

United Nations Human Rights Council  
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Joint Statement by the International Commission of Jurists and the  
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan  
in the General Debate under Agenda Item 4

## **Human Rights Crisis in Pakistan**

14 March 2017

Mr President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) wish to draw the Council's attention to the alarming human rights situation developing in Pakistan.

Pakistan has increased its clamp down on human rights defenders, even attempting to shut down NGOs for reasons such as the NGO "presenting a very bleak picture of human rights" to the UN.

State agents have subjected human rights defenders exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly to excessive force and even prosecution under Pakistan's anti-terrorism laws. Others have been assaulted, killed or forcibly disappeared. Not a single perpetrator has been successfully brought to justice.

Misuse and persecution are inherent in the logic, structure and formulation of blasphemy laws in Pakistan: vague and over-broad language leaves them open to abuse; they blatantly discriminate against minority religions and sects; they are incompatible with the rights to freedom of expression and religion; and their implementation raises serious fair trial concerns.

Finally, Pakistan's counter-terrorism laws and policies disregard human rights protections, including in the practice of enforced disappearances of terrorism suspects and others, and in the exposure of civilians accused of terrorism-related offences to unfair, secret and opaque trials in military courts. Laws such as the Actions (in Aid of Civil Powers) Regulations allow indefinite detention without judicial supervision.

I thank you.

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