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Global Minorities Alliance laments the Sikh man shot dead in Pakistan



Glasgow (August 09, 2014): The Global Minorities Alliance (GMA) has expressed grief over the targeted killing of a Sikh man in Pakistan. Jagmohan Singh, a young Sikh man, was killed on Wednesday (August 06) in the north-western city of Peshawar, Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). The tragic incident has angered already beleaguered minority community of Pakistan.

According to Pakistan police the two armed assailants opened fire in Hashtnagari on three defenseless Sikh men as they opened a cosmetics shop. Relatives of Sikh youth recently killed in Pakistan.

The three men were rushed to hospital where one teenager, Jagmohan Singh, died from his injuries. The other two victims, Manmit Singh and Param Singh, remain were injured. The Sikh community have reacted passionately to this act of apparent religiously-motivated violence, blocking roads and burning tyres in protest. The body of Jagmohan Singh was placed in the middle of a road by his family and other community

members in order to protest against this senseless act of violence.

The Chief Minister of KPK Province, Pervez Khattak, held talks with Sikh delegation which consisted of 14 members. Mr Khattak promised that foolproof security will be provided to Sikh community.

Global Minorities Alliance Chief Executive, Manassi Bernard lamented Pakistan Government inability to protect minorities who continue to face all forms of violence, intimidation and persecution under one pretext or other.

He expressed his condolences to the bereaved family and demanded that the Pakistan Government punish the culprit as soon as possible.

He further added: "Sikh community is the peaceful citizens of Pakistan who are working hard to feed their families through the sweat of their brow. The Pakistan Government should ensure that protection be provided to its own citizens" "The elements of hatred and intolerance should not break the bond that binds people of all faiths together" he said.

"Global Minorities Alliance (GMA) stands alongside Sikhs in demanding government intervention and justice for a community too often subjected to persecution. This is not the first time that a Sikh community member has been attacked in Pakistan, with kidnappings in the Peshawar region meaning that many have relocated to Rawalpindi, which is considered much safer" reads a statement by GMA. As per reports around 520 Sikh families live in Peshawar with 380 of them living in Mohalla Jogan Shah. Several Sikh families have migrated from tribal regions to settle here.

Pakistan has become increasingly unsafe for minorities. In recent years, minorities who make up 3% of



Jagmohan Singh

Pakistan's 180 million people including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs have become the target of ongoing violence and persecution across the country.

Source: Sikh Siyasat Network

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Manual Scavenging Cleaning Human Waste, Caste And Discrimination in India. *Human Right Watch*

The Indian government should end “manual scavenging” – the cleaning of human waste by communities considered low-caste – by ensuring that local officials enforce the laws prohibiting this discriminatory practice, Human Rights Watch said in a new report released on 25th August 2014. The government should implement existing legislation aimed to assist manual scavenging community members find alternative, sustainable livelihoods.

The 96-page report, “Cleaning Human Waste: ‘Manual Scavenging,’ Caste, and Discrimination in India,” documents the coercive nature of manual scavenging. Across India, castes that work as “manual scavengers” collect human excrement on a daily basis, and carry it away in cane baskets for disposal. Women from this caste usually clean dry toilets in homes, while men do

the more physically demanding cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. The report describes the barriers people face in leaving manual scavenging, including threats of violence and eviction from local residents but also threats, harassment, and unlawful withholding of wages by local officials.

“Successive Indian government attempts to end caste-based cleaning of excrement have been derailed by discrimination and local complicity,” said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “The government needs to get serious about putting laws banning manual scavenging into practice and assisting the affected caste communities.”

In 2014, Human Rights Watch interviewed more than 135 people, including more than 100 people currently or formerly working as manual scavengers, in the Indian states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Women who clean dry toilets in rural areas often are not paid cash wages, but instead as a customary practice receive

leftover food, grain during harvest, old clothes during festival times, and access to community and private land for grazing livestock and collecting firewood – all at the discretion of the households they serve. In areas where untouchability practices are intact, food is dropped into their hands or thrown in front of them.



Local authorities are frequently complicit in the discrimination against manual scavengers,

Women who clean dry toilets in rural areas often are not paid cash wages, but instead as a customary practice receive leftover food, grain during harvest, old clothes during festival times

Human Rights Watch said. Human Rights Watch documented cases in which government village councils and

Across India, castes that work as “manual scavengers” Women usually clean dry toilets in homes, while men do the more physically demanding cleaning of sewers and septic

municipalities have engaged in caste-based recruitment to clean open defecation areas. Those who do this work also suffer discrimination in other facets of their lives, including access to education, to community water sources, and to government housing and employment benefits. Human Rights Watch found that the police and other authorities fail to act on complaints by manual scavengers who have been threatened with violence, eviction and other offenses.

“People work as manual scavengers because their caste is expected to fulfill this role, and are typically unable to get any other work,” said Ganguly. “This practice is considered one of the worst surviving symbols of untouchability because it reinforces the social stigma that these castes are untouchable and perpetuates discrimination and social exclusion.”

The rights abuses suffered by people who practice manual scavenging are mutually reinforcing, Human Rights Watch said. Repeatedly handling human excrement without protection can have severe health consequences, including constant nausea and headaches, respiratory and skin diseases, anemia, diarrhea, vomiting, jaundice, trachoma, and carbon monoxide poisoning. These conditions are exacerbated by widespread malnutrition and inability to access health services.

There are currently no comprehensive government surveys that accurately account for the prevalence of manual scavenging in the country. Accepting the lack of proper surveys, in March 2014, the

Supreme Court of India confirmed however that that it is “abundantly clear that the

In March 2014, the Supreme Court of India ruled that manual scavenging violates international human rights law. The court called for effective remedy. The new Indian government elected in May has pledged to address the needs of India’s marginalized communities, but has yet to take any new measures to end manual scavenging.

practice of manual scavenging continues unabated.”

Manual Scavenging Violates Laws and Constitution

India’s Constitution bans caste-based discrimination known as untouchability. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, prohibits compelling anyone to practice manual scavenging. In 2013, the Indian parliament enacted The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act (the 2013 Act) outlawing all manual excrement cleaning. The 2013 Act also recognized a constitutional obligation to correct the historical injustice and indignity suffered by these communities by providing alternate livelihood and other assistance.

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People who have left manual scavenging, even those who had the support of community-based civil society initiatives, report significant barriers to accessing housing, employment, and support from existing government programs. Notably, under the 2013 Act, rehabilitation provisions are left to be implemented under existing central and state government schemes – the same set of programs that have not thus far succeeded in ending manual scavenging.

To ensure that entitlements under the 2013 Act – including financial assistance, scholarships, housing, alternative livelihood support, and other important legal and programmatic assistance – are available to manual scavenging communities, the government should undertake a complete assessment and audit of all relevant schemes currently in place, Human Rights Watch said. The government should then work in consultation with communities engaged in manual scavenging and civil society organizations to create a comprehensive program that corresponds with the provisions of the 2013 Act. “Caste-based custom, backed by coercion, is still binding people to manual scavenging, and that demands government intervention,” Ganguly said.

“India’s new government has the means and an obligation to bury this rights abusing practice forever.

Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network

discrimination and the situation of Dalits.

On the first day of the session, the Committee met with representatives of NGOs and the National Human Rights Commission of India to hear information on the situation of women in the states whose reports will be considered in the session. Please find a link to caste references in these meetings.

The SC/ST PoA Act is not implemented effectively. Culprits in serious cases like rape and murder are not punished. Caste abuses, stripping and parading of Dalit women in India is not rare.

It is expected that the Concluding Observations and Recommendations from the CEDAW Committee will reflect the many concerns raised during the review on caste-based discrimination and caste-based violence against women as well as the lack of implementation of laws meant to protect Dalit women.



Dalit women leaders
Asha Kowtal, General Secretary of

AIDMAM and Ruth Manorama, President of the National Alliance of Women took part in the review. Ms. Kowtal noted several comments by the Indian National Human Rights Commission at the meeting the day before the review including,

"There is no dearth of evidence to show that Dalit women elected representatives face severe barriers as they perform the role of leaders in governance," said Justice K.G. Balakrishnan adding that "the SC/ST PoA Act is not implemented effectively. Culprits in serious cases like rape and murder are not punished. Caste abuses, stripping and parading of Dalit women in India is not rare."



Asha Kowtal, General Secretary of AIDMAM

Source: International Dalit Solidarity Network

