

Item 3 #38

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My name is Monireh Shirani and I represent Balochistan human rights group.

Balochistan is rich in natural resources such as gas and coal, but in reality the Baloch people live in the poorest and least developed region of Balochistan. The economic crisis which Iran is facing is five times more extreme in Balochistan.

The Baloch, an ethnic minority in Iran, with their own culture and language, are deprived of equal education and economic as well as political participation.

Attempts in recent years to set up poetry nights, cultural events, newsletter in Balochi have been met with severe punishment, as the organizers have been incarcerated and in some case executed, in the name of national security.

Baloch children do not have a connection to their language or history, as all traits of Balochistan are being erased. A strong cultural cleansing campaign is taking place to eradicate their their identity.

Women in Iran are, due to their gender, not equal in law. Baloch women suffer multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Baloch women are discriminated based on their religion (being Sunni), ethnicity (Baloch), language (Balochi) and are consequently given no opportunity to participate in the decisions affecting them.

In recent years, the execution of prisoners have risen, to the point that last year about 900 prisoners were executed in Iran. Just this year 37 Baloch male prisoners have been executed. There have been too many cases of death sentences being carried out without legal representation, forced confessions and even cases where the courts have not followed the protocol of the legal system in the country. These executions – often based on juvenile arrests, torture, and unfair or non-existent trials – show total contempt for the rule of law. Whole male population in a village in Balochistan have been executed in Irans war on drugs.

This has a devastating effect on the Baloch society, as families are losing their breadwinner.

The protection of the Baloch both physical and as a minority group should be a priority for the state. With the lack of media coverage, the Baloch are forgotten as the state can ignore the security and rights of the Baloch.

Balochistan Human Rights Group recommend that:

- pressure is put on the state to follow legal procedures and guarantee all prisoners a fair trial and access to the judicial system.

- the UN investigate death penalty procedures in Iran

-that the Special Rapporteur on Minority Rights investigates into the situation of the Baloch community in Iran