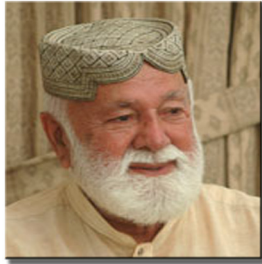




American Friends of Baluchistan



-- Liberty is a fundamental right of every nation



Baluchistan International Conference

Nov. 21-22, 2009 Washington DC

Baluchistan means the land of the Baluch. Most Americans seem never to have heard the name Baluchistan, a Texas sized region divided among Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Baluchistan is a vast territory - 43 percent of Pakistan's land mass. The area under Pakistani army occupation is slightly bigger than New Mexico. The area under Iranian mullahs is the size of Nevada, and that under Afghan control is the size of West Virginia. The total Baloch population in these areas is eight million, and seven million Baluch live elsewhere in the world. Seventy-five percent Baluch population has no access to safe drinking water. Sixty-five percent lives without electricity. Eighty-eight percent lives below the poverty line.

The Baluch are yearning for their independent state. Thousands have been killed and tens of thousands displaced. Upwards of 8,000 are missing.

The first Baluchistan International Conference is aimed at creating awareness in the United States, a country that has been supplying arms and ammunition, including F16 fighter jets and helicopter gunships to Pakistan.

The conference has been organized to highlight Baluch issues in Eastern and Western Baluchistan -- now under Pakistani and Iranian occupation -- and to pay tributes to slain Baluch freedom fighter Nawabzada Balaach Marri, 41, an elected member of the Baluchistan state assembly and son of legendary Baluch leader Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri.



Mehran Baluch, a brother of the slain leader, will preside over the two-day conference that is aimed to find ways and means to end the plight of the Baluch natives in Western and Eastern Baluchistan. Mr. Baluch has represented Baluchistan at the UN Human Rights Council for nearly ten years now. Pakistani intelligence agencies have been anxious about his activities and have been following him in different Western capitals. They have also been engaged in a character assassination campaign against the young leader.

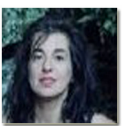
The panelists at the conference are:



Selig S. Harrison, Asia director at the Center for International Policy, has written extensively on ethnic tensions in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, focusing on the Baluch nationalist struggle. His 1980 book *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, remains the most authoritative analysis of the Baluch nationalist movement. He is the author of *Pakistan: The State of the Union* recently published by the Center for International Policy, where he directs the Asia Program. In this study, he calls on the government of Pakistan to honor the autonomy provisions of the 1973 Constitution and withdraw its armed forces and intelligence agencies from Baluchistan. Harrison served for 22 years as a Senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and was South Asia and Northeast Asia Bureau Chief of *The Washington Post*. His five books on Asia include *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton) and *The Widening Gulf: Asian Nationalism and American Policy* (Free Press).



Andrew Eiva was born of refugee parents who fled tyranny in Lithuania, and learned early on that resistance warfare could help his homeland Lithuania regain independence. His quest took him to West Point -- where U.S. generals are trained -- and the Green Berets. He is best known for his impact on policy and the selection of effective weapons systems during Afghanistan's struggle against Red Army occupation. Later in Lithuania, he led the volunteer pro-independence forces in a showdown with Soviet occupation forces. During the Serb ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, he lobbied for military support for the Bosnians and Kosovars. Currently, he is working on a concept for the Sudanese resistance to use their oil and gas reserves as a tool for unity and victory. Eiva thinks a similar approach could benefit the Baluch drive for independence.



Annie Nocenti's writing has appeared in *Details*, *Utne*, *HEEB*, *Stop Smiling*, *PRINT*, *The Independent*, *Filmmaker*, *Scenario*, *High Times*, *Counter Punch*, *Lies of Our Times*, *Chronogram* and *Prison Life*. Her story *The Most Expensive Road Trip* in the

World was published in the *Best Travel Writing* 2008, editor Anthony Bourdain. She has edited books for *The Nation* and *Moveon.org*. Her interviews with film directors have been published and anthologized. Her comics include *Daredevil*, *Longshot*, *Typhoid Mary*, and *Spider-man*. Nocenti made a film with Wendy Johnson called *The Baluch* [http:// blip.tv/file/ 1211472](http://blip.tv/file/1211472) and wrote a story about her trip to Baluchistan: [http://www.brooklynrail.org /2006/12/express/letter-from-baluchistan](http://www.brooklynrail.org/2006/12/express/letter-from-baluchistan) Nocenti currently teaches film in Haiti.



Aziz Baloch now lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, where he represents the Baloch Human Rights Council. He is MA (Economics) from University of Balochistan and former zonal general secretary of the Baloch Students Organization [BSO], a student body engaged in a struggle to secure the rights of the Baloch people since 1967. He has an associate degree in professional management and business technology management and served as lecture coordinator in the student program, inviting academics to speak on international topics. A volunteer interpreter / translator for Baloch community in Canada he is also a seasonal writer -- his articles have been published in *articlebase.com* and other websites.



Dr. Gul Agha is a well-known Computer Scientist and Professor of Computer Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Agha grew up in, and has traveled extensively throughout Sindh, and all of South Asia. He has written numerous short essays about Sindh and has lectured at many Sindhi gatherings. He was the Guest of Honor ('Mukhi Mehman') at the Sindhi New Year (Cheti Chand) celebration organized by the Bharti Sindhu Sabha in Thane in 2000 (Mumbai, India). Dr. Agha is an outstanding speaker whose expertise and personal experience enables him to speak extensively on human rights and international and domestic politics pertaining to Sindh and Baluchistan.



Dr. Karim Abdian is the executive director of Ahwaz Human Rights Organization, an international advocacy NGO, an advocacy organization for the rights of seven million Ahwazi-Arab ethnic minorities in Iran. An Aerospace Engineer by profession, he was born and raised in al-Ahwaz or Khuzestan, Arab region of Iran. He is a PhD in International Economics and for the past 40 years, he has worked tirelessly and passionately on behalf of the Ahwazi-Arabs, Azeri-Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Baluch and Turkmen. He was imprisoned for 2 years in the infamous Evin prison during the Shah's reign for these activities. He has worked closely with UN Human Rights Commission, now Human Rights Council, with UN Permanent Forum of Indigenous peoples and with UN Minority Forum. Mr. Abdian and his wife Tina live in suburbs of Washington D.C. Their two children are, Angela 20 and Alex 18.



Dr. Nazir S. Bhatti has been campaigning for equal rights for Christian people in Pakistan since 1985. He is president of Pakistan Christian Congress [PCC] {See details www.pakistanchristiancongress.org}. He led numerous protests, hunger strikes, rallies and long marches with other leaders and members of PCC to condemn discriminatory laws in Pakistan. Before being forced to flee to US safety, he was arrested many times. He contested the blasphemy law in Lahore High Court and Supreme Court of Pakistan and has challenged the Hadood Ordinance. The government of Pakistan registered 21 false cases of treason and blasphemy against him on February 13 1998, in Karachi, for leading a protest against the burning of Christian village Shanti Nagar by radical Muslims in Punjab.



Humaira Rahman is general secretary of the World Sindhi Institute. A former practicing architect and lecturer, she is an environmental and human rights activist. She had launched a highly successful non-profit against urban sprawl in her hometown of Karachi. Ms. Rahman belongs to a well-known family from Old Karachi, where her father and uncle were respected for their community service as educationists and jurists. She has three decades of service to her people behind her. Currently, she resides in Toronto, Canada.



Ismail Ameeri attended high school in port city of Chahbahar and college in Zahedan in Western [Iranian occupied] Baluchistan. After the 1979 Iranian mullah takeover, he went to Karachi and did his Master's in Political Science from the University of Karachi in 1985. In Karachi, he was actively involved in Baloch politics and Balochi literary forums and joined the Western Balochistan-based Balochistan National Movement. He is presently a member of the central and executive committees of the pro-independence party. A writer in Balochi language, he had been a co-editor of Monthly Taptan (Balochi). He regularly chairs and moderates Baluch gatherings in London.



M. Mumtaz Khan is vice chairman of the International Kashmir Alliance. He started his political activism as a student leader more than a quarter century ago at the University of Karachi and bravely faced the religious extremists. He has given a voice to the people of Kashmir at the UN Human Rights Council and boldly exposed Pakistan's human rights violations in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. He has tirelessly campaigned at international fora against terrorism and machinations of Pakistan's infamous Inter Services Intelligence in Kashmir since 1990. He advocates a free, secular and democratic Kashmir.



Munir Mengal is the managing director of Baloch Voice based in Paris, France. He hails from the remote Mashkay area in Awaran, Pakistan Occupied Balochistan. He had planned to launch a Balochi and Brohi language satellite TV channel called "Baloch Voice." But Pakistani intelligence agencies abducted him on April 4, 2006 and he was held incommunicado and faced worst torture in a Pakistan military dungeon for 16 months. After being freed on 23rd April 2008, he came to France with the help of Reporters Sans Frontieres. He has attended two UNHCR council sessions and made speeches at events organized by the UNPO and Interfaith International.



Raja Karthikeya is a foreign policy researcher based in Washington DC. He writes often in South Asian and international media on security issues in South Asia and Iran with a focus on the role of ethnic political and nationalist movements in insurgencies in the region. He also regularly analyses South Asian politics and security issues as well as US foreign policy towards the region for Voice of America. He has served as an International Affairs Fellow at the US House of Representatives, has been an international election observer in Afghanistan and has worked in the private and non-profit sectors in North Africa, India and Afghanistan.



Robert R. Selle has been a newspaper and magazine journalist for 24 years. Most recently, he has been editor of The World & I Online, a monthly e-zine that focuses on current issues, world cultures, the arts, and the sciences. He is also editor of The Africa Dispatch, a newsletter that presents positive news about Africa. He has been a current issues editor for The World & I, a monthly print magazine; a Special Sections editor for The Washington Times daily newspaper; and managing editor of the New York City Tribune, once a daily based in Manhattan. He and his wife Angelika have four children (3 sons and a daughter) and live in Bowie, Maryland, just outside Washington, DC, where he continues to edit and write.



Saghir A. Shaikh, PhD, is based in California. He is the former chairman of the World Sindhi Congress -- a Sindhi advocacy and educational organization with chapters in UK, USA. Dr. Shaikh has been active in different social and political forums since he was five. He is one of the founding members of Sindhi Baloch Forum, G M Syed Memorial Committee, Sojhro.Org (an education and career abroad web portal), and a life member of Sindhi Association of North America. Dr Shaikh speaks regularly at seminar and conferences to highlighting the Sindh struggle for national self-determination and Baluch fight for independence.



Saleem Samad, an Ashoka Fellow for journalism, has co-authored several books on conflict, terrorism and forced migration. To protest genocide and extermination of non-Muslims in Bangladesh in 1971, he joined the Mukti Bahini (guerrillas) to establish a secular Bangladesh, free from the occupation of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He is President of International Forum for Secular Bangladesh (Canada Chapter), which recently held a day-long film event on Bangladesh War Crimes in Toronto, Canada. In November 2002, he was detained and tortured by the Bangladesh authority. His arrest invited international uproar by rights groups. He is presently living in exile in Canada, after security agencies harassed him for his articles on the nexus of Bangladesh security agencies with the Jihadists. He received Hellman-Hammett Grants award by the New York based Human Rights Watch.



T. Kumar is the Advocacy Director for International Issues for Amnesty International USA. He has served as a human rights monitor in many Asian countries as well as in Bosnia, Haiti, Guatemala, and South Africa. He has also served as director of several refugee ships and refugee camps. Kumar often testifies before the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and frequently lectures at the Foreign Service Institute. A former political prisoner in Sri Lanka for more than five years, he has been interviewed by CNN, BBC, and NPR. He is also a Professor at Washington College of Law's Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.



Wendy Johnson is a co-producer of the seminal documentary The Baluch. She has a Master's degree in Languages and Literature of South Asia from the University of Minnesota. She has lived and traveled extensively in Pakistan and India while studying Urdu on the Berkeley Urdu Language Program in Lahore, Pakistan, on two occasions, and with the American Institute of Indian Studies program in Delhi, India. She also studied documentary film at the Anthropological Film Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Wendy works as a graphic designer in New York. She and her husband Albert Larew manage thebaluch.com website.

MIR BALAACH MARRI: A PROFILE IN COURAGE

Balaach Marri was born on January 17, 1966. He was the fourth among six sons of Nawab Khair Bux Marri. He was named after the great 15th century Baloch hero Balaach Gorgej of Chaker-e-Azam era. He started his primary education at Quetta Grammar School. He was only six in 1972 when the National Awami Party government was removed forcibly at the instigation of the military. The entire area around Nawab Khair Bux Marri's house in Quetta was surrounded by military and Balaach witnessed his father being arrested by the army. The siege of the house continued for many months after the arrest. Nawab Khair Bux Marri was jailed for the next seven years for plotting to liberate Baluchistan and during this entire period, Balaach was able to see his father only a couple of times. Nawab Khair Bux was released in 1979 and went into self-exile in Afghanistan the following year with his family and thousands of Baloch people. Balaach continued and finished his secondary education in Afghanistan.



Balaach excelled in his studies. He was a keen student who really loved his school and studies. During this period Balaach started to learn and understand politics.

He attended study circles run by his father Nawab Khair Bux that included philosophy, history of Baloch people and Balochistan and about the possible options for political struggle and emancipation. The study circles and discussions also included the analysis of international situation.

At that time a lot was happening in Afghanistan, attracting many liberal activists and intellectuals from the surrounding countries. The study circles and the interactions that Balaach attended during this period had a deep mark on his understanding of Baloch issues.

He was also believed to be probably one of the closest to Nawab Khair Bux among his sons. Balaach interacted frequently with his father, whom he used to call Ada or "Elder Brother."

After finishing his secondary education in Afghanistan, Balaach moved to Moscow to finish his higher education in communication engineering. Again, he proved to be an excellent student. Balaach was very effective in interacting with people from many different countries with revolutionary ideas and enthusiasm to bring a change. He continued to maintain many of those relations that he established during this period.

Nawab Khair Bux Marri returned to Balochistan in 1992 and Balaach Marri returned in 1993 after completing his studies. He left Balochistan at the age of 14 as an adolescent and returned as a man of 27 years.

In 2000, the entire family of Nawab Marri was implicated in the murder of Justice Marri. Nawab Khair Bux was imprisoned. Balach incidentally was at that time in London. After the arrest of his father, family and friends and family advised him to stay in London.

He immediately started work to raise awareness among the international community about the plight of the Baloch people. In early Nov. 2003, he went back to Balochistan.

He started working to develop the backbone of the current Baloch resistance. One of his greatest achievements is that he resolved long-term feuds between Marri and Bugti tribes and assisted Nawab Akbar Bugti to lead the Baloch national cause. This demonstrates his visionary and statesmanlike capabilities. He organized the Baloch struggle not on tribal but Baloch national lines.

He raised the profile of the Baloch struggle to a new level within the international community and in Pakistan. The impact was so big that on many occasions coup leader and Dictator General Pervez Mushraf explicitly said Balaach Marri has to be eliminated to keep Baluchistan under Pakistan's military thumb.

Shaheed Balaach Marri

our promise to you, your mission shall continue until Baluchistan is free.

Baluch yuk'ba'at, Baluchistan sabz ba'at