to thousands who continue to resist slavery in Mauritania and beyond". Read more [here](#).

## KHMER KROM CELEBRATION AND CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA

29 April 2017

During the UNPFII in New York, a representative of the UNPO Secretariat, participated in and delivered a speech at a conference organised by the Khmer Krom Federation to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The event also included a celebration by the Khmer Krom youth and an evening event with music.



## UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES, NEW YORK

21 April - 6 May 2017

A UNPO delegation participated in the 16th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), taking place in New York. The UNPFII is a high-level advisory body to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Established in 2000, it aims at providing expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the ECOSOC and UN bodies, to raise awareness and promote activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system and to prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues. On the occasion of the Forum, UNPO organised meetings together with professors from the universities of Oxford and Hawaii, during which UNPO Members present at the Forum discussed ways to improve the efficiency of indigenous rights advocacy by making better use of UNDRIP and the UNPFII. UNPO has also been actively reporting about the Forum on social media and on the UNPO Website. To get daily updates on our New York activities during the UNPFII, click [here](#).



## LAUNCH OF RADIO RADICALE UNPO BROADCAST

22 March 2017

Thanks to the longstanding collaboration with the Radical Party, UNPO was invited to start a collaboration aimed at broadcasting half-an-hour of information about UNPO every Sunday on Radio Radicale, an Italian radio station focussing on politics and international relations. The weekly broadcast will look into different aspects of UNPO, including the case of some of its members and some of the thematic issues that UNPO works on, as well as the organisation's activities. You can access the first episode [here](#).

## EP CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN, BRUSSELS

10 May 2017

Building on a series of events on human rights in Pakistan organised by UNPO, a conference at the European Parliament will provide European policy-makers with a detailed overview of the human rights situation in Pakistan. Entitled "Who Pays the Price? CPEC and the Challenges Facing Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Pakistan", the conference will give a platform to academics, CSOs representatives and EU officials to discuss constructive approaches to ensure that Pakistan fulfils its human rights obligations.

### Upcoming Events:

**24 April - 5 May:** 16<sup>th</sup> Session UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

**10 May:** EP Conference on Pakistan

**16 May:** Hudson Institute Conference on Multinationalism and Federalism in Iran

**19 May:** Academic Conference on CPEC at Oxford University

**30 May:** EP Conference on Indigenous Rights in Brazil

**6 June:** EP Conference on Iraq

**26-28 June:** UNPO General Assembly

## CONFERENCE ON IRANIAN NATIONAL MINORITIES, HUDSON INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON DC

16 May 2017

UNPO, in collaboration with the Congress of Nationalities for a Federal Iran (CNFI) and the Hudson Institute will convene a conference on multinationalism and peaceful ways to achieve federalism in Iran. Entitled "The Iranian Mosaic: The Struggles of Minorities for a Federal and Pluralistic Iran", the event will bring together high-level panelists representing the plethora of non-Persian nationalities existing in today's Islamic Republic of Iran, and seek to raise awareness of the country's multinational character and the ongoing human rights violations perpetrated against Iran's various national groups.

## EP CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN BRAZIL, BRUSSELS

30 May 2017

Entitled "The Guarani-Kaiowá and the Assault to Indigenous Rights in Brazil", a hearing at the European Parliament with Brazilian MPs Janete Capiberibe and Edmilson Rodrigues, possibly CIMI and a number of Guarani-Kaiowa leaders, will take place as an answer to the mission in Brazil at the end of 2016. As part of the Peretti Project, the event will have a focus on human rights violations, as well as EU-Brazil trade connections. Indigenous leaders will also have the opportunity to discuss their situation with MEPs and EEAS staff.

## EP CONFERENCE ON IRAQI MINORITIES, BRUSSELS

6 June 2017

Hosted by MEP Ana Gomes, a conference on Iraqi minorities will bring together representatives of the country's various minorities, policy-makers, as well as research experts. Made possible by the financial support of Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung and co-organised by UNPO, No Peace Without Justice and the Institute for International Law and Human Rights, the event seeks to raise awareness for the precarious situation of Iraq's beleaguered minorities and to discuss ways forward for a post-ISIS era. The following day, UNPO and the partner organisations involved will present their third report on the situation of Iraq's many national minorities, which is a result of the fact-finding mission that had been conducted earlier this year.



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## ACADEMIC CONFERENCE ON CPEC AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY

19 May 2017

UNPO will organise a high-level academic conference at the University of Oxford to discuss the many faces of CPEC. Drawing on their research, academics from different areas of expertise will present findings and discuss about different topics including institutions and governance; livelihood; infrastructure; landscape and economics and investment.

## XIII. UNPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY, EDINBURGH

26-28 June 2017

During the XIII. Session of the UNPO General Assembly, representatives of UNPO members from across the globe will meet in Edinburgh, Scotland, to take a look back, while also discussing the direction UNPO should take in the following few years and electing the organisation's President, Vice-President and nine members for the Presidency. A conference and an evening reception at the Scottish Parliament will serve to raise awareness for the organisation's members among Scottish policy-makers, researchers and the general public.

## HARATIN CROWDFUNDING!

UNPO and the Mauritania-based Association of Volunteers Against Illiteracy once again joined forces and launched "Education Spells Freedom". Haratin women and children in particular lack access to education and are often caught in the cycle of descent-based slavery. Help us in our fight against social vulnerability and slavery by supporting our new crowdfunding campaign! Click [here](#).

We rely on financial support from our Members and friends to continue our work each year. Such donations are crucial to ensure the continued full participation and engagement of a great number of unrepresented communities, indigenous peoples, minorities and occupied or unrecognized territories. The 2012-15 Secretary General's Activity Report provides an overview of the activities we have been working on over the past years with the help of our [partners](#). Please do also spread the word about UNPO or invite your friends to like our [Facebook](#) page or follow us on [Twitter](#).

**HELP OUR MEMBERS!  
DONATE TO UNPO**