



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fourth session

11 September–13 October 2023

Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the  
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

## **Written statement\* submitted by Association MIMAN, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2023]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## Baloch People's Concerns Regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Plea to the United Nations

We present a matter of utmost significance, touching upon the principles of international human rights law and the responsibility of states to uphold these obligations. The concerns of the Baloch people against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) represent a poignant example of the necessity for the UN to address human rights violations within the context of large-scale development projects. We urge the UN, in line with Item 5 of UN Bodies and Mechanisms, to recognize the Baloch people's apprehensions and intervene to ensure their rights are safeguarded.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): The CPEC, a flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative, holds significant promise for regional connectivity and economic growth. However, it has raised profound concerns within the Baloch community due to its potential impact on their land, livelihoods, and rights. The Baloch people fear that the CPEC may exacerbate existing patterns of marginalization, exploitation, and deprivation they have long endured.

During the UN 52nd Human Rights Council Session Baloch representative stressed "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been a source of great concern for the Baloch people. This multi-billion-dollar project is seen as an attempt to eliminate the Baloch people from their land, loot their resources and suppress their voices. The Baloch people are facing mass displacement, enforced disappearances, and military operations, as they are being systematically neglected, suppressed, and oppressed, said Munir Mengal". \*1

The CPEC has galvanized Gwadar and its people like never before. The "Haq Do Tehreek" (Gwadar Rights Movement) demonstrations in Nov-Dec was the latest outburst of Balochi resentment against the China-backed CPEC, and also the Pakistani state at large.

Led by Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman, thousands descended on to the streets in Gwadar. They blocked an expressway leading to the Gwadar port as the government failed to meet the deadline to implement the demands- abolition of checkpoints, action against illegal trawling and easing border trade with the Islamic Republic of Iran. On December 10, thousands of women, and even children, rallied in Gwadar in support of Rehman- a first for the conservative region.

Rehman issued a warning to Chinese nationals working in Gwadar port to leave, vowing to completely stop work on all CPEC projects in the city. \*2

The Chief of the Balochistan National Party (BNP) and former Chief Minister of Balochistan Sardar Akhtar Mengal contests the CPEC project as not being acceptable without the consent of the local people. He has said that the project agreement was signed "without taking local people into confidence" and such a development project which violates the rights of the indigenous population cannot be endorsed. Even the federal government did not take the provincial government of Balochistan into confidence when entering into this agreement with China. Mengal says that he has read the CPEC agreements and that the project offers Balochistan nothing. \*3

As the CPEC project moves forward, the fog of fear grows thicker. The native Baloch are of the view that, under the banner of economic development and prosperity, CPEC might turn them into a minority within their own land. As the influx of settlers begin to move into Gwadar and Balochistan as a whole, the natives are being ignored when it comes to jobs and other opportunities. The sense of deprivation and disappointment within the community is strong. Add to this the ongoing trend of issuing fictitious Balochistan domiciles to refugees (and others) and the list of Baloch grievances continues to mount. \*4

UN Item 5: UN Bodies and Mechanisms: Item 5 of the UN agenda pertains to the functioning of various UN bodies and mechanisms that address human rights issues. It underscores the importance of ensuring the respect for international human rights law and the fulfillment of states' obligations in this regard. This item aligns with the Baloch people's concerns, as it emphasizes the role of the UN in addressing human rights violations and promoting justice and equity.

**Baloch Concerns and Human Rights Violations:** The concerns of the Baloch people regarding the CPEC are multi-faceted and rooted in their apprehension about land acquisition, environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and economic inequality. The CPEC's implementation has been accompanied by reports of forced land acquisition without adequate compensation, environmental degradation, displacement of communities, and a lack of consultation with affected populations. Such actions violate fundamental human rights principles enshrined in international law, including the right to property, the right to a healthy environment, and the right to participation and consultation.

**UN's Role in Upholding Human Rights:** The UN, as a guardian of human rights and international law, is obligated to ensure that states adhere to their responsibilities under international human rights law. The Baloch people's concerns against the CPEC underscore the importance of the UN's role in monitoring, advocating for, and safeguarding the rights of affected communities. The principles of transparency, accountability, and equitable distribution of benefits, as laid down in international human rights law, must guide the implementation of large-scale development projects like the CPEC.

**Call for UN Intervention:** We implore the United Nations to take the following steps in response to the Baloch people's concerns:

1. **Independent Impact Assessment:** Facilitate an independent and comprehensive impact assessment of the CPEC's social, economic, and environmental implications on the Baloch people and other affected communities.
2. **Consultation and Participation:** Ensure that the Baloch people's right to participate in decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods is respected. This includes meaningful consultation, consent, and the incorporation of their concerns into project planning.
3. **Monitoring and Reporting:** Establish mechanisms to monitor the human rights situation in the context of the CPEC, reporting on violations and ensuring accountability for any abuses.
4. **Capacity Building:** Support the capacity-building of local communities to effectively engage in negotiations, consultations, and advocacy related to development projects.

In conclusion, the concerns of the Baloch people regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor echo the principles of international human rights law that obligate states to respect the rights of their citizens. The United Nations must stand as a beacon of justice and equity, intervening to address these concerns and ensuring that large-scale development projects prioritize the well-being and rights of affected communities.

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Baloch Voice Association (BVA), Baloch Peoples Congress (BPC), Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP), Baloch Voice Foundation (BVF), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

\*1 <https://greekcitytimes.com/2023/03/26/unhrc-balochistan-cpec-project/>

\*2 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/pakistan-why-cpec-projects-are-facing-backlash-in-balochistan/articleshow/96971372.cms>

\*3 <https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/cpec-a-bad-deal-for-the-baloch-people/>

\*4 Ibid