

Annual Report 2012-2013



World Sindhi Congress
ورلڊ سنڌي ڪانگريس

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About

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Purpose of the Organisation

World Sindhi Congress ("WSC") is a human rights advocacy organization based in the UK, USA and Canada. It aims to create a better understanding among the international community about the disadvantaged status of Sindhis in Pakistan and about Sindhi people's struggles for their human rights, including the right to self-determination. In addition, WSC strives to create an association of Sindhis around the world. WSC is a registered company in England and Wales, UK and Louisiana, USA, organized to carry out non-profit activities only.

Executive Committee (2012-2014)

Lakhu Luhana	Chairman
Rubina Shaikh	Secretary General
Farhan Kaghzi	Senior Vice Chairperson
Sattar Zangejo	Vice Chairperson
Gul Sanai	Deputy Secretary General
Ambreen Hisbani	Finance Secretary
Ali Memon	Information Secretary
Hafeezan Wadhio	Cultural Secretary
Hidayat Bhutto	Organizer UK Chapter
Mansoor Samo	Organizer US Chapter
Asif Panwhar	Organizer Canada Chapter



Mission

The World Sindhi Congress (WSC) aims to promote and undertake the struggle for right to self-determination of Sindhis. WSC continue to provide a voice of Sindhis and international communities around the world who want to see Sindh as a sovereign state. WSC believes this is essential to achieving a just and lasting peace in the region.

Objectives

- To create a better understanding among the international community about the disadvantaged status of Sindhis in Pakistan and about Sindhi people's struggles for their human rights, including the right to self-determination.
- To advocate and support all organisations working on human rights, sustainable development, equal rights for women and religious minorities, as well as conflict resolution and peaceful initiatives in Sindh.
- To promote and encourage the association of Sindhis living throughout the world.
- Means of creating such awareness include:
 - o organising seminars;
 - o publishing newsletters, reports and research papers;
 - o working with media, non-governmental organizations, academics and other conscientious individuals.

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The Backdrop - Sindh in 2012 and 2013

The period that this report covers (November 2012- November 2013) has been one of the most traumatic for Sindhi people. Following is the summary of violations of democratic and human rights of Sindhi people during this period perpetrated by intelligence agencies and Pakistani state:

1. Numerous Sindhi political leaders and activists were abducted and their mutilated bodies were thrown. These include: Sajad Markand, Aamir Kuhawar, Afzal Panwhar, Zamin Shah, Sobhal Dahar, Yamin Chachar, Barkat Chandio (Deewan Prem) and Sahib Khan Ghoto
2. More than 100 Sindhi political and civil society activists continue to remain missing. Additionally during this period Shahid Junejo, Asghar Jamali, Zamir Khaskheli were kidnapped and are still missing.
3. The violence against a section of indigenous population, Sindhi Hindus, intensified. Scores of kidnapping of Sindhi Hindu girls and their forcible conversion and marriages occurred during this period. This state sponsored atmosphere of fear, persecution and insecurity is created among this section of indigenous Sindhi people in order to force them to migrate.
4. The state sponsored action to attack the secular Sindhi society intensified. Thousands of new fanatic religious schools (madarsahs) have mushroomed everywhere in Sindh. Taliban are being settled at strategic locations in Sindh.
5. Sindhi people were systematically marginalised in all spheres of social, cultural and economic development, while Sindh produces 70% of the wealth of Pakistan.
 - i. Sindh has the worst education in the entire Pakistan, worse than the war torn Fata. Almost half of all the school going children are not enrolled almost 70% of girls in rural areas remain illiterate. More than 6 million primary school-going children are out of education.
 - ii. More than 50% Sindhi population remain under absolute poverty line.
 - iii. The malnutrition among Sindhi people is comparable to African draught hit areas.
 - iv. The governance in Sindh at its worst. The entire Sindh has become ruins. Hundreds of people are dying in Sindh needlessly from illnesses resulting from endemic poverty, malnutrition and lack of basic health facilities.
 - v. The capital of Sindh, Karachi, has become the battleground for various immigrant communities with support from the state establishment who want to control the wealth of Karachi and Sindh

During this period, all sections of Sindhi society have put a heroic struggle against the grave violations of human rights and injustices. Not a single day goes by when Sindhi people have not been on the streets, strikes, processions, hunger strikes, rallies, seminars and conferences to demand for their democratic and human rights.

During this period, World Sindhi Congress stood in solidarity with the struggle of Sindhi people back home and inspired by their struggle, continued to work with the international

community to inform them about the disadvantaged position of Sindhi people. The activities of WSC undertaken during this period to inform about the plight of Sindhi people are outlined in the following sections.

WSC Activities 2012-2013

22 December 2012 - London: Sindhi Cultural Day

World Sindhi Congress (WSC) held rally and gathering of Sindhis in the UK, to celebrate “Sindhi Cultural Day” in London.

In response to WSC call scores of Sindhi women, children and men from all over England gathered in the Parliament Square London in traditional Sindhi dresses, Topis and Ajraks.

The speakers said that this gathering show solidarity of Sindhis in England to their people and motherland. The participants also raised slogans against the local bodies ordinance. The participants walked around the area in the traditional dresses. Latter on a Sindhi *Kachehry* was organised which discussed on issues facing Sindhi nation.

It was reemphasised that during these celebrations we should not forget the difficult times from which Sindhi nation is passing and Sindhi diaspora should play their role in the betterment of Sindhi people.



**19 January 2013, London,
Houston USA: Celebrations
Anniversary of Saeen GM Syed**

In London WSC organised a commemoration event on the 109th birthday of Saeen GM Syed, the father of modern Sindhi nationalism. A visionary leader who struggled for human rights, democracy and freedom of Sindh, he died in prison after having spent 30 years without ever being charged. During the celebration in London, which was attended by Sindhi and Baloch activists and intellectuals from all over the UK, speeches on Syed's life and work were followed by a cake cutting ceremony.

In USA WSC and GM Syed Memorial Committee held the birthday anniversary in Houston, Texas. Hundreds of Sindhis from USA, Canada and Sindh participated in the celebrations. Two awards in the memory of GM Syed were given to individuals who have contributed to the Sindhi identity, language and Sindhi rights movement.



24 February 2013 - London: Rally against State-sponsored Persecution of Sindhi Hindus in Pakistan

World Sindhi Congress (WSC) in collaboration with International Sindhi Women Organisation (ISWO) held a protest rally in front of Pakistan High Commission in London on 24th Feb 2013. Rally was aimed to bring attention of international community to the injustice carried out in the case of Rinkle Kumari by Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The rally was also attended by representatives of Christians, Ahmadis and Hindu minority groups. The UK leadership of Awami Workers Party (AWP) also participated in the rally.

The speakers at the rally reiterated that Sindhis are historically and philosophically secular people. They condemned the state sponsored religious extremism and systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan. The speakers highlighted the plight of Sindhi Hindus particularly the forcible abduction and conversion of Sindhi Hindu girls.

They participants demanded that case of Rinkel Kumari should be reopened and she should be given immediate access to human rights defenders and her parents. The speakers raised concern that Pakistani justice system has failed to protect Sindhi Hindu women and in the case of Rinkle Kumari, international independent observers should be involved in deciding such cases. The speakers also requested the UN and the international community to put pressure on Pakistan to stop persecuting Sindhi Hindus and other religious minorities.



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18 May 2013 - London: Sindhi Martyrs Remembrance Day

WSC organised the remembrance event in London to pay tribute to those brave sons and daughters of Sindh who have given their lives protecting human rights, justice, liberty and freedom. The gathering was attended by scores of Sindhis and Balochs from all over UK and Europe. The gathering demanded that the killers of Sindhi leaders Bashir Khan Qureshi, Muzzafar Bhutto, Sirai Qurban Khuhawar, Roplo Choliani, Noorullah Tunio, Adi Ghazla Batool and scores other Sindhi political activists should be brought to justice and such heinous crimes should be stopped.

07 April 2013 - USA: Sindhi Martyrs Remembrance Day

WSC in the USA organised the remembrance event on the day courageous national leader Bashir Khan Qureshi (1959-2012) who was killed under the mysterious circumstances to pay tribute to those brave sons and daughters of Sindh who have given their lives protecting human rights, justice, liberty and freedom.



**20 July 2013 - Calgary Canada: WSC
Activists Workshop, Calgary, Canada**

Canada chapter of WSC organised a workshop for Sindhi political and human rights activists in Calgary, Canada. The workshop discussed the human rights issues and violations, role of Sindhi diaspora and the international perspective about Sindh and Sindhi people's struggle for their democratic and human rights.

The seminar featured prominent Canadian peace and human rights organizations; among the distinguished speakers were Ms. Kelly Dowdell, Director of Programs, Calgary Centre for Global Community, Ms. Linda McKay-Panos, The Executive Director, Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, Mr. George Calliou, The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, Mr. Mazhar Memon of Sindhi Association of North America, and Mr Frahan Kaghzi, Senior Vice Chairman World Sindhi Congress.



24 August 2013 – London: Demonstration in front of 10 Downing Street against Extrajudicial Killings

World Sindhi Congress (WSC) held a rally against the recent and on-going extrajudicial killing of Sindhi political leaders and activists. A large number of Sindhis, Balochs and representatives of other human rights organisations from all over the Britain gathered in front of British Prime Minister's 10 Downing Street residence in London to protest. The representatives of Baloch Human Rights Council UK, International Voice for Missing Baloch Persons, Sindhi Baloch Forum, Baloch National Movement and Nations without States participated in the protest.

Speakers condemned the extrajudicial killing, abduction, disappearances and torture of Sindhi and Baloch people. They reiterated that blood of martyrs will not go in vain and will eventually bring light of freedom to Sindhi and Baloch nations. The speakers requested the international community to raise their efforts and pressure on Pakistani government to stop killing and disappearances of Sindhi and Baloch people.



March, June, September 2013 – Geneva: Participation in UN Human Rights Council Sessions

World Sindhi Congress (WSC) participated in the 22nd (March 2013), 23rd (June 2013) and 24th (September 2013) regular sessions of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The WSC delegation comprised of Dr Hidayat Bhutto and Dr Lakhu Luhana.

WSC delegation made statements at numerous briefings organised by EcoSoc accredited NGOs and informed the international community about the plight of Sindhi people and atrocities committed by Pakistani state establishment against the human rights. The delegation highlighted the issues of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, forced conversions of Sindhi Hindu girls, violence against religious minorities, state support to violent religious extremism, usurpation of Sindh’s natural resources and attack on Sindhi people’s right to development including economic, social, cultural and political. The delegation also informed the UN and the international community about designs to convert Sindhis in minority in their own motherland.

The delegation also met with numerous ECOSOC NGOs, human rights defenders from South Asia region and from nations oppressed by Pakistan and with the office of UN’s Special Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances and Extra-judicial killing. In these meetings, the delegation had detailed discussions about the worsening situation of human rights for Sindhi people.

During the 24th session, the delegation also presented the case in a press conference at Geneva Press Club organised by Baloch Human Rights Defenders.



09 November 2013 – London: 25th International Conference on Sindh

WSC held its 25th International conference on Sindh in Kingsley Hall in London. Several distinguished scholars and activists from Sindh, USA, EU, Canada and UK gathered to present papers and speeches on the theme of ‘REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA: ROLE OF SINDHI NATION.’

The invited speakers included Dr Elvira Dominguez-Redondo, from Department of Law, University of Middlesex, Dr Charles Graves, General Secretary of the Geneva based Interfaith International, Dr Safdar Sarki, Chairman of Jeay Sindh Tahreek, Dr. Hyder Lashari, Chairman of GM Syed Studies Board, Mr Shoib Mengal (speech of Baloch leader Mr Harbiyar Marri), Mr Umed Lagahri (speech of Baloch representative at UN Human Rights Council. Mr Mehran Marri), Mr Imdad Odho a renowned political activist and journalist, Mr Dilip Ratnani member of the Sindhi Association of North America, Mr Graham Williamson coordinator of the Nations without States, Mr Suhail Memon, a political analyst and journalist, Dr Naseem Metlo, a postdoctoral research fellow specialising in Talibanisation, Dr Mushtaq Abassi, with doctoral research on the modern history of Sindh, Mr Mushtaq Sarki a Sindhi journalist, Mr Siraj Lakho a student political activist from Karachi University.

The consensus at the 25th International Conference was “Violent religious extremism patronized by Pakistan is threat to South Asia and the world. Sindhi nation because of its deep secular roots and strategic location can play a decisive role in the region to avert the threat.”



WSC on Social Media

In 2013 WSC built its new multi-media website and streamlined its presence on facebook and twitter. Regular updates on facebook, website and twitter are being made by WSC team on daily basis.

WSC also started Monthly Update Newsletter.

Our facebook fans reached to be more than 29K.



Appendix - Resolutions



WORLD SINDHI CONGRESS®

25th International Conference, London

9th November 2013

On the auspicious occasion of the 25th International Conference, World Sindhi Congress (WSC) is honoured to present the following resolutions for approval of this august gathering:

1. Right to Self Determination

This Conference resolves and requests the International Community to help solve the issue of right of self-determination of Sindhi and all the constituent nations of Pakistan under the auspices of United Nations.

2. Extra Judicial Killings, Abductions, Arrests of and Attacks on Sindhi Nationalists

Sindhi nationalists and other political activists have always been a target of the Pakistani establishment. Things haven't changed even in the current new government: Extra judicial killings and involuntary disappearances continue to be a norm in Sindh. This year (during both the pre and post May general election period), has witnessed the untimely and brutal deaths of many valiant sons of Sindh.

On 28th April bullet-riddled bodies of 19 years old Sajjad Markhand and 22 years old Aamir Khuhawar, both activists of Jeeay Sindh Mutahida Mahaz (JSMM), were found on a link road near Khairpur Nathan Shah. Their bodies bore severe marks of torture. They were illegally arrested by the personnel of agencies, police and Rangers from Larkana on 24th April 2013.

Afzal Panhwar, a student of M.Sc. Biochemistry, University of Sindh, Jamshoro and a student leader belonging to Jeeay Sindh Students Federation (JSSF) was abducted by plain clothed persons in the jeep with no registration plate on 15 August 2013, and within some hours he was shot dead in Kotri city by the plain clothed persons believed to be from the secret agencies.

Again on the Pakistan independence day, when nationalist groups observed a 'Black Day', three Sindhi nationalists were killed by the state agents in Madho Goth, Karachi and many arrested.

In the early hours of 15th August, a police Station Head Officer (SHO) raided the house of Sayed Zamen Shah in Madho village with 20 private guards dressed in plain clothes. There were six people inside the house, viz., Zamin Shah, Yameen Chachar, Umed Ali Dehar, Imran Wahoocho, Ahmar Peerzado and Sindhrani. They all were asleep. The armed personnel abducted three people, Imran Wahoocho, Ahmed Peerzado, and Sindhrani and went on to torture and kill Zamin Shah, Yameen Chachar and Umed Ali in a fake encounter. Zamin Shah was from JSMM, while Yameen Chachar and Umed Ali were from Jeeay Sindh Tehreek.

Most recently, in October 2013, bullet ridden body of the Co-ordination Secretary of Jeeay Sindh Mutahida Mahaz (JSMM), Barkat Chandio alias Diwan Premchand was found in Karachi. He was abducted by Pakistan intelligence agencies a couple of days before he was killed. He was from Warah town of district Qambar Shahdadkot.

Therefore, this august house resolves and demands of the governments of Sindh and Pakistan to

- Stop kidnapping, killing and attacking Sindhi nationalists and other political workers and activists.

- Conduct a judicial inquiry into the deaths Sajjad Markhand, Aamir Khuhawar, Afzal Panhwar, Zamin Shah, Yameen Chachar and Umed Ali and compensate their families accordingly.
- Conduct judicial inquiry into the last year's mysterious death of Bashir Khan Quershi of JSQM, extra-judicial killing of Muzaffar Bhutto, Sirai Qurban Khuhawar, Roplo Choliani, Noorullah Tunio and all the other political leaders and workers martyred in the past.
- Stop the illegal abduction of Sindhi nationalists and other political activists in Sindh and Balochistan. Declare the whereabouts of all the missing and illegally detained people and produce them in a court of law if they are deemed to be criminals.
- Protect the life and liberty of all the citizens, including the ones who demonstrate peacefully for the rights of their land and people.

3. Ban on Sindhi Nationalist Parties

Sindhi nationalist parties and organizations have always been victims of Pakistani state atrocities. Banning Sindhi political and even non-political parties/organizations, imprisoning, even killing their office bearers and activists is quite common. Most recently, the Pakistan government has banned a Sindhi nationalist party, Jeeay Sindh Mutahida Mahaz (JSSM) and put a reward for informing about the whereabouts of its Chairman, Shafi Burfat.

Therefore, this Conference resolves to lift the aforesaid ban, drop all charges against Shafi Burfat and stop violating the basic democratic rights of Sindhi people to form associations.

4. Indigenous Bheel and Menghwar Communities

This Conference expresses its grave concern over the plight and helplessness of indigenous Hindu Bheel and Menghwar communities and rising fundamentalism in Sindh, which has centuries old traditions of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence, so much so that there is a separate space for Dalits in a Muslim graveyard of Haji Fakir at Kumdar Karo Mal village, near Pangrio town in Badin district, where Bheels and Dalits bury their dead.

This extraordinary practice of religious harmony was violated on 6th October 2013, when at the call of so religious leaders and with the help of young men from the local Madreshas, an armed mob dug the body of a Hindu Dalit, Bhooro Bheel within 12 hours of his burial at the same graveyard. A Muslim cleric in Faisalabad, Punjab province even issued a Fatwa that Hindus cannot be buried in the Muslim graveyards.

- It is, therefore resolved that the Sindh and Pakistan governments take immediate steps to restore religious peace and harmony in Sindh and give exemplary punishments to the perpetrators involved.
- It is also resolved that Bhooro Bheel's family, especially his children be compensated adequately both financially and socially.

5. Plight of Hindus and Forcible Conversions of Hindu Women

This House condemns the continuous atrocities against Sindhi Hindu women and girls, who are being indiscriminately raped, abducted and forcibly converted to Islam. The case of Rinkel Kumari too remains unsolved, who was abducted and then forcibly converted to Islam last year. In November last year, a 12 year old Manisha Kumari was kidnapped by a MQM gangster in Hyderabad. According to the Hindu Panchayat, every month around 20 girls are abducted and forcibly converted to Islam.

There is a lack of security of Hindus places of worship. In December 2012, MQM with the help of a court order demolished a 200 years old temple of Hindus in Karachi and stole all historical Deity Idols.

6. New Draconian Laws, the PPO

This Conference condemns Pakistan's new draconian laws passed only to strengthen the state control over citizens' lives and liberty under the pretext of combating terrorism.

In October 2013, the government has promulgated an ordinance known as *Pakistan Protection Ordinance*, giving extraordinary powers to the law enforcement authorities (LEA). Now LEA can enter and search any premises without warrant, confiscate any property without permission from any lawful authority, detain suspects up to three months and even shoot on sight. The LEA can obtain information on the alleged suspects by all authoritarian and anti civil liberty means, such as intercepting phone calls, texts and emails.

Therefore, it is resolved that the Pakistan government

- Repeal the above Ordinance and other similar laws immediately.
- Not to promulgate any such Ordinance in future and all the legislation be passed by the Parliament.

7. Education

This Conference expresses its grave concern over the lack of education facilities right from the Primary school to University and deteriorating standards at all levels.

It is, therefore, resolved that

- Education be made compulsory at least at the school level and adequate facilities provided.
- Steps be taken to improve the standards at all levels.
- Higher educational institutions be funded sufficiently and given academic independence.

8. Development programmes and Employment Opportunities:

Sindh has been deprived of development by almost all successive governments. Joblessness among Sindhi youth is quite high.

Therefore, this Conference resolves and calls upon the current governments in Sindh and Pakistan to start development projects in Sindh and create more job opportunities.

9. Protecting the Demography of Sindh

The Conference resolves and calls upon the government to recognise and protect the inalienable right of the indigenous people on their land and its resources. All illegal immigration be stopped and any effort to artificially change the demography of Sindh to suit the interests of certain groups be dealt with judiciously rejecting all such plans.

10. Language and Culture: This House resolves that the:

- Constitution be amended to declare all the Pakistan languages as the national languages and not just Urdu as it is now.
- 1973 Sindhi Language Bill passed by Sindh Assembly be implemented.
- Sindhi Medium schools in Sindh, including Karachi be restored and Sindhi medium be allowed at all levels in all the towns and cities of Sindh as was the case in pre-Pakistan Sindh.
- Sindhi language be given its due share in the government controlled electronic media.

11. Sindhi Culture Day

In response to attacks on and ridicule of Sindhi culture by some quarters of Pakistani media, Sindhi media has been celebrating Sindhi Culture Day for some time.

This Conference resolves to support the said initiative and all the activities aimed at promoting Sindhi culture and language.

12. Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial Killings of Baloch People

A full-fledged military operation continues unabated in Balochistan since last eight years, during which thousands of Baloch political leaders, activists, writers and journalists have been forcibly disappeared by Pakistani state agencies. Mutilated and tortured bodies of hundreds of kidnapped thrown in the open. Therefore, this august house resolves to request the international community, particularly the United Nations, to set up an international enquiry into the atrocities against Baloch people and press upon the Pakistani state to stop human rights crimes against Baloch people.

13. Human Rights Violations and International Community

The Conference resolves and calls upon the international community to thoroughly investigate and monitor the human rights violations in Pakistan, especially with regards to religious minorities, women, civil liberties, and freedom of expression, right to participate freely in the election process, the right to life and liberty and the cultural and linguistic rights.

Sindhi Media Group Visiting USA was welcomed by WSC and SANA in San Francisco in September 2013

