

Press release

Pakistan: Government must not curb Students' Solidarity March

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Lahore/Islamabad, 29 November. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) deplores the government's response to the Students' Solidarity March, being held on Friday 29 November across cities and towns in Pakistan.

HRCP is alarmed by reports that students supporting the march are being harassed, facing rustication or being dislodged from their hostels in an effort to restrain them from participating. This is a flagrant violation of their right to peaceful assembly. Moreover, the propaganda that is being circulated on social media platforms to malign march supporters is not just repugnant, it could also put them at risk of harm.

HRCP is also concerned to learn that the Governor's Secretariat in Quetta has issued a notification to the University of Balochistan, banning all political activity and gatherings, and clearly giving security personnel the authority to prevent these.

HRCP urges the government to take the legitimate demands of the solidarity march seriously. Students have the right to oppose fee hikes and budget cuts to higher education, and to call for an end to unnecessary interference by security forces on campus, for functional anti-harassment committees with student representation, and above all, for the restoration of student unions. HRCP stands in solidarity with all students taking part across the country on Friday.

On behalf of Dr Mehdi Hasan
HRCP
