

(1)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
Human Rights Council 8th session
item 6 UPR
Oral statement

Geneva, 12 June 2008 – Following the review under UPR of Pakistan, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) welcome the fact that the government of Pakistan recently ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture, consistent with the pledges it made to the Human Rights Council at the time of its election. We also look forward to the establishment of an independent Human Rights Commission, in accordance with the Paris Principles.

However, we would like to express our deepest concern about the comment made by Pakistan in the Working Group report par. 108 that a number of recommendations proposed in the framework of the UPR “neither fall under the framework of universally recognized human rights nor are consistent with the pledges and commitments made by Pakistan”.

The right to life is enshrined in the UDHR as well as in the ICCPR. In relation to par.43 of the report of the Working Group ~~on the ICCPR~~, we urge the government of Pakistan to seriously consider the adoption of a moratorium on executions, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution of 18 December 2007.

Relating to par. 28, we regret that religious minorities live under threat of being ^{falsely} prosecuted for blasphemy. [Religious extremists constantly threaten the lives, trade and educational opportunities of minorities while the government looks away.]

Referring to par. 43, we want to raise the issue of women who continue to be haunted under accusations of Zina (extramarital sex), even when legally married but without the blessing of their families. For awarding Hadd punishment the evidence of non-Muslims and women is not acceptable despite the fact that Hadd punishment is also prescribed for the crime of rape, where women are victims.

Regarding par. 23 on the criminalization of defamation, we deplore the refusal of Pakistan to review laws and measures which restrictions are incompatible with the principles of the right to freedom of expression as guaranteed in the ICCPR. [This refusal appears as a lack of will of the Pakistani authorities to respect their international obligations.]

We call upon Pakistan to cooperate fully with the UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures, in particular the Special Rapporteurs on Independence of Judges and Lawyers and on Human Rights Defenders.

We urge you to agree on all the recommendations made by the Working Group and to implement them over the next four years ~~as effectively as possible~~.