

House Foreign Affairs Committee
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Hearing
on

Pakistan's Ongoing Political Repression and Human Rights Abuses

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Statement of Sadiq Amini
Founder/Host
[Afghanistan Impact](#)

Introduction

Members of the Human Rights Commission, I stand before you today to deliver a stark truth about Pakistan: it is not a democracy, but a military dictatorship masquerading as one. My statement aims to expose the ongoing political repression, systematic human rights abuses, and the dangerous double game Pakistan plays on the international stage, particularly with the United States. It is imperative that the U.S. Congress fully understands the true nature of this regime and holds its leadership accountable for its actions against its own people and its destabilizing role in the region.

The Illusion of Democracy: A Military Dictatorship in Control

Pakistan's democratic facade crumbled long ago, revealing the entrenched power of its military establishment, as we have witnessed repeated military coups, and military dictatorships.

Pakistan's military dictators, and its pro-Taliban political leaders have effectively taken the nation's 250 million people hostage. This vast population lives under the constant shadow of military dominance, denied fundamental freedoms and fair economic opportunities.

The recent general election of 2024 serves as a glaring testament to this reality. It was not a free and fair exercise of the people's will, but a meticulously orchestrated charade designed to install a government favored by military. Shahbaz Sharif, the current Prime Minister, does not represent the aspirations of the Pakistani people, as he is installed by the military to maintain their iron grip on power.

The evidence of this electoral manipulation is overwhelming and undeniable. We witnessed an unprecedented internet blackout, silencing dissent and preventing the free flow of information. Media censorship became pervasive, stifling independent reporting and ensuring that only the military's narrative reached the public. Opposition groups faced brutal suppression, their rallies dispersed, their leaders and activists subjected to widespread arrests. Candidates favored by the people were systematically disqualified, their political careers sabotaged to clear the path for the military's preferred choices. Beyond these overt tactics, the regime employed assassinations, intimidations, and threats to instill fear and coerce compliance. These actions confirm that the election was a sham, utterly devoid of democratic principles. The military controls every aspect of the state, from political appointments to economic policies, and resources, leaving no room for genuine civilian governance. President Trump's recent meeting with General Asim Munir, the Chief of Pakistan's Armed Forces, regrettably serves as an implicit acknowledgment by the White House of this grim truth: that the real power in Pakistan resides with its military, not its elected officials.

Systemic Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities

For decades, Pakistan's ethnic minorities have endured a systematic campaign of marginalization, treated as second-class citizens within their own homeland. Pashtuns, Balochs,

Sindhis, and numerous other indigenous groups face discrimination, violence, and lack of representation. Their rich cultures, languages, and identities are suppressed, and their grievances are met with state-sponsored repression rather than redress.

The arrest, and continued detention of Dr. Mehrang Baloch, a prominent Baloch female leader, exemplifies this brutal reality. Dr. Baloch committed no crime; her only "offense" was fulfilling her civic duty: protesting against the systematic violence and discrimination her people endure, and courageously seeking justice for the countless disappeared and murdered Baloch individuals. Her detention, carried out in blatant disregard of all international, national, religious, and cultural norms, highlights the military dictators' fear of strong, capable women leaders, especially those emerging from ethnic minority communities. This act is not an isolated incident but a chilling demonstration of the regime's determination to crush any voice that dares to challenge its oppressive rule and demand fundamental human rights for the marginalized.

The Persecution of Religious Minorities

Pakistan's religious minorities live in a constant state of fear and vulnerability. Non-Muslims, including Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs, along with Shiites, Sufis and other sects of Islam, have never been truly safe or protected. They face relentless discrimination, systematic prosecution, and violence, which tragically goes unpunished. The legal system, far from being a shield, often becomes a tool of their oppression, failing to provide the protection and justice they desperately need. Blasphemy laws are weaponized against them, mob violence is frequently condoned, and their places of worship are routinely attacked. This systemic failure to protect its most vulnerable citizens exposes the deep-seated intolerance fostered by the state, particularly the Military.

The Plight of Women in Pakistan

Pakistani women face severe restrictions and discrimination across all aspects of life. While the regime may parade women in political roles, their presence is largely symbolic, a superficial gesture designed to appease international observers. These women mostly come from rich and powerful families with deep rooted ties to military that doesn't represent the grassroots. Even these women rarely exercise any real power; if male political leaders are mere puppets of the military, one can only imagine the utter lack of agency afforded to their female counterparts. Beyond the political sphere, women confront violence, including honor killings, domestic abuse, and sexual assault. Forced marriages remain a tragedy for many, and the cases of rapes often goes unaddressed, with victims facing immense societal pressure and a justice system that frequently fails them. Furthermore, women disproportionately suffer from unemployment and lack of economic opportunity, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and disempowerment. The regime's failure to genuinely address these issues speaks volumes about its disregard for half of its population.

Pakistan's Dangerous Double Game and Its Support for Terrorism

Pakistan has consistently played a dangerous double game with the United States, portraying itself as an ally while simultaneously undermining American interests and fostering instability. The regime has demonstrably sided with dictators in Russia, China and, in cooperation with the authoritarian regime in Iran, has actively created, armed, trained, and managed Taliban terrorists. Their objective was clear: to kill Americans and NATO forces in Afghanistan. This betrayal of trust is unforgivable.

The regime even exploited the charismatic figure of Imran Khan, then Prime Minister, to mislead U.S. leadership, particularly President Trump, after the announcement of his South Asia Strategy. Khan rushed to Washington, presenting a "message of peace" from the Taliban – a message that was, in fact, a carefully crafted deception orchestrated by his counterparts in Russia and Iran. He successfully convinced President Trump to pursue a peace deal with the Taliban, an endeavor that only empowered these terrorists, as they were never sincere in their intentions. The peace process inevitably failed, leading to the disastrous U.S. withdrawal and the subsequent establishment of a gender apartheid regime in Afghanistan – a terrorist entity whose Russian recognition unequivocally proves the Taliban's status as a Russian proxy. Pakistan facilitated this outcome, helping to create and manage this proxy force for Russia.

The hypocrisy reaches its peak now, as Pakistani leaders, both military and civilian, complain about the Taliban threats within Pakistan's own borders and shamelessly seek U.S. assistance to combat them. Their hypocrisy is too obvious: according to Pakistan's leadership, the Taliban is "good" for Afghanistan but "bad" for Pakistan. This is a blatant display of duplicity that demands immediate and unequivocal condemnation.

The Pakistani leadership, military and civilian alike, continues to deepen their ties with authoritarians and dictators in Russia, China, and Iran. This duplicity must cease immediately. They can no longer be permitted to operate on both sides of this critical global divide. The United States must force them to make a definitive choice: they need to clearly stand on one side, so the world, led by the U.S., can know precisely how to treat them.

They cannot buy trust from the United States by merely imprisoning two officials, such as former Prime Minister Imran Khan and Faiz Hameed, the former head of the ISI (Inter-Services

Intelligence agency). The pro-Russian, pro-Chinese, and pro-Iranian networks deeply embedded within Pakistan's military and political structures must be completely dismantled. All individuals involved in these dangerous alliances and terrorist facilitation must be arrested and jailed.

Anything less is a continuation of their deception.

The Taint of Authoritarian Alliances

One of the key reasons for the authoritarian nature of the Pakistani state, its rampant corruption, and its inhumane treatment of its own people, and its inability to effectively serve its citizens – despite being one of the most resource-rich countries in South Asia – lies in its close connections with the authoritarians in the region. Afghans have a proverb that encapsulates this: "Ba Mah neshini Mah Shawi, ba deg neshini Seya." This translates to: "If you sit with the Moon, you will become the moon, and if you sit with an oven, you will be tainted." Pakistan is severely tainted.

Its active support for Taliban terrorists in Afghanistan and other terrorist groups against India naturally corrupts its behavior at home. The military and the political class mirror these external alliances, becoming anti-democratic, violent, and extremist themselves. Sadly, even the civilian political groups are deeply tainted. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan acting as a spokesperson for the Taliban, a known Russian proxy, stands as a prime example of such duplicity, hypocrisy, and the double game played by Pakistan's civilian political leadership. This internal rot is a direct consequence of their external alliances.

Inhumane Treatment of Afghan Refugees

Pakistan's recent treatment of Afghans living within its borders is nothing short of shameful and inhumane. Millions of Afghans had called Pakistan their home for decades, having fled conflict

and persecution. Yet, unlike Western countries, Pakistan never provided them with legal pathways to citizenship, leaving them in a perpetual state of vulnerability. The ultimate cruelty is that these Afghans had escaped the very Taliban tyranny that Pakistani leaders helped bring to power, and now, the Pakistani regime is forcibly sending them back to live under that same oppressive rule.

What kind of human beings force desperate refugees to return to a terrorist regime that denies girls access to education, systematically subjugates an entire nation into darkness, and commits unspeakable atrocities? It was not enough to plunge Afghanistan into this darkness; now, those seeking refuge from it are being cruelly sent back. This action is inhumane, utterly unjustified, and demands the strongest possible condemnation from all civilized nations of the world.

Conclusion and Call to Action

The United States must hold the Pakistani leaders accountable for all the atrocities they are committing against their own people, and against their neighbors, particularly Afghans and Indian. We must demand a clear declaration of where they truly stand moving forward.

The choice before Pakistan's leadership, particularly its military leadership, is simple:

1. **Stand with democracies:** Become a real democracy, genuinely support democratic forces in Afghanistan, and align with the principles of freedom and human rights.

Or

2. **Stand with authoritarians and State Sponsors of Terror:** Continue their alliances with Russia, China, and Iran – the "Axis of Evil" – and persist in supporting the Russian

terrorist puppet regime of the Taliban. Pakistan is an important nuclear-armed country, as are Russia and China. If Pakistan cannot untangle itself from this "Axis of Evil," then the United States must treat it as such: a State Sponsor of Terror.

The metrics for their alignment with democracies are clear and verifiable:

- **Cut off all ties with the Taliban:** Sever all military, financial, and political support for this terrorist organization.
- **Stop mistreating and forcing Afghans to return:** Provide legal protection and pathways for refugees, allowing them to remain safely in Pakistan until Afghanistan is truly free.
- **Support the anti-Taliban Afghans:** Actively assist those fighting to free their country from Russian occupation and its terrorist puppet regime. A free Afghanistan will naturally lead to the voluntary return of most Afghan refugees.
- **Purge their army and political structures:** Eliminate all Russian and Chinese agents who are closely working with terrorists and undermining democratic principles.
- **Open up the political space for all ethnic and religious minorities:** Ensure their full and equal participation in governance and society, protecting their rights and identities.
- **Hold a genuinely free and fair election:** This election must be conducted under the strict supervision of U.S. authorities and international observers to ensure its legitimacy.
- **Cement their ties with the United States and democracies of the world:** Demonstrate unwavering commitment to democratic values and international cooperation.

The time for Pakistan's duplicity is over. The United States must demand a clear choice, and hold them accountable for the path they choose.