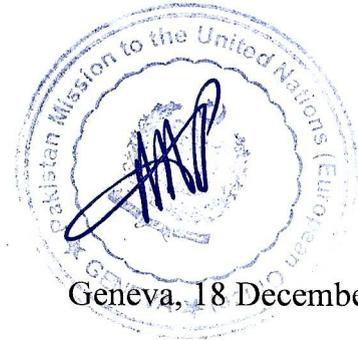




No. Sp/Proc/1/2024

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and with reference to latter's joint communication No. AL PAK 7/2024 dated 23 October 2024, has the honour to attach the response of the Government of Pakistan.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 18 December 2024

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais Des Nations
1211 Geneva 10

Copy to:

- i. Mr. Ulrik Halsteen, Officer-in-charge, Special Procedures Branch, OHCHR
(ohchr-registry@un.org)

**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

Response to joint communication (AL PAK 7/2024) from Special Procedures

The right to education is enshrined in Article 25A of the Constitution of Pakistan, alongside guarantees of non-discrimination and special provisions for advancement of socially or educationally disadvantaged citizens in Article 22.

The continued construction, rehabilitation and operation of schools for girls and boys across the country, including in the newly merged districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, is part of the Government's abiding commitment to implement the right to education for all.

Responding to the growing phenomenon of out-of-school children and the related issue of lack of nutrition, the Prime Minister in September 2024 announced a nationwide education emergency. Through the initiative, the Government aims at significantly reducing the overall number of out-of-school children including through, inter alia, increased budgetary allocations to education over the next five years.

The development of evidence-based policy and sharing of best practices in pursuit of this goal has been aided by the collection of data and execution of focused campaigns.

For instance, the "Zero OOSC Campaign" in the Islamabad Capital Territory by the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training successfully identified 81,668 out-of-school children aged 5-16 years, of whom 49 percent were girls. At the end of the study period, 70,941 children had been enrolled in schools, while 10,727 remained the focus of continued effort.

The campaign's planning, proceedings and conclusions were documented in a report by the Pakistan Institute of Education¹.

In October 2024, the Pakistan Institute of Education also published education statistics and non-formal education statistics reports for 2022-23, containing data and insights on such matters as enrolment and outcomes.

In each of the cases of girls' schools referred to in the joint communication, the authorities have initiated inquiries and investigations to find and prosecute the perpetrators in accordance with the law.

The incidents at Afia Girls Public School, Shewa, and Sakhi Mar Welfare Society School, Razmak, – both in North Waziristan – were swiftly condemned by the highest echelons of leadership and all sections of society. District police and counter-terrorism departments are carrying out active investigations, with several suspects having been interrogated.

The incident of arson at the Sofia Girls Academy, Wanna, South Waziristan, is also under active investigation with law-enforcement and military forces both carrying out site visits, recording witness testimonies, and consulting with the head of the school. The investigation is contending with the facts that the school was under construction at the time and no terrorist group has claimed responsibility.

¹Pakistan Institute of Education, "Documentation of Good Practices of Zero OOSC Campaign Zero OOSC Campaign in Islamabad", January 2024 (<https://pie.gov.pk/SiteImage/Publication/OOSC.pdf>)

The case of the attack on a school in Surab District, Kalat Division of Balochistan province has also been investigated. Two principal suspects have been arrested and will be prosecuted in the court in accordance with the law.

It bears noting that these incidents took place in relatively remote parts of Pakistan where the scourge of terrorism is a clear and present threat.

Pakistan has consistently condemned terrorism in all its manifestations in the strongest terms at the highest levels, including in the cases highlighted in the joint communication. Eradicating terrorism remains a pressing and urgent task for the Government, with law-enforcement and security forces working in tandem to ensure safety and security of the people and Pakistan and establish the conditions necessary for their full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to education.

It is hoped that the above information would prove helpful in clarifying the cases raised in the joint communication.

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