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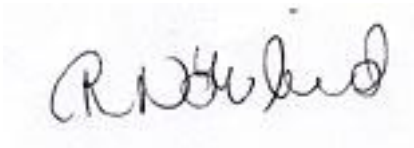
URGENT APPEAL: Two Hindu traders killed (Umerkot city, Umarkot District, Sindh, Pakistan)

This urgent appeal is jointly submitted by the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN) and the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN). It concerns the brutal killing of two traders and brothers Heeralal and Ashok Kumar who belong to the Malhi community (a sub caste of Hindus) in Umerkot city.

The appeal is submitted to the Urgent Appeal mechanisms of the OHCHR, and may be relevant for due consideration and action by several Special Procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, and the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism.

For further details on this case, please contact Mr. Zulfiqar Shah (zulfiqarshah@yahoo.com)

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Rikke Nöhr Lind
Coordinator, IDSN



Mr. Zulfiqar Shah
Director, Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network

DETAILS ABOUT THE CASE

- **Identification of the alleged victim(s);**

Mr. HeeraLal, 44, of Umerkot in Sindh province and Mr. Ashok Kumar, 31, of Umerkot in Sindh province

- **Identification of the alleged perpetrators of the violation (if known);**

An FIR has been lodged by Suresh Kumar, a relative of victims with Umerkot Police against unknown assailants.

- **Identification of the person(s) or organization(s) submitting the communication (this information will be kept confidential);**

This urgent appeal is jointly submitted by the Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network (PDSN) and the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN). PDSN is a network consisting of over 20 civil society organizations, and a member of IDSN. It was formally launched on 5th April 2009 after a research study conducted in 2007, which identified serious violation of basic rights of Scheduled Castes (Dalits in Pakistan), and is in Karachi, Sindh province of Pakistan. PDSN issued a press release on 18 September 2014 supporting the demand to arrest the killers and endorsed the announcement for a protest at Karachi Press Club against the murders. The main objectives of the network are to highlight the issue of Scheduled Castes through national and international advocacy. IDSN is an international lobby and advocacy network, which is working for the elimination of caste-based discrimination and other forms of discrimination based on work and descent (www.idsn.org)

- **Date, place and detailed description of the circumstances of the incident(s) or violation.**

HeeraLal and Ashok Kumar were residing in Umerkot city, in the Umerkot District, Sindh province in Pakistan. HeeraLal and Ashok Kumar belonged to the Malhi community, which is a sub caste of Hindus, which are often victimized and treated as second class citizens, instead of being protected. The incident took place on 31st July 2014 at 9.30 PM in Umerkot city, in the Umerkot District of Sindh province, Pakistan. The two Hindu brothers were gunned down in Umerkot on 31st July, 2014 at 9:30 in the night. The murders followed a string of attacks on non-Muslim communities in the form of murders, kidnappings, forced conversions and attacks on worship places in Umerkot as well as in other parts of the Sindh Province. The gruesome murder sparked heavy protest across the region. However, the response of the state authorities was "business-as-usual". The local police killed two men in an "encounter" near Naukot, following the murders, declaring them as murderers. There was no investigation or any effort to present anybody alive and produce before a judicial procedure to investigate the killings. Moreover, the Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan, following protests from local MNAs, announced to form a special committee to investigate excesses against the Hindu Community. However, the announcement was never followed. Similarly a police inquiry was ordered under the supervision of DIG Sanaullah Abbasi but the report has not been made public or shared with victims family.

The murdered Hindu traders were from the marginalized Malhi community. While the Malhi in Pakistan are not formally included in notification of scheduled castes (which is the case in India), members of this community largely identify themselves as Dalits. Minority groups such as Scheduled caste Hindus suffer from serious human rights violations in Pakistan. The figures on the ground indicate a greater number of scheduled caste Hindus who suffer discrimination from the Muslim majority and from upper caste Hindus

as well. Constitutionally and legally, scheduled caste Hindus have equal rights to education, health, housing, public services and infrastructure but social discrimination translates in to exclusionary practices and procedures, depriving the minority communities of full benefit of the facilities. Scheduled caste Hindus, one of the most vulnerable communities, are concentrated in rural areas of Sindh, mostly in semi-arid zones or in the districts deprived of physical and social infrastructure. Prejudices against minorities run deep and various forms of untouchability, including restriction on access to private/public spaces and public services, are practiced against scheduled caste by both upper caste Hindus and Muslims. Scheduled caste communities are mostly landless, asset-less peasants, often in debt bondage.

Protest March of more than 10,000 Hindus, majority of them Dalits, in Karachi city against the killings and the growing threat and violence against the non-Muslim community, held on September 20 2014.

In a mass protest more than 10,000 Hindus, majority of them Dalits, marched through the streets of Karachi to push for the provincial Government of Sindh in Pakistan to meet their demands for provisions to stop escalating discrimination against Hindus in the region.

Approximately 80% of the protesters demonstrating against the attacks, discrimination and forced conversions in Karachi were Dalits.

The protest was sparked by the murder of the two Hindu traders in Umerkot, from the marginalised Malhi community which followed a string of attacks on non-muslim communities in the form of murders, kidnappings, forced conversions and attacks on places of worship.

Umerkot, where the non-Muslim population is in the majority, is increasingly becoming a hub of targeted attacks against the Hindu community. Frequent murders, kidnappings and forced conversion of Hindu women are leading to mass exodus of the local population from the area. During last year's general elections, the Hindu Community yet again faced threats from the powerful elements out to usurp our right to vote. There is neither any special attention to the threat against the local community nor have the provincial and the federal government taken any measures to address the concerns of the local population.

The demand paper presented by the protesters to the Government included a number of key actions to be taken to end the discrimination and attacks lodged at scheduled caste Hindus and other minority groups in Pakistan. The paper included reference to paying particular attention to the plight of scheduled caste Hindus in Sindh, as they are an especially vulnerable group being discriminated against. Protesters also demanded an urgent investigation into the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Thar desert to address the social, economic and political root-causes of the issue in order the bridge the growing discontent in the region.

The protesters furthermore urged the government to implement the landmark verdict of the Supreme Court of Pakistan announced in May 2014, in which the apex court has asked the government to constitute a National Council for minorities' rights, to form a Special Police Force for the protection of worship places of minorities and remove hate material from the curriculum. They demanded that measures be taken to implement all the recommendations including enforcement of the relevant policy directives regarding reservation of quota for minorities in all the government services.

Following the protest a committee of the Sindh government, comprising 3 Ministers and senior government officials, accepted all the demands set out in the demand paper, after meeting with a committee including the organizers of the protest. The Sindh government also agreed to form a joint committee for the implementation of the remaining demands and suggestions.

The government also assured in writing that no punitive measure would be taken against the protestors and organizers for staging a demonstration in Karachi. Following the signing of the agreement, the protest was disbanded with a promising outcome to be followed up.

[Read the demand paper presented to the Sindh Government >>](#) or read the full demands listed below

1. A judicial inquiry of the murders be conducted. The inquiry tribunal must be headed by a High Court Judge and the investigation needs to be carried out transparently followed by a public declaration of the findings. Local community leaders should be consulted in preparation of ToR of such a tribunal and a time frame should be given and followed.
2. Non Muslim traders are frequently kidnapped in the area and released after paying heavy ransom. Victims and local traders are made to arrange ceremonies where elected representatives, who are alleged to have settled the issue, are decorated with gold crowns. This is a serious issue reflecting the connivance of local political elites in crimes against common citizens. This matter should be investigate either by the same commission looking into the murder of the two brothers or by a separate commission.
3. The report of the police investigation committee headed by DIG SanullahAbassi should be made public.
4. The police officials (SSP, SP, DSP & SHO) posted at the time of murder should be suspended to ensure an impartial and fair inquiry.
5. None of the senior postings in the local police belong to the Hindu community which is dominant in terms of population in the area. The community is never consulted for any appointments of the local officials nor are their concerns addressed regarding the growing lawlessness in the region. Thar, being a region dominated by the non-Muslim community, must have special provisions for the protection of the community. The appointments of the law and order officials must be made in consultation with the local population.
6. In view of the growing threat against the non-Muslim community in Thar, a local chapter of the Citizens Police Liaison Committee headed and run by the districts' community and businesspersons must be established in Umerkot. It should be authorized to act against the excesses against the Hindu Community.
7. The family of the victims that lost two bread-earners must be compensated.
8. The Thar region is increasingly becoming insecure for the non-Muslims. Apart from the ongoing humanitarian crisis, the local community is faced with frequent killings, kidnappings and forced conversions. We demand a High Court headed institution to investigate the rising attacks against the local Hindu community population and devise a proper strategy for the protection of the community.
9. In addition to lawlessness, the growing poverty, denial of social justice and lack of access to basic services such as food, drinking water and healthcare are resulting in humanitarian emergencies such as the recent successive droughts leading to deaths. There is an urgent need to investigate the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Thar, and address the social, economic and political root-causes of the issue in order the bridge the growing discontent in the region.
10. In the backdrop of the Supreme Court landmark ruling concerning the rights of the religious minorities in May this year, we demand the federal and the Sindh government to take every measure to implement the judgment. The ruling, carrying powerful provisions for the protection of

the non-Muslim communities in the country, lays down a set of clear and binding directions for its implementation. The state has no reason to delay the setting up of related policy frameworks, institutions and mechanisms to pursue its implementation. The Sindh government must give a clear framework for the implementation of the judgment.

11. The Sindh government minority related departments have isolated the majority of the non-Muslim communities particularly scheduled castes as they function only for a group of powerful individuals. Funds allocated for the minorities either get lapsed or do not reach the deserving. The Sindh government should constitute a commission/ committee comprising reputable persons to review the current status of these departments/ committees and suggest recommendations which should be implemented.