

Press release

## **Solidarity with forcibly disappeared persons across the world**

Lahore, 30 August 2019. As we observe International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) expresses solidarity with all victims of enforced disappearance the world over. Our thoughts are also with those Kashmiris who have been forcibly disappeared as part of the state crackdown in India-held Kashmir.

HRCP calls on the Pakistan government to carry through its long overdue promise to criminalise enforced disappearances under the Pakistan Penal Code. The state must also acknowledge allegations that the official data sorely underreports the numbers of forcibly disappeared persons – something that many victims' groups and human rights organisations have consistently pointed out. This makes it all the more necessary for the findings of the 2010 Judicial Commission on Enforced Disappearances to be made public.

HRCP draws urgent attention to the need for Pakistan to sign and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. 'Internal political instability or any other public emergency' are no grounds for justifying enforced disappearances. Equally, the internment centres to which numerous forcibly disappeared persons have been traced, must be declared unconstitutional. As such, these centres are black holes and have no place in a democratic structure that entitles a detained person to know what they have been charged with, the right to a fair trial and the right to remain in contact with their families and with legal counsel.

**Dr Mehdi Hasan**

Chairperson

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