

Dated: April 23, 2008

Chief Coordinator PCHR Appreciates Pakistan's Ratification of ICESR and ICCPR

Islamabad: Mr. Shafique Chaudhry Chief Coordinator Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR) in a press release appreciated Pakistan's ratification of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and signing the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as Convention against Torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

While commenting upon the worsening state of human rights violation in Pakistan Chief Coordinator said that more than 59,962 cases of human rights violations were reported from all over Pakistan. The highest number of human rights violations, (37,000 cases), were reported in the NWFP According to official statistics of Law Ministry given in Parliament, human rights violations had been reported in various cities irrespective of big and small or urban or rural for example, big cities like Peshawar 7,339 cases were registered followed by 4,676 cases in Gujranwala in Punjab and 1,311 in Karachi. In interior Sindh, Khairpur district topped the list with 442 cases followed by Dadu 368 cases, Larkana 306 cases, Shikarpur 307, and Sanghar 280. He said that the above mentioned figures clearly unleash the negligence and insensitivity of the previous government towards the most fundamental duty of protecting the rights of citizens as no steps were taken by the previous government to combat the human rights violations in the country.

He said it was evident from above mentioned statistics that Pakistan needed strong and urgent policy reforms to counter human rights violation and the ratification of the core human rights instruments is big step in this direction. He said that it was the need of the hour to take administrative steps to protect human rights and eliminate all form of human rights violation at the earliest. He said that Pakistan has also ratified ILO Conventions but they have not been implemented in letter and spirit which called immediate attention on the part of the government. He said that the pressing human rights concerns in the country included a rise in sectarian violence; legal discrimination against and mistreatment of vulnerable groups like women and religious minorities; arbitrary detention of political opponents; harassment and intimidation of the media, bonded labour, child labour and lack of parliamentary or judicial oversight to security operations related to ongoing war on terror.

"The ratification and signature of the three core UN human rights instruments is a significant step forward by Pakistan in fulfilling its pledges and commitment to promote human rights of the people of Pakistan in accordance with international law" he said. He hoped that joining the main international

human rights instruments would reflect practically the commitment of the new democratic government to promote human rights in Pakistan, including the rights of women, children, minorities and the unprivileged. He said that the ratification of International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights has obliged the government to ensure the full realization of the economic, social, and cultural rights of the people of Pakistan enshrined in the covenant including the elimination of economic injustice and poverty.

He further said that it is high time for the new democratic government to demonstrate its commitment with human right by incorporating international human rights practices and standards into domestic policies and laws as required by international rights laws. He said that there was strong criticism on the Pakistan criminal justice system and its procedure of investigation itself causing human rights violation which demanded urgent reform on the part of government. He hoped that the new government would reform the existing Criminal Justice System to make it more protective for the citizens of Pakistan.

Media Cell, PCHR