Human Rights, Regional Security and Perspectives for Balochistan and Pakistan Post-2014
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Foreword

While much attention is given – by international fora, politicians, and the media – to the Middle East and South Asia, one strategically important region has been forgotten. Balochistan, located in the South-West of Pakistan, is the country’s largest and most resource-rich province. The Baloch are a secular people spread between Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. They have been victims of marginalization for a long time, but recently their situation has worsened, particularly in Pakistan.

The claims of the Baloch for self-determination and cultural rights have been suppressed by Islamabad for decades. The Baloch do not benefit from the natural resources of the region, as a result of which they live in poverty. The Pakistani military and security forces use summary executions, enforced disappearances, torture and targeted killings to silence the Baloch protesting against their economic and political disempowerment. In January 2014, mass graves were discovered, uncovering around 170 mutilated bodies, of which only a few have been identified. Families of the disappeared still live in uncertainty of the fate of their beloved ones. Contributing to keeping the conflict forgotten is the fact that freedom of the press is almost non-existent in Balochistan; local journalist fear disappearances and killings, while international journalists are not allowed to enter the region.

In an attempt to clarify the geo-political dynamics and to inform the international community of the grave ongoing human rights abuses, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), in cooperation with the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation and Baluchistan House, convened an international conference at the United Nations in Geneva on 10 March 2014, entitled ‘Human Rights, Regional Security and Perspectives for Balochistan and Pakistan Post-2014.’ An assorted panel of human rights activists, experts, journalists, and politicians gave an overview of the security perspectives and ongoing human rights abuses.

The overall conclusion to be drawn from this conference is that more attention has to be given by the international community in general, and the UN in particular, to human rights violations in Balochistan. The international community must step up its efforts to investigate the mass atrocities - especially in light of the ignorance showed towards the discovery of mass graves in January 2014. Having access to reliable information is essential, but currently made almost impossible by Pakistani military forces. UNPO believes that this conference was a positive step in giving more attention to the dire situation facing the people of Balochistan in international fora, but further action is urgently needed.

Marino Busdachin
UNPO General Secretary
Conference Programme

Opening Remarks

Mehran Baluch (Baloch representative to the UN)
Johanna Green (UNPO Programme Coordinator)
Noordin Mengal (Baloch representative and human rights campaigner)

Moderator

Paulo Casaca
Founder and Executive Director of the South Asia Democratic Forum, former MEP

Panel I: Human Rights Violations, Enforced Disappearances, Mass graves in Balochistan

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Panel II: Regional Impact and Security Concerns

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Willem Marx
Journalist, author of ‘Balochistan at a Crossroads’

Questions and Answers
Opening Remarks

Speech by Mehran Baluch
*Baloch Representative to the United Nations*

Welcome to this session.

We would like to bring to your attention, and bring you up to date with the tragedies unfolding in occupied Balochistan.

In 1948, this month [March], the sovereign state of Khalat was invaded and occupied by the Pakistani army. And since then, the Baloch have risen up to fight for their dignity and freedom. Tens of thousands have died since, and yet very few people outside the conflict zone are aware of the five wars of independence that my parents’ generation and now my generation are fighting.

We have been asked what people want to do for the Baloch. Why are we fighting? I will let the other speakers dwell on the history of the conflict and suggest how best to protect the human rights of the Baloch people in Pakistan. I will limit my talk today to three issues that need urgent consideration.

First, the ongoing military operation being carried out across Balochistan. In the Dera Bugti area, just last week, over a hundred youths have been killed by the Pakistani military. Hundreds of homes have been destroyed by helicopter bombing and shelling. We demand an immediate hold on the Pakistani military operations in Balochistan, and UN-sponsored talks to be held between leaders of the Baloch freedom struggle and the Pakistani military, and their puppet Government.

Second, we have confirmed reports from the battle zone in Pakistan, and this is very important, that the Pakistani army is now involved in the illegal business of organ trading. Hearts, kidneys and livers of dead Baloch youths have been taken out of their bodies, and sold on the black market by the Pakistani army. This is very alarming news. Almost all the bodies of the dead Baloch youths have come back with their vital organs missing. We want the UN to investigate the war crimes being committed against the Baloch nation by the occupying army.

The third issue, I wish to raise today, is to request the UNHCR, we ask Ms Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to, please, get personally involved and investigate in the issue of missing persons, or the Baloch who have been abducted from their homes, and have literally disappeared. Over 15,000 Baloch youths have been abducted. Now, mass graves have also been discovered inside Balochistan. She should send a special representative to the hundreds of people found in the mass graves, to discover the identity of the individuals through their DNA.

In today’s day and age, how can we, as humanity stay still, while our fellow humans are being eliminated, with such callous disregard for victims of this genocide.

I thank you very much.
Speech by Johanna Green

*Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization Program Coordinator*

Thank you Mr. Baloch. I am Johanna Green, from the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. We are an international, non-violent, and democratic, membership organization, founded in the Hague in 1991. Our members are indigenous peoples, minorities, and unrecognized or occupied territories. As you know, we have gathered here today to address the gross human rights violations, and important global and regional security challenges, facing one of our members; namely Balochistan.

Since we have several outstanding experts with us today, who will share their insights on this topic, I want to keep it very short and just stress the fact that we can only secure permanent peace and stability, if we respect human rights.

And, on the behalf of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, I thank you all for being present at this very timely event.

Speech by Noordin Mengal

*Baloch Representative to the UN Human Rights Council*

Esteemed Members of Parliament, honoured speakers and guests,

Most of us gathered here today are aware of what is at stake for Balochistan. The recent discovery of the mass graves in Khuzdar alarmed the international community about the geopolitical dynamics and human rights violations that had already been taking place for many decades.

The military operation launched in Balochistan nearly a decade ago continues, but remains ignored by many. The worsening situation of Balochistan should be of grave concern for the world, as the ripple effects of this growing crisis will be detrimental to the future of the wider region.

“Enforced disappearances, mass displacements, arbitrary arrests, torture, summary executions, and many other human rights violations are rife in Balochistan, while journalists and NGOs have little access to the region to cover these issues.”

Little over a year ago, I hosted an international conference at the Royal Society London, which served as a platform where representatives from different Baloch factions, experts, as well as key stakeholders in the region,
shared their insights about the crisis in Balochistan. U.S. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher concluded at the time that Pakistani officials should be tried for war crimes, and that the Baloch people have the right to demand a referendum on the question of independence. The Baloch people have a right to independence.

The right to self-determination is the cardinal principal in international law. As Woodrow Wilson put it, “national aspirations must be respected; people may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase; it is an imperative principle of action. . . .”

However, in Balochistan this action is curbed and silenced by the Pakistani military and intelligence services, who want to gain from instability in the region and from Balochistan’s wealth and resources. Subsequently, enforced disappearances, mass displacements, arbitrary arrests, torture, summary executions, and many other human rights violations are rife in Balochistan, while journalists and NGOs have little access to the region to cover these issues. I’m sure Willem Marx, author of ‘Balochistan at a Crossroads’ can tell us more about this experience.

The Baloch face overwhelming assaults on all their rights from all sides. Fundamentalism is a growing threat for the secular people of Balochistan and this is an alarming issue that has long been neglected by the world. The State continues to create, breed and sponsor such rogue elements to systematically counter Baloch nationalism, erode the fabric of society by infecting it with the irreversible disease of fundamentalism, and ultimately strengthen its grip on Balochistan. This footprint of Pakistan’s intelligence agencies can be found in other parts of the region and is known to all. It is most disappointing and shocking however, that while the focus of many superpowers and the international community lies on the entire volatile region and they have already acknowledged the role of Pakistan in international terrorism, they still turn a blind eye towards the atrocities that are committed in Balochistan and continue to financially assist Pakistan’s actions in an indirect manner.

The Baloch demand a just, democratic, nuclear-free and secular Balochistan, which would enhance peace and stability in the wider region. I hope the many insights that will be shared today will bring us one step closer to understanding what is needed to make the international community bring an end to the atrocities committed against the Baloch people.

I would like to thank our expert speakers, who are joining us here today, as well as our partners, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization and Baluchistan House in organizing this event.

Thank you for your participation, and I wish you all an excellent conference.

“The Baloch demand a just, democratic, nuclear-free and secular Balochistan, which would enhance peace and stability in the wider region.”
Panel I: Human Rights Violations, Enforced Disappearances and Mass Graves in Balochistan

Moderator: Paulo Casaca, South Asia Democratic Forum

T. Kumar
International Advocacy Director, Amnesty USA

Mario Silva
Chair of the International Forum of Rights and Security, and former Member of the Canadian Parliament

Tarek Fatah
Author, columnist and broadcaster
T. Kumar  
*International Advocacy Director, Amnesty USA*

Thank you very much.

Amnesty International is peacefully here to talk about the very sad situation in Balochistan. We have been following the situation in Balochistan for over thirty to forty years. But today, I have been asked to speak about the disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and other human rights abuses.

When you look at Balochistan, the troubles started immediately after independence. There were revolts, but intense human rights abuses started during the last ten to fifteen years, when disappearances started. A disappearance is something when three of four policemen take you into custody, and then deny accountability; deny that they have that person in custody. Or sometimes they completely ignore the reality that they have taken someone into custody. The other issue that we are monitoring, and that we have documented intensely, is extrajudicial executions; that is plain assassinations of political opponents.

These two major abuses have been taking place in Balochistan, because in that volatile region, the Baloch people have been raising their voices for their rights. Some are fighting for independence, some not. But overall, they have been singled out, because they belong to an ethnic group; they belong to the Baloch in Pakistan.

We have documented thousands having disappeared. They have targeted lawyers, journalists, activists; anyone who comes in their way. Usually, the Frontier Corps, security officers, are the ones who will take the lead in arresting these people. And along with them the Intelligence Officers, private intelligence officers, in plain view, will be taking these people into custody.

One thing that bothers me, or amazes me, is that – you know, I have been doing human rights for quite some time and current human rights issues around the world – there are disappearances, in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia. But usually the people who commit them are dressed in plain clothes and take them secretly. In this case, in Balochistan, they do not even hide their identity. It is the Frontier Corps, they just come and say, “come on”.

Another interesting thing, or the sad thing, in Pakistan is that the people who have been abducted, without any judicial warrant, and disappeared, are being kept in custody and tortured for a long, long time. It is also unusual in other countries. In other countries, when somebody disappears, you can pretty much conclude, that person is dead and gone, especially after a month or two. But here, we have

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“Justice never happens, no one is held accountable.”
seen, even after two years, people reappear in a very bad shape, after the Supreme Court of Pakistan got involved in this case.

So having said that, the Government always denied, as usual, their involvement; and claims that disappearances are the work of intra-Baloch fighting. But our records and our assessments say that it is the Pakistani security forces, and the Intelligence Services that are responsible for the disappearances.

As many of you have probably heard, mass graves have been found. When that happens, usually, there is international attention and security forces will be very careful. But here, the Frontier Corps surrounded the area and did not allow civil society or family members to enter the area. Worst of all, when family members tried to go to the hospital to see whether their family members are there, and to identify their identity, they were kicked out by the security forces. That is happening today, not six months ago or one year ago.

Then again, the other issue is the abuse of weapons that were given to the Pakistani Government to fight the “war on terror”. Those weapons were used against the Baloch people. They killed the famous leader Bugti, who was in a cave. His identity and his location were discovered, because of the weapons that were given to Pakistanis. They used the bunker-busting bombs to kill him. When we raise this issue with foreign governments and the Pakistani authorities, they say, “we cannot do anything, we lack enough weapons, so we have to use what we have”.

So overall, the challenge today, is how to stop these disappearances and extrajudicial executions from taking place in Balochistan.

Number one, people who have committed abuses, not only the soldiers, even the senior leaders, should be brought to justice. For whatever reason, President Musharraf is in custody now. The clock turns. One of the charges against him is Bugti’s killing [a Baloch

“There take people, execute them, torture them, and throw their bodies around Balochistan.”

There is also a terror element. When they take these people out, the families have a very difficult time raising their voices, for they themselves could become disappeared. So out of fear, they will keep quiet. And we have also seen families of political activists who have been kidnapped and disappeared. Two months ago a ten-year old child disappeared in Pakistan because he belonged to a political family. This is nothing new, I am merely telling it, because it happened two months ago.

Justice never happens, no one is held accountable.

The other major human rights abuse is extrajudicial executions. They inflict terror in the minds of Baloch people. They take people, execute them, torture them, and throw their bodies around Balochistan. This happens to send a chilling message to the people of Balochistan, that “if you speak out, this will happen to you”. Even small children have been executed, and their bodies have been thrown in the street, mutilated. This ‘kill-and-dump’ strategy is basically a terror strategy by the Pakistani Government.

“The situation cannot be allowed to carry on at this pace for another five years. By then, 10,000 bodies will have disappeared.”

Number one, people who have committed abuses, not only the soldiers, even the senior leaders, should be brought to justice. For whatever reason, President Musharraf is in custody now. The clock turns. One of the charges against him is Bugti’s killing [a Baloch
leader]. A large number of Baloch people were executed.

So, there is some degree of justice, but we want more justice. We want to make sure that there is international presence, when these mass graves were excavated.

Pakistan is a country that is garnering a lot of attention because of the war on terror, yet on the other hand, very little attention is paid to the one province of that country, where massive human rights abuses are taking place. Even the Chief Minister is not safe; his party Secretary General has disappeared.

The international community, international human rights organizations and the United Nations, have to face the challenge of how to re-shift the attention that is paid to Pakistan, because of the “war on terror”, to focus on the people in Pakistan, namely a group of people in Balochistan, Balochis. That is a challenge we must work together for.

The situation cannot be allowed to carry on at this pace for another five years. By then, 10,000 bodies will have disappeared.

Accountability and international monitoring are extremely important and necessary. So, an event like this, we hope, will raise some direct pressure, and attention, to the specific issue of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances. Until then, Pakistan as a country and Pakistanis as people will never succeed. And this is a challenge for the other ethnic groups; especially the Punjabi people to speak out about this particular issue.

We hope that this will happen, if we put pressure on Pakistan. We hope these events will open the eyes of Pakistani authorities and administration, to see whether anything can be done to stop this free reign of the Pakistani security forces and intelligence services, to end the abuse of people simply because of their identity and to stop the practice of enforced disappearances and the terrorizing of a population.

Thank you for inviting me.

Mario Silva
Chair of the International Forum for Rights and Security, and former Member of the Canadian Parliament

We are all shocked, and express deep concern over the discoveries of mass graves.

Unfortunately, the history of the Balochistan people is one of constant struggle to secure their political-economic rights and also their self-determination rights. There seems to be no end to the atrocities in Balochistan, with enforced disappearances and mutilated bodies dumped in mass graves. Reports and discoveries of mass graves have been documented by several human rights agencies, yet, unfortunately, the United Nations and the world community are silent, while these mass atrocities and incidents are taking place.

And we, collectively, all of us here together, do have a moral responsibility. And the United

“There seems to be no end to the atrocities in Balochistan, with enforced disappearances and mutilated bodies dumped in mass graves.”
Nations especially, as an international body has a legal duty; as the Pakistani Government is also a signatory to many international human rights conventions. The United Nations has a duty to investigate when human rights violations are taking place in Balochistan.

When the world community joined together in 1998 and drew the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in which they stated in several articles that they had such a responsibility. In Article 1 for example; the conference states that “the world conference of human rights reaffirms the solemn commitment of all states to fulfil their obligation to promote universal respect for, and observance and protection of, all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in accordance with the charter of the United Nations, other instruments relating to human rights, and international law. The universal nature of these rights and freedoms is beyond question.”

The Declaration goes further to state that all people have the right to self-determination, by virtue of that right; they freely determine their political status, and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. The world conference also reiterated that the international community’s fight against torture, and declared that torture is not allowed under any circumstances. This has also been reinforced by the Convention against Torture. Article 5 of the 1998 Declaration states that, the World Conference on Human Rights emphasizes that one of the most atrocious violations against human dignity is the act of torture, the result of which destroys the dignity and inherent capacity of victims to continue their lives and their activities. The World Conference of Human Rights reaffirms that under human rights law and international humanitarian law, freedom from torture is a right, which must be protected under all circumstances, including times of internal or international struggles or armed conflicts.

The Vienna Conference reaffirms that it is the responsibility of states to take effective measures to prevent enforced disappearances. Now, what happens when the state – not individuals – are the perpetrators and are the ones involved in enforced disappearances? As Mr. Kumar mentioned, this took place for example in Latin America, and is now taking place in Balochistan. What can be done, for the state, in fact, to stop the enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings from taking place, is to investigate. Now we all know that we cannot get the Pakistani government and the Pakistani army to investigate itself. The international community needs to put pressure on Pakistan to respect international law and to stop these atrocities.

“A fact-finding mission [by the UN] is the only solution; there will never be a proper investigation by the Pakistani Government.”

We all have a collective responsibility. Human rights violations could soon escalate as the Pakistani Government recently passed a new controversial law, or is about to, the Pakistan Protection Ordinance, which legalizes enforced disappearances. What it means is that this particular law, instead of strengthening human rights instruments, which is what is needed in the country, the Government instead wants to strengthen the rights of the army to act with impunity. Pakistan’s Government blames the victims, not the perpetrators.

And the Asian Human Rights Commission said that it has found 169 bodies in mass graves within the Pakistani province of Balochistan. The corpses are believed to be members of groups calling for autonomy and the rights of Balochistan. The Asian Human Rights Commission suspected that they are some thousands of Baloch people who have been reportedly
arrested and kidnapped by Pakistani security agencies. The Commission has also called on the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission to find the truth behind these killings. Pakistan’s Government denies the numbers of the AHRC, and blames again the Baloch people themselves for the killings.

Balochistan is one of Pakistan’s poorest regions, although it has vast natural resources. The Baloch people want their rights to be respected, like everyone else. This covers a range of human rights; from greater autonomy to increase in royalties from the region’s abundant resources. Pakistan will not allow an independent party in Balochistan, nor will they allow human rights organizations. Only the UN can send fact-finding missions to investigate. And that is all that we are asking for here today at this panel.

There is no transparency in Pakistan. Nations have a responsibility to ensure that all their citizens benefit from development projects. This is something that is denied daily to the people of Balochistan. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was adopted 1984. The Convention against Torture, which Pakistan is a party to since 2010 (they ratified much later then they signed), requires that States take effective measures to prevent torture within their borders, and to prevent States from transport people to any country where there is reason to believe they will be tortured.

A fact-finding mission is the only solution; there will never be a proper investigation by the Pakistani Government. This is the only way also to bring the perpetrators to justice, and to have a transparent and accountable process.

Thank you very much.

Tarek Fatah
Writer, Broadcaster, and secular Muslim and anti-Islamic Activist (Canada)

A lot of the speakers have talked about the issues facing the Baloch and the occupation of Balochistan. So, I would not like to repeat the oft-repeated pain and suffering that comes to international centres.

What troubles me is the lack of response in European capitals, and in North America, to the issues that affect a group of people who most parliamentarian and congressman think are too far away, are not worthy of their concern. If a hundred people die in Balochistan, and ten die in Kiev, I can assure you that the hundred people in Balochistan could not and would not matter. The ten in Kiev will be the front page news in every newspaper, including South Asian, African and European newspapers.

These are the challenges that we face, in that they suggest to you that the Baloch are children of a lesser God. And their suffering of the last 65 years as an occupied territory does not even appear as a blip on the screen, even at a time when East Timor and Eritrea have got freedom, and America has delivered Kosovo out from the underbelly of Serbia, and now...

“Saving Balochistan is not just the right of the Baloch, it is imperative, for the future survival of all.”
Crimea is going to be another new state. But no one talks about Balochistan’s occupation, a country that has existed for five thousand years.

And therefore I’d like you – those of you who live in this city, or represent organizations or NGOs, or represent governments – to understand what exactly Pakistan is up to in Balochistan. You all know that Pakistan’s nuclear testing takes place in Balochistan. You all know, or might not know, that the port of call at the entrance of the Strait of Hormuz is a city called Gwadar, which today is a Chinese armed military submarine base. There, Pakistan’s small technical nuclear forces are based. They hope to use naval boats to deliver fifty to sixty kilogram missiles on land based war.

But what we do not know is that Pakistan has a nuclear program. Ostensibly, it started with the conflict with India, in which no missiles further than 1500 kilometres would be needed. But Pakistan is developing two types of intercontinental and midrange missiles, that you need to be cognizant of, especially members of Parliament and observers. The first is the ‘shining tree’, which goes to 4500 kilometres. Tell me Sir, if a missile were to be launched from the land of Balochistan, do draw a compass to represent the range of 4500 kilometres. Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv fall into that range. But the other missile that is now under development is called the ‘Taimur’, named after ‘Taimur, the lame’, the world’s worst mass killer, who in his single lifetime reduced the world’s population by seven percent. The ‘Taimur’ nuclear missile of the Pakistan military has a range of 7000 kilometres, which puts Geneva, Brussels, London and Paris in its crossfire.

So that should concern all European Parliamentarians, or North American politicians, or NGO executive directors, who right now do not think that Balochistan merits international attention. May I suggest to you that the land that gave birth to Al Qaeda and the Taliban, is a nuclear armed rogue state today. Not even Pakistanis can identify who runs their country. It is a tragic state in which the Prime Minister of the country has to beg mercy from the Taliban to allow him to travel around the country to have his cabinet meetings. Those cabinet ministers, in negotiating with Al Qaeda, speak for Al Qaeda and have the ability to take two billion dollars per year from the United States of America, and pass it on to the Taliban, who killed Canadian, American and NATO troops.

“No one talks about Balochistan’s occupation, a country that has existed for five thousand years.”

I suggest to you that saving Balochistan is not just the right of the Baloch, it is imperative, for the future survival of all. If you wish human civilization to continue to exist, then you have to make sure that Balochistan is created as an independent, secular, liberal state. A state that wants to join the family of nations, and does not come to the UNHCHR to dictate terms and justify the abhorrent treatment of women, the LGBT community, people of colour, in our society, in a city like Geneva.

I will conclude simply by suggesting to you, please, it is not in the interest of the Baloch that we should support Balochistan, it is in your own interest and the interest of your grandchildren, who will not forgive you if you let these nuclear dictators that run Islamabad and the Taliban and Al Qaeda get away with this.

Thank you very much.
Panel II: Regional Impact and Security Concerns

Moderator: Paulo Casaca, South Asia Democratic Forum

Russ Hiebert
Lawyer, Member of the Canadian Parliament for South Surrey-White Rock-Cloverdale

Burzine Waghmar
Academic Member, Centre for the Study of Pakistan and SOAS South Asia Institute, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (U.K.)

Willem Marx
Journalist at Bloomberg TV in New York; author of ‘Balochistan at a Crossroads’
Russ Hiebert  
*Lawyer; Member of the Canadian Parliament for South Surrey-White Rock-Cloverdale*

Balochistan has a long history of insurgency, with nationalist groups advocating greater autonomy. For instance, in the period of 1973 to 1977, the Pakistani Government fought a difficult campaign against the Baloch insurgency employing up to 80,000 troops.

According to independent human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, hundreds of Baloch people have been killed while in captivity of the Pakistani security forces. Reports from these groups detail forced disappearances, torture, summary executions and deaths in custody. The organization Asian Human Rights Commission collects statistics, and claims it is aware of 126 extra-judicial killings last year, and over 400 disappearances. Various human rights groups affirm, that Pakistani intelligence agencies employ ‘kill and dump’ tactics, in which the victims are first abducted, then tortured, killed in cold blood and dumped in open fields.

Now there is no question there is a terrorist element at work in some factions of the Balochistan independence movement. However, the tactics used by agencies of the Pakistani Government that rights groups have documented, are absolutely unacceptable for any Government to engage in. By engaging in nothing short of cold-blooded murder, the security and intelligence forces have exceeded their legitimate authority, and exchanged justice for brutality.

The absence of justice concerns me deeply. While Pakistan has a democratically elected Government, the willingness of some agencies of that Government to abandon fundamental principles of human rights and democracy in pursuit of their objectives only deepens the crisis in Balochistan. When there is an absence of
justice in any society, there is no way to resolve disputes peacefully, and oppression and violent conflict will be the inevitable result.

As Supreme Court Justice Javed Iqbal commented on the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry for Missing Persons on May 4, 2010, “disappearances of people of Balochistan are the most burning issue in the country. Due to this issue, the situation in Balochistan is at its worst.”

Just last fall, the local non-governmental organization, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, released recommendations in response to a fact-finding mission they conducted last summer in Balochistan. They also confirm that the ‘kill and dump’ is a continuing policy of the security and intelligence agencies.

While they acknowledge that a prerequisite to any hope for peace negotiations is obviously for Baloch separatists to lay down their arms, they state that one of the biggest hurdles in normalization of the situation is the ‘kill and dump’ policy.

The crisis in Balochistan cannot be resolved until justice is restored. This means establishing and protecting individual rights, restoring a system of law and order that is both objective and just, and prosecuting those who have committed these atrocities.

To this point, a few steps have been taken by the international community, to hold the Pakistani intelligence and security agencies accountable for the continuing human rights violations in Balochistan. However, there is more that can be done by us to, first of all, shine a light on these unacceptable practices. More can also be done to pressure the responsible elements within the Pakistani Government to change course.

We can pressure other arms of the Pakistani Government to investigate the disappearances, and take appropriate action in response to their findings. So far, only the judiciary in Pakistan has acted with the two Commissions of Inquiry, although according to Human Rights Watch, the judges are probably reticent to dig too deeply and name names, out of a legitimate fear of their own security.

During his unacknowledged detention in April of 2010, Bashir Azeem, a 76-year-old Secretary General of the Baloch Republican Party, said one official told him, “even if the Justice Chief tells us to release you, we won’t. We can torture you, or kill you, or keep you for years at our will. It is only the Army Chief and the [intelligence] Chief that we obey.”

The recipe for peace and eventual prosperity in Balochistan lies in re-establishing justice and respect for individual rights and freedoms. The leadership for creating the foundation for such peace can only come from the Pakistani Government. Not only must the rights of the Baloch people be respected, those who have violated individual rights in the past, must be held ac-

“The crisis in Balochistan cannot be resolved until justice is restored.”
countable. And as mentioned, the international community must play an increased role in bringing these conditions to bear.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Burzine Waghmar

Centre for the Study of Pakistan and SOAS South Asia Institute, University of London (U.K.)

“Beleaguered Balochs: Muslim Republics Murdering Muslim Minorities”

If Afghanistan has earned the sobriquet, ‘graveyard of empires’, no less a claim is that of Balochistan, namely, Pakistan’s qabrastan (graveyard). The province, geographically Pakistan’s as well as Iran’s largest, has become just that what with more than 14,800 disappearances since 2001, according to the Voice of Baloch Missing Persons, and the clockwork regularity with which the establishment’s self-styled janbaz (gallant-hearted) custodians ‘pick up and dump’ Baloch corpses, particularly men, but also entire families, students, teachers, journalists and human rights activists. It brings to mind the Baloch balladeer’s plaint, bauf dighari thaht hagant ‘my pillow was made of the ground’.

Cold comfort, however, to the kith and kin of those slain who, upon securing their remains mutilated by Pakistani forces, are at least able to arrange prayers and make-shift funerals. Iranian Balochs, on the other hand, like other ostensibly equal Sunni citizens of that Islamic republic, cannot pray in Tehran, for that urban conurbation of some fourteen millions, the largest metropolis in West Asia and only Muslim capital city, are prohibited from praying never mind possessing Sunni mosques not a few of which flourish in the bosoms of the ‘Great Satan’ (Washington, DC) and ‘Little Satan’ (Tel Aviv). I must, as an aside, confess ignorance of any pre-arrangements for the spiritual needs of the majority of Muslims, namely, Sunnis, at the eighth Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit

Disclaimer: The views expressed herein constitute my sole prerogative. They neither imply nor suggest the orientation, views, current thinking or position of the university, school or regional and research study centres with which I hold affiliation.


convened in Tehran, December 9-11, 1997. What is common knowledge though is that only six out of 22 Arab heads of state attended.\(^\text{4}\) Further, Sunni diplomats posted to the land of the ayatollahs hold their weekly Friday afternoon prayers in the precincts of the Pakistan embassy school.\(^\text{5}\)

On Pakistan’s 66th Independence Day, August 14 2013, Raza Jahangeer Baloch, secretary-general of the Baloch Student Organization (Azad), was killed in Turbat. Next day, August 15, it was the turn of Sindhi nationalists of the Jeay Sindh Tehrik [Eternal Sindh Movement], three of whom were publicly killed by Karachi police in a park, which runs counter to the later claims of the deputy inspector that they were killed in custody.\(^\text{6}\) The Tehrik’s moorings were anchored in the musings of the late G. M. Syed (1904-95), who, in the first instance, steered the Pakistan resolution through the Sind assembly in the 1940s, only to regret endorsing this Muslim Zion.\(^\text{7}\) His subsequent detention and house arrest, during the last thirty years of his life, was expended in contrition rather than reflection. Envisaging an independent Sindhudesh in one of his best known tracts, Heenyar Pakistan khey tuttan khappey [Now Pakistan Should Disintegrate], was irksome, obviously, to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, a fellow Sindhi, sometime Bombay muhajir (émigré), full-time opportunist, all-time debauch, and a Sunni\(^\text{8}\), who, along with a Shia Shah reigning across the border, was the architect of the real beginnings of Balochistan’s spiral into murder and mayhem. Bhutto was, besides Mujibur Rahman, one of Bangladesh’s founding fathers but now squirmed at the thought of siring Sindhudesh or Balochistan ‘doing another Bengal’. But Syed, as pointed out, had galvanised his provincial leadership to throw in their lot with the Muslim League. Nobody thought of consulting northern Balochs of British India’s Chief Commissioner’s Province or their southern brethren represented by an unrepresentative feudal council (jirga) if they desired fusing and, in turn, being hosted in the house that Jinnah built.\(^\text{9}\)

Neither do the Pashtuns as is borne by the historical record only too well known to be rehearsed here: Afghan refugees, as Pakistani NGOs have reported, find themselves arbitrarily rounded up in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa or NWFP (which I still prefer as an English orientalist), and Balochistan, in February 2013, following attacks on the Hazara Shia domiciled in Quetta. Earlier, a discredited federal administration attempted to burnish its credentials when its Interior Ministry’s July 2012 report audaciously attempted an even-handed mention of 868 individuals as having been killed in Balochistan between 2010 and that date, and that the onus of these killings lay with the Baloch Liberation Army and the Los-


\(^{5}\) http://www.islamicfinder.org/getItWorld.php?id=108490&lang=arabic

\(^{6}\) Pakistan 2013 Human Rights Report, p. 3.

kar-e Jhangvi, a Deobandist-inspired, ISI-sponsored Sunni militant group among other anti-state separatists undermining Pakistan’s territorial integrity. Any lingering doubt regarding integrity was presently dispelled by the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances whose intrinsic reluctance to broach the issue of abscinding civilians with Pakistan’s domestic intelligence and law-enforcement agencies sharply brought into relief its partisanship among Baloch groups. Such enforced disappearances were rampant across the NWFP and FATA. The UN’s Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances visited Quetta, the provincial Baloch capital, in September 2012. In its February 2013 report, the Working Group condemned the striking absence of mention of the state’s intelligence organs, which are principally and repeatedly culpable for such disappearances. The Supreme Court, Pakistan’s apex judicial body, was stonewalled when its three-member bench held a special session hearing at the Quetta registry of the Supreme Court over two days in August 2013. That bench, led by Justice Chaudhury, demanded that the intelligence agencies, police and stationed Frontier Corps come clean within a fortnight on all missing individuals. The security agencies, in a written judgment statement dated August 28, 2013, committed themselves, ‘to hand over any uniformed officers who were involved in the abduction of citizens in Balochistan.’ Another September 2013 hearing in that city also led nowhere despite notices issued by the Supreme Court to the inspector-general of Balochistan police and the inspector-general of the Frontier Corps for failing to co-operate.

Such an infirmity of purpose and culture of lawlessness run through the warp and weft of Pakistani officialdom which, for the record, does not permit the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) to have access to those held at detention sites in Balochistan, NWFP and FATA. The 2009 Aghaz-e Huquq-e Balochistan remains a farce, as with so much else with Pakistanis in particular and South Asians at large, for illegal detention of Balochs continues and the panacea package mooted for Balochi woes, social, economic and political, remains a pious proclamation on paper.

Post-2014, the Balochi canker continues to fester. Some would claim a tipping point is on the anvil. Yet others that we are well passed it. There are several such tipping points across South Asia where the basic conditions of civil existence have broken down. In the Balochi context, we are dealing with an insufficiently imagined nationalist movement. Not all the reasons for it can be enumerated here save salient features. They are, it may be reiterated, posited by an orientalist, not futurist. I can tell you what has happened, not what will. But Churchill soundly forewarned that, ‘the further back you look, the further forward you can see.’ This could not be truer for the Orient – and Orientals. Muslim Orientals, in this particular case.

Consider then the facts: the Balochs are a non-starter insofar as the Islamic world goes. Why? Because, unlike Palestinians, Kashmiris, Uyghurs, or Moros (Filipino Muslims), the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), which putatively artic-

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10 Pakistan 2013 Human Rights Report, p. 3.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
ulates the aspirations of 57 Muslim polities, is, like the Islamically-inspired Arab League or GCC, a veritable talking-shop. Balochs and Bolors in Pakistan or Kurds in Iraq, Syria and Turkey are disgruntled Muslim minorities with long-standing grievances against oppressive, fellow Muslims – not imperialists or infidels, bluntly put, non-Muslims. Had their abusers been so, it would make for a shrill rallying point among concerned, cynical Muslims who would extract as much political mileage as possible by highlighting their plight and portraying non-Muslims as tormentors and Muslims, yet again, tormented. There is a cognitive dissonance here in that corporate loyalty trumps any and every contradiction, commission or omission. It would be detrimental to Muslim unity, and meddlesome too, so the thinking goes, by asking fellowmen to put their house in order whether Turks, Pakistanis, Iranians or others, none of who are squeamish about dealing with their recalcitrant denizens hence the stunning, selective silence about such Muslim minorities at the OIC. The hapless Balochs certainly are a common concern to both ‘brotherly’ Muslim republics, Iran and Pakistan, who will stop at nothing to check their ‘anti-national’ or ‘misguided’ insurgency.

Iranian Balochs, like their eastern Pakistani kinsmen, perhaps more ruefully than them, know full well their tenuous relationship with Tehran, a regime whose ideological raison d’être is predicated upon a peculiarly Persian version of Twelver Shia Islam recrudescent after 1979. The Revolutionary Guards, those republic’s Rottweilers, are there to obliterate Balochs among other dissenters, Sunni and Shia, who threaten the ‘victory of the Islamic revolution’. Neither Tehran nor Islamabad would dare to question never mind castigate Beijing over its treatment of Muslims in Xinjiang (Chinese or Eastern Turkestan). For one thing, they cannot afford to do so. And pretty much most of the OIC would think twice before taking cudgels with the Chinese. No such reservations, however, come into play when criticising Israelis, Indians, Americans or Europeans over alleged mistreatment of Muslims. Had the Balochs, for example, been non-Muslims, both Iran and Pakistan would have finished them off in no time. Ottoman Turkey briskly did so with its Armenian irre-dentists leading to the 1915 genocide. And so did West Pakistan’s military junta with Bengali nationalists in the eastern wing by practically decimating its Hindu minority which it held responsible for being a fifth column in east Pakistan. It is more difficult, however, to declare fellow Muslims as heretics or infidels. Historically jihoj would then be justified – as is evinced by the supplying, subventing and sponsoring of fanatics against deemed crypto-Muslims like Assad’s Alawites whose bloodletting is both permissible and promoted – but such is not the case with mainstream Sunni Balochs. But it does not connote the Balochs have not felt the harsh hand of alien rule for most of Pakistan’s existence. Punjabi and Pashtun Sunnis, the rank and file of the Frontier Corps, remain pre-occupied in the ‘pick up and dump’ routine of fellow Sunni, Hanafis or middle-class, politically conscious, alienated, impoverished Balochs. It is they who are paying the price for, as stated above, an insufficiently imagined national movement, un-

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like their tribal chieftains, whose lack of political direction and imagination is compensated by fractious one-upmanship.

So could a replay of 1973 be possible if, say, Iran and Pakistan jointly decide to tackle the Baloch question once and for all? An increasingly despised Shia Iran, given its support for Syria, lacks credibility in the predominantly (Sunni) Muslim world would that it were to assist Islamabad in any such venture. The Saudis would come down very heavily on those Punjabis running their Pakistani plantation. Any such reprisals, overtly or covertly, by Teheran would have far-reaching consequences for Pakistan’s Shia, a besieged, outraged minority which, arguably, more than any other marginalised group in Pakistan today, has reaped a grim dividend for their loyalty to the land of the Quaid-e Azam, himself a Shia.

The Baloch separatists have remained non-sectarian and non-confessional in their opposition to the Islamabad establishment. Linguistically, anthropologically, and psychologically, the Balochs do fulfill certain criteria towards being recognised as a ‘nation’, something which the Pakistan movement, a motley assortment of Muslim Zionists from the minority districts of British India expressly united in animus against a Hindu-dominated Congress, never did, but who, nevertheless, patched together an artifice where Urdu was declared a national language, the mother-tongue of barely 8% of the populace, and, where no two Muslim divines, when quered by the 1953 Justice Munir Commission, could concur on defining Islam. Pakistanis still don’t. But they can agree, evidently, on singing Dil Dil Pakistan [My Heart is Pakistan], a pop number regarded as Pakistan’s unofficial anthem and produced by Vital Signs, the late Miss Bhutto’s favourite band. That troupe, like her, has trooped off the stage. But its lyrics endure which the Frontier Corps, Punjabis and Pashtuns to man, force Balochs during stop and search swoops to sing extempore. Would the Frontier Corps or the regular Pakistan army dare compel hardened FATA inhabitants or puritanical Tehrik-e Taleban-e Pakistan (TTP) fighters to sing it? If and when so, that day will be a game-changer. Not so much for Pakistanis but its beleaguered Balochs for whom the road winding out of Pakistan’s qabristan may meander through Nimruz, Helmand and Qandahar. For now, as Josh Mull baldly observed, ‘[T]he Taliban’s all-important Quetta Shura is in Balochistan, so the Pakistani military can’t have any American troops that close to a key military asset. So they instead “clear” Balochistan of “Islamic terrorists” (democratic Baloch dissidents, not Taliban) and remove it from American calculations.’

Willem Marx
Journalist at Bloomberg TV in New York; author of ‘Balochistan at a Crossroads’

I should emphasize that I am a journalist, I am not an analyst, activist, or a politician. I am happy to be here to talk about my reporting and what I have seen and heard in Balochistan over the last few years.

I have put together this book ‘Balochistan at a Crossroads’, and I will be showing some photographs taken from the book by my French collaborator Marc Wattrelot, who sadly cannot be here today. The photos start with some landscapes of Balochistan, so for those who may not have had the chance to visit, you will get a sense of what the place is like.

I have been asked to speak here about regional security implications. I am not going to give a history lesson. But one of the things that people need to bear in mind is that there is a lot of theories thrown around about Balochistan, and there are many great power conspiracies, and this is largely because of its location. The Pakistani province of Balochistan is on the border of Iran and Afghanistan; and it is a very large area. There are a lot of different complex situations going on there concurrently.

If we want to discuss regional stability, I think we have to start with the facts, and that is what I am most comfortable talking about. I am not going to talk about political theories; my job is to be sceptical, not cynical. I try not to look at the geopolitics from 30,000 feet, which I think a lot of people in this city might do, I like to talk about what is happening on the ground.

In the province that Pakistan calls Balochistan, there is a relatively small and sparse population. It is mostly desert and mountains. And a significant portion of that population, as you have probably gathered from this afternoon, are not thrilled about being part of Pakistan. Several hundred of them, may be several thousand, have been willing to take up arms to fight a military insurgency against the Pakistani state for their right to self-determination. I would say that most of the individuals that I have encountered do seem to enjoy great support from the local population that has allowed them to continue.

“The threat to journalism is one of the biggest threats to understanding what is going on there.”

But the situation is far from black and white, there are no ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys’. There are different armed groups acting in different territories, with different agendas, different tactics, and sometimes against very different opponents. There are militant nationalist attacking Pakistani military and Government infrastructure. There are Sunni extremists who kidnap and kill Shia pilgrims. There are unknown members of state security agencies we have heard a lot about, who kidnap and dump, and often do so with impunity. And that impunity is one of the major problems in Balochistan for all of these actors. There is no rule of law; the po-
lice is ineffectual; the military seems to do as it wishes.

Going through some of these photographs, I would not mind stopping occasionally just to explain some of the scenes you are seeing. A lot of these refer to displaced populations. When we start talking about regional security, the fact that large numbers of people have been driven from their homes is having an effect on the region. The Baloch I focused on in this book are inside the modern State of Pakistan, but there are obviously Baloch in other areas of the world, and there is a growing diaspora.

You have heard about the enforced disappearances. The picture that is being shown now is of a woman whose husband vanished one day and has not come home. She is one of hundreds, maybe thousands of these women in Balochistan, and now a human face is being put on the story you have been hearing this afternoon. And it is a very tragic story that I have encountered numerous times in the province.

Talking about why this is not a bigger story on the world stage, I think it is important to note that operating in Balochistan as a journalist is probably one of the most difficult assignments that I have ever had, and I have been to some very difficult places over the years. Getting into Balochistan now as a non-Pakistani journalist is almost impossible, because of the military agencies that control access to the region. If you try to enter without a valid visa you will be arrested, and you will not get a valid visa.

"From my experiences travelling and reporting in Balochistan, people are absolutely desperate for change."

If you are a local journalist, you are in even greater danger. Over the last four to five years, at least two dozen Baloch journalists have been killed, mostly by State authorities, but in some cases by militant nationalists who disagree with their viewpoints.

So the threat to journalism is one of the biggest threats to understanding what is going on there. It is very difficult to get reliable information out of the province, and consequently occasions such as this one today are few and between where people can learn about what is happening in Balochistan.

As you can probably gather from some of these photographs, there is support for some of the militant movements. That destabilizes an already fragile security situation, to such an extent that other parts of Pakistan, which are a big concern to would-be allies of Pakistan are themselves even more fragile.

I do not really know what else I can add to this conversation as I am not going to talk about geopolitics. I am going to let these photos speak for themselves. But from my experiences travelling and reporting in Balochistan, people are absolutely desperate for change. When I first went there in 2007, a lot of people talked about autonomy. They wanted freedom to govern themselves, to determine their own future, but were willing to do so within the current framework of Pakistan. In the last seven years, most people I know have now moved to calls for independence. And I think that realistically that is going to be an absolute uphill struggle for all of them.

But that uncertainty means that for instance foreign investors are very unlikely to look at
Balochistan as a place to spend their money. We hear a lot about Pakistan’s fantastic natural resources, but no reputable Western country is going to go into Pakistan at the moment. This is both because of the security situation, but also the uncertainty of governance in Pakistan generally. You see, some of the coal mines are positively medieval when you visit them. The idea of developing a huge modern mining infrastructure, which costs billions of dollars is not something that any Western country is going to be willing to do.

Thank you very much.
Speaker Profiles

Mr. Mehran Baluch
Baloch Representative at UN Human Rights Council

Mr. Mehran Baluch is a renowned Baloch human rights activist and a Baloch representative at the UN Human Rights Council. He is the president of Balochistan House, a Paris-based human rights organization. Son of legendary Baloch leader, politician and head of the Marri tribe, Nawab Khair Baksh Marri, Mehran Baluch is based in London.

Mr. Noordin Mengal
Baloch representative at UN Human Rights Council

Mr. Mengal is a young self-exiled Baloch human rights activist peacefully campaigning for Baloch self-determination, regional peace and against religious fundamentalism. He is the grandson of both Sardar Ataullah Mengal and Nawab Khair Bux Marri, the two iconic statesmen of the Baloch national struggle. Mr. Noordin Mengal is the co-producer with his brother Bhawal Mengal of the film ‘The Line of Freedom’ which stresses the on-going human rights crisis in Balochistan, and raises awareness about the persistence of disease, injustice, poverty, war, racial discrimination, gender and social inequality issues. Mr. Mengal is a Baloch representative at the UN Human Rights Council and at the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization.

Mr. T. Kumar
International Advocacy Director for Amnesty International USA (Washington D.C)

Originally from Sri Lanka and member of the Tamils ethnic group, Mr. T. Kumar undertook at the age of 17 a combat for the respect of human rights and against discriminatory rules towards Tamils. While participating to several pacific demonstrations, he was arrested and sentenced to jail, the first time for six months, and the second time for more than five years and a half during which he focused on studying. He then graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, obtained a Master’s degree in Law, and became a lawyer in Sri Lanka. Mr. T. Kumar has worked in several Asian and African countries and served as a human rights monitor in many Asian countries as well as in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Guatemala, and South Africa. He currently holds the position of International Advocacy Director for Amnesty International, pursuing his fight against injustice.

Mr. Mario Silva
Chair of the International Forum of Rights and Security and former Member of the Canadian Parliament

An international legal scholar, Mr. Mario Silva holds a Master’s degree in International Human Rights Law from the University of Oxford, and obtained his Ph.D. at the National University of Ireland. He was a member of the Canadian Parliament from 2004 to 2011. He served as the Official Opposition Critic for Foreign Affairs. He was appointed by the Prime Minister in 2011 as the chair of the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. He also serves as the hon-
Mr. Tarek Fatah  
*Writer, broadcaster and secular Muslim anti-Islamic activist*

Tarek Fatah describes himself as “an Indian born in Pakistan” a Punjabi born in Islam, of Hindu ancestry & Sikh heritage. A ‘Sarmachar’ grounded in a Marxist youth, but above all a Canadian”. Author of two award-winning books, “Chasing a Mirage: the Tragic Illusion of an Islamic State” (Wiley 2008) and “The Jew is Not my Enemy” (McClleland & Stewart 2010). Fatah is also a columnist for The Toronto SUN and hosts a weekly radio show on Toronto’s NewsTalk1010 Radio. In Pakistan, Fatah was imprisoned twice for his political work as a student leader against successive military dictatorships. He has been associated with the Baloch national movement since the late 1960s. He left Pakistan in 1978 after yet another military coup and since 1987 he has called Canada home. From there he has led the fight against Islamist extremism and in exposing the tentacles of Pakistan’s subversive intelligence networks who seek to control the worldwide jihad against Western civilization.

Mr. Burzine Waghmar  
*Academic Member, Centre for the Study of Pakistan and SOAS South Asia Institute, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*

Mr. Waghmar is a member of the Centre for the Study of Pakistan, Centre for Iranian Studies and SOAS South Asia Institute (University of London). His academic research focuses on greater Iran, Indo-Iranian dialectology, the ethnoology of Balochistan, counterterrorism and dhimmi (Muslim-non-Muslim relations) studies. Mr. Waghmar holds a Master’s degree in International Relations (Islamic Studies) from Boston University. Mr Waghmar is completing his doctorate in Indo-Iranian philology. He reads Balochi, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Kashmiri, Marathi, Russian, Pashto, Persian and Urdu.

Mr. Willem Marx  
*Journalist at Bloomberg TV in New York*

Born in Great Britain and after studying Classics at Oxford University, Mr. Willem Marx moved to the United States to complete a MA in journal-
ism at New York University. He then worked as a correspondent for CBS News, based out of their Kabul and later London bureaus, and reported stories for both Al Jazeera English and Sky News. He is the co-author of “Balochistan at a Crossroads”, a book that focuses on the conflict engulfing a province, located between Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the desire of its people for freedom and recognition. He currently lives in New York and work as a roving correspondent for Bloomberg TV.
About the organizers of the conference

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) is an international, nonviolent, and democratic membership organization, founded in 1991. Its members are indigenous peoples, minorities, and unrecognized or occupied territories who have joined together to protect and promote their human and cultural rights, to preserve their environments, and to find nonviolent solutions to conflicts which affect them. Although the aspirations of UNPO Members differ greatly, they are all united by one shared condition – they are not adequately represented at major international fora, such as the United Nations. As a consequence, their opportunity to participate on the international stage is significantly limited, as is their ability to access and draw upon the support of the global bodies mandated to defend their rights, protect their environments, and mitigate the effects of conflict.

Baluchistan House

Baluchistan House is a Think Centre for Baluchistan. The organisation primarily focusses upon the ongoing activities either good or bad in Baluchistan. Baluchistan, from several decades, is surviving under abhorrent government of Pakistan. It is one of the four province of Pakistan. It lies in South West Part of Pakistan. The people of Baluchistan are fighting for Greater and Sovereign Baluchistan from past 60 years. In 1970’s, the citizen’s started a conflict demanding the Independent State, which led to a Civil War. Thereafter, their lives have changed and are treated as Non – Pakistani’s and are under constant Military Supervision. Past few years atrocities on this land has risen tremendously. Inhumane treatment is common. There are innumerable cases of murder, riots, rape and other horrendous acts of brutality. The Baluchistan House acts as a platform for people of Baluchistan and brings out the true, real, unedited news & facts. It will not only clear the air but also act as an eye-opener for those who are still to realize that Baluchis are living a treacherous and dilapidated life.

The United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation also supported the organization of the conference.
Appendice – ‘Balochistan at a Crossroads’

The book ‘Balochistan at a Crossroads’ details journalist Willem Marx’s travels in the ‘forgotten’ region in Pakistan. It is accompanied by some powerful photography by French photojournalist Marc Wattrelot, showing the dangerous but beautiful landscape and the struggle of the Baloch people. The book focuses on the conflict engulfing Balochistan and the desire of its people for freedom and recognition.

Soon after its publication, Marx was denied entry into Pakistan, undoubtedly another attempt by the Pakistani Military and Security Forces to prevent journalist from covering the region of Balochistan.

The book can be purchased online at http://willemmarx.com/book/