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BALUCHISTAN: THE KEY TO REGIONAL SECURITY

8 JUNE 2009

PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA

Event scheduled to coincide with 11th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva (UNHRC) will address human rights violations and propose solutions to simmering tension and conflict in key region straddling Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan.

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) in partnership with Interfaith International and Baloch representative Mr. Noordin Mengal, will host an event to discuss the deteriorating human rights violations in Baluchistan during the 11th Session of the UNHRC in Geneva on Monday, June 8 from 16h00 (TBC).

Balochistan is a region that makes up 44% of Pakistan's territory but also straddles Iran and Afghanistan. The region is exceptionally rich in natural resources which has encouraged exploitative domestic and external intervention. Speakers at the event will include influential Baloch leaders, security and human rights experts and representatives of Permanent Missions to the UN, each of whom will contribute to discussions of the present situation in the region and possible solutions.

The session, entitled *Self-Determination in Baluchistan-its Relation to Regional and Global Security* will discuss the repeated human rights violations of the Baloch, a minority community who have been politically and economically marginalized by the Pakistan government. These violations include indiscriminate use of force against civilians, targeted killings and the disappearance of political activists and journalists. Hundreds of thousands of civilians are said to have been displaced across province boundaries into Sindh and Punjab and state boundaries into Afghanistan, underlining the regional and international nature of the problem.

The kidnapping of American citizen and head of the UNHCR in Balochistan, Mr. John Solecki in February of this year brought the attention of the international community to this region but the subsequent killing of three men who were members of the committee that secured his release is evidence that international attention must now turn to international action.

This event will allow assembled leaders, experts, and decision-makers to discuss the current situation, raise awareness of the complexity to the problem, and begin to develop possible solutions to the existing regional turmoil and instability.

For more information on please contact:

Ms. Maggie Murphy UNPO Project Coordinator
P.O. Box 85878, 2508 CN The Hague, The Netherlands
unpo@unpo.org, mmurphy@unpo.org
Tel: +31 (0) 70 36 46 504 **Cell:** +31 (0) 649 864 340



Dr. Charles Graves Interfaith International Secretary General
P.O. Box 32, 1246 Corsier, Geneva, Switzerland
charlesgraves@interfaithonline.org
Tel: 0041 22 751 23 45 **Fax:** 0041 22 751 23 48