



Peace, Justice & Equal Rights

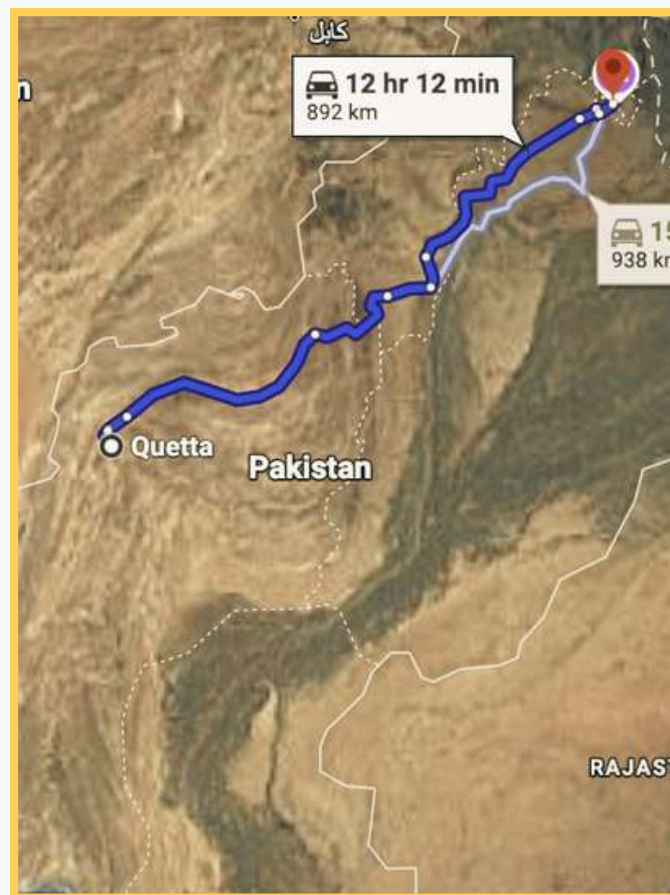
BALUCH MISSING PERSON'S FAMILIES UNDER THE FAULT LINE OF LAW IN ISLAMABAD

Paank Special Report





On 17 July 2025, families of Baloch missing persons and members of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) – including Dr Mahrang Baloch, Shah Ji, Bebagar Baloch, Bebow Baloch, Gulzadi Baloch, and relatives of the disappeared such as Mahjabeen Baloch – arrived in Islamabad to begin a peaceful protest outside the National Press Club. Their presence in the capital was neither disruptive nor confrontational. They carried portraits of their missing sons, brothers, and fathers, along with placards demanding the safe and lawful return of their loved ones, and the release of BYC leaders detained under the controversial 3MPO law.



Led by women and accompanied by children, these families were exercising what they believed to be their constitutionally protected right to peaceful assembly. However, instead of receiving compassion, justice, or legal recourse, they were met with harassment, intimidation, and a blatant violation of their rights – as they were prevented from holding their protest outside the National Press Club in Islamabad.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS



On that very first day, as monsoon rains lashed Islamabad, the families attempted to erect a simple tent for shelter. However, they were stopped by police and plainclothes men believed to be affiliated with Pakistani intelligence agencies, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Uniformed police officers stood by, offering no assistance or protection, yet actively prevented the families from setting up the tent or continuing their protest.



In the pouring rain, with elderly women and children soaked and shivering, the protestors sat on the ground, recording their message with nothing but determination in their hearts and pain in their voices. They had come to remind the state that their loved ones were not mere statistics – they were citizens abducted without due process and held in the shadows of military camps or unknown detention centres.

The next day, the same tactic was repeated. The state once again denied these families the most basic human dignity: a place to sit, a tent to shield them from rain, or even the freedom to voice their grief. What followed was even more insidious. Military intelligence operatives reportedly deployed a group of men holding placards of titled "mafia". These individuals, when questioned by journalists, could not identify who had sent them or what their cause was. Their presence was a calculated attempt to delegitimize the protest, confuse the media, and cast doubt on the sincerity of the victims' families. They were facilitated and given foolproof security by the Islamabad police. Such diversionary tactics are reminiscent of past state strategies designed to silence dissent and stigmatize those seeking justice.



In the days that followed, Islamabad authorities escalated their efforts to isolate and suppress the protest. Roads surrounding the National Press Club were closed off, limiting media access and cutting off the families from logistical support. Buses were brought in to forcibly remove protestors, echoing the violent crackdown on the Baloch missing persons' families and used the words to “deport them to Balochistan”, which clearly states that the Baloch belongs to a different country. Once again, state forces used threats, coercion, and the fear of abduction to push families back into silence. But they refused to leave. They sat in the open, surrounded by barricades and drenched in the rain, refusing to abandon the portraits of their missing kin.



On the night of 20 July, the repression took an even darker turn. Families who had taken temporary refuge in rented flats near the protest site found their water and electricity suddenly cut off. The owner of flat was threatened by intelligence personnel and ordered to evict the tenants. At 2:00 a.m., under pressure and fear, the flat owner forced the families out into the street. Mothers, daughters, grandmothers, and small children were thrown out of shelter in the middle of the night, without safety, food, or basic amenities. This act alone constitutes a gross violation not only of Pakistani constitutional protections but of every foundational principle of human dignity and international human rights.





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These protestors are not political opponents, militants, or agitators. They are families. They are citizens. Their demand is a simple one: if their loved ones are accused of crimes, let them be presented before a court of law. If not, release them. This demand is firmly rooted in Pakistan's Constitution. Article 9 guarantees that "no person shall be deprived of life or liberty save in accordance with law." Article 10 ensures the right to due process. Article 16 provides every citizen with the right to peaceful assembly. Article 14 upholds the dignity of every human being, and Article 19 guarantees freedom of expression. The actions of Islamabad's administration and security institutions are in direct violation of each of these articles.

LEGAL RIGHTS VIOLATED



ARTICLE 9

Unlawfully detained and disappeared persons



ARTICLE 10

Denied the right to a fair hearing



ARTICLE 14

Harassed, intimidated and threatened protestors



ARTICLE 16

Protest disrupted and broken up



ARTICLE 19

Protestors' voices stifled

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TREATIES

Pakistan's obligations under



ICCPR



CEDAW



CRC

Beyond the constitution, Pakistan is also legally bound under international human rights law. It ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2010, which guarantees the right to freedom of assembly (Article 21), freedom from arbitrary detention (Article 9), and protection against cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (Article 7). It is a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which obligates the state to protect children from harm and neglect, and to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),

which requires the protection and advancement of women's rights. In cutting off water and shelter, forcing evictions in the middle of the night, and endangering the safety of vulnerable women and children, the Pakistani state has violated all these legal commitments.

Enforced disappearance itself is recognized as a crime under international law, even though Pakistan has failed to criminalize it domestically. According to the United Nations, enforced disappearance includes “the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person.” Pakistan has failed not only to stop such practices but to hold anyone accountable and continues to target the families of the disappeared with threats and repression.

The actions of Islamabad’s authorities amount to more than negligence or misuse of power — they constitute a systemic and deliberate policy of silencing the Baloch. This policy has been condemned by international human rights organizations for years. Amnesty International has repeatedly urged Pakistan to end enforced disappearances and harassment of Baloch activists. Human Rights Watch has documented state violence and the use of intelligence agencies to abduct and detain without trial. The UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances has submitted formal inquiries to Pakistan, most of which remain unanswered.



At this moment, with families still sleeping in the open, their health deteriorating, their spirits under siege, it is imperative that the international community speaks out. Pakistan must be held accountable for its violations. The UN Human Rights Council must send special rapporteurs to investigate. Human rights defenders must monitor and report these abuses. Legal organizations must call for the criminalization of enforced disappearances and offer protection to the families resisting these crimes with nothing but their voices and their grief.



This is no longer just a human rights crisis; it is a moral emergency. The world must not look away. These families have endured the unthinkable — loss without closure, injustice without end, and now violence for simply asking where their sons are. They came with portraits and prayers, and the state answered with water cannons, buses, eviction, not giving them protest in front of national press club Islamabad and silence. The world must not be silent too.

