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PERMANENT MISSION OF PAKISTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
56 rue de Moillébeau
1211 Geneva 19
Tel: (4122) 7491930
Fax: (4122) 734 8085
E-mail: mission.pakistan@ties.itu.int

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29 August 2018

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan accredited to United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and has the honour to attach the response of the Government of Pakistan to the Joint Communication No. AL PAK 2/2018 dated 5 June 2018.

It is requested that Pakistan's response may kindly be shared with the relevant Special Procedure Mandate Holders.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Special Procedures Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Special Procedures Branch
The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Geneva

Response to the Queries raised by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy; and Special Rapporteur on violence against women regarding case of Maryam Hasan

- i. Please provide any additional information and/or any comment(s) you may have on the above mentioned allegations.**

The allegations conveyed in the communication have not been established yet as the investigations are still under process. According to the available information and evidence, the incident has no relation with the work of Ms. Hasan as editor of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (IIRCP).

- ii. Please provide detailed information on any investigation or prosecution underway with regards to the above-mentioned allegations, along with any results obtained therein. If no such investigation has taken place, please explain why.**

On the complaint of Ms. Maryam Hasan, the concerned police authorities registered First Information Report (FIR) against the burglars on 22 April 2018 under Section 392 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). The case is still under investigation and the police is continuing with its efforts to arrest the burglars. The authorities are seized of the matter and concerned officials have been directed to take the requisite action.

- iii. Please provide information about the reason why no FIR could be filed in this case.**

The FIR was registered timely as per normal procedure and investigations are being carried out.

- iv. Please provide detailed information on any specific measures which have been undertaken by authorities to ensure the physical and psychological security of Ms. Hasan, as well as members of her family, to ensure that she is able to carry out her important work in the defence of human rights in a safe and enabling environment.**

Law enforcement authorities are mindful of the need to ensure safety of Ms. Hasan and have taken all necessary steps to ensure her safety. She has all the constitutional and legal guarantees as that of any other citizen of Pakistan. No information of intimidation or harassment has come to the notice of the Government from her side. Being a parliamentary democracy with active media, strong civil society and independent judiciary, necessary enabling environment exists in Pakistan for promotion and protection of human rights.

- v. **Please indicate what measures, in general, have been taken to ensure that human rights defenders in Pakistan are able to carry out their legitimate work in a safe and enabling environment without fear of threats or acts of intimidation and harassment of any sort.**

Human rights defenders, civil society and bloggers are free to function in an enabling and independent media environment of Pakistan. In a thriving democracy like Pakistan, free and independent media is considered as an important pillar of the State. The robust role of media can be gauged from the fact that over 100 media channels frequently highlight political, social and human rights issues and lead the national debate on issues of public importance. The Constitution of Pakistan protects all the fundamental rights of its citizens. Articles 9, 10, 14 and 19 deal with protection of life and liberty of persons, protection against arbitrary arrest and detention, inviolability of person and freedom of speech respectively. These constitutional provisions are available to all without discrimination. Moreover, the fundamental rights are justiciable and if any citizen fears that his/her constitutional rights are being violated can seek redressal at appropriate forums. We would like to underscore that given the unprecedented level of freedom of media, all cases of intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders get immediate media attention and are addressed by the Government, the Parliament and the Judiciary. Where required, high-powered commissions were set up to investigate into allegations of intimidation and harassment.

Pakistan strongly believes in the freedom of press, expression and opinion and has been making appreciable efforts both internationally and domestically. We believe that journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders play an important role in ensuring freedom of press, fostering culture of accountability, protecting rights of citizens and providing access to prompt and timely information to the public on all issues. The Government has taken several measures to safeguard journalists, bloggers, human rights defenders

and lawyers for them to function without fear. The Government considers them partners in promotion and protection of a human rights culture in Pakistan. A few measures taken in this regard by the Government are as following:

- a) notified a Ministerial Media Security Committee with the mandate to suggest welfare measures to ensure safety of Journalists and Media Persons;
- b) initiated a new scheme (Life Insurance Policy for Media Persons) for the welfare of the journalists;
- c) a Hot Line Number (111-925-225) has been installed in Press Information Department so that journalists can inform the government about any potential threat to them or security related issues;
- d) Establishment of Endowment Fund to provide relief to the wounded and crippled journalists who have fallen victims of terrorism in the line of duty.

The Government's draft Journalist Welfare and Protection bill, 2017 is under consideration. It was circulated amongst All Pakistan Newspaper Society, Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors and Pakistan Broadcasters Association for inputs. Meanwhile, Ministry of Information has constituted a media security committee to provide protection and safety to the media persons nationwide. Provincial Governments have been taken on board to strengthen this arrangement.

The Government of Pakistan remains strongly committed to the respect, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its citizens in accordance with its international obligations and domestic laws.