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2018, another mournful year in Sistan and Balochistan

Sistan and Balochistan has witnessed another year of endless extra judicial killings and executions in 2018.

According to the latest statistics around 29 people were executed on arbitrary allegations without due legal proceedings. The provinces of Sistan and Balochistan have also experienced an ever-increasing tide of extra judicial killings of ordinary Baloch citizens. In 2018, around 40 people lost their lives from indiscriminate shootings by security forces and military personnel who targeted fuel smugglers.

Sistan and Balochistan are witnessing the worst forms of social, economic and political discrimination by the theocratic Iranian regime in Tehran. Due to Balochistan's security situation along with the lack of employment opportunities, ordinary Baloch citizens are struggling to stay alive, with many losing their lives.

Rape victims of Iranshahr are forced to remain silent

Seven months have passed since the stunning revelations about the gang rape of 41 girls in the city of Iranshahr, Sistan and Balochistan Province. Despite the initial promise from concerned state authorities, as yet, there have not been any judicial proceedings concerning the arrests of culprits behind this heinous crime. The people who protested were brutally attacked and the general public has been forced to stay silent about the situation. By arresting political activists and intimidating civil rights activists, state authorities are trying to silence people on this issue.

According to information disclosed by one of the victims, 41 girls were gang raped by "people in uni-

form". This shocking revelation was made public by the Sunni cleric during Friday Prayers in Iranshahr city, a cleric whom later was threatened to be detained and prosecuted by the general prosecutor in Balochistan, Mr. Ali Movahedirad, for allegedly disturbing public opinion.

After the initial public protests and civil right activists unrest, the relevant state authorities made empty promises of arresting the perpetrators. Unfortunately, as feared by political and civil rights activists, several months later all those arrested were released without any charges, while one of the victims was forced to marry her rapist.

Balochistan's stateless citizens

Tens of thousands of Iranian Balochi citizens, many of whom children, do not have birth certificates, state identification or other proofs of citizenship. There are no official statistics on the number of Balochi citizens who do not have citizenship. The informally reported numbers vary greatly and officials have noted they do not know the scope of the problem. Officials however have said that in Sistan and Balochistan, at least 40,000 children of 5 years old and above do not have birth certificates. Experts have additionally noted large numbers of Baloch people without proof of citizenship living in locations outside of Sistan and Balochistan, in cities such as Mashhad.

According to the Iranian Parliament News Agency and various statements by members of the parliament, as of May 2017 there were over one million Iranians of all ethnicities without any birth certificates, 400,000 of which were children.

According to Yaghoub Jedgal, a former member of Iran's Parliament representing the Chabahar county of

Sistan and Balochistan, Baloch citizens without proof of citizenship cannot easily access state social assistance, including welfare payments, healthcare and education. Baloch people have difficulty obtaining utilities such as water, electricity and phone services. They are also at risk of legal statelessness, cannot vote, access certain government loan programs and do not get counted in the census.

Traditionally, Baloch people in Iran, particularly the older generation, have had little interaction with the state and its institutions. As such, many Baloch people have not had their birth registered nor have they registered their marriages or realised their need for official identification cards or proof of citizenship. In deed many children are affected by this because new births of Baloch citizens cannot be easily registered when their fathers and grandfathers do not themselves have proof of citizenship.