

Unmasking the Illusion: The Balochistan Narrative Manipulation through Pakistan Literary Festival

Editorial

The Pakistani occupier state has consistently attempted to manipulate the perception of the Baloch nation and Balochistan through different tactics and soft narrative initiatives. From the start, it has worked diligently to conceal the truth and distort facts related to the occupation in Balochistan. Numerous organizations and NGOs have been established for this purpose. Their objective is to present a fictionalized version of Balochistan that does not align with reality. By doing so, they aim to downplay human rights violations, genocide, and exploitation of the Baloch people, falsely portraying peace in the region. These efforts disproportionately target Balochistan's youth. Organizations such as "Pakistan Youth Development," "Voice of Balochistan," and the recent Pakistan Literary Festival held in Quetta on May 15-16 are part of a colonial program designed to create a distorted image of Balochistan. The puppet Chief Minister of Balochistan Sarfaraz Bugti, on its social media platform, X, admitted their involvement in the recent mega event held in Quetta in the name of Literary Festival where all the segments included in the session were politically motivated and their ultimate goal was to project a false image of Balochistan to the rest of Pakistan and the world.

These organizations, which have been heavily funded by the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan, are attempting to manipulate the Baloch youth's perception of the reality. They use programs and events to persuade people, but their true intention is to divert attention away from societal and national issues. They portray the human rights violations in Balochistan as the concern of only a few individuals fighting for an unjust cause. However, simultaneously, Pakistani security forces engage in abducting and killing thousands of Baloch people, resulting in immense suffering and serious human rights violations. These critical facts are deliberately concealed from the public. Through such programs and events, they seek to camouflage their crimes. While presenting grand visions of development, the harsh reality remains: Balochistan is occupied by the Pakistan Army, which employs violence through killings and abductions, while also subtly manipulating narratives via literary festivals and NGOs.

These NGO's, groups and individuals are heavily funded by the law enforcement agencies to distort the realities of Balochistan. Such programs are designed to create a soft image of the occupier Pakistani state and soft players such as Journalists like Saleem Safi, Actors like Mahira Khan and so called media channels like Voice of Balochistan and others which are actually part of the security establishment and launched to misguide to people regarding the actual brutal policies of the Pakistani state in Balochistan. The recent mega event, which was held in Buitems Quetta, was another attempt to portray the state's soft image to the colonized people of Balochistan and hide the State brutalities and killings in Balochistan. It is worth to note that the institution, where the mega event was held has deep crisis within, in terms of financial corruption

and injustice to their own teachers. Recently two Baloch teachers of the same institution were taken to custody by the police for speaking against the irregularities in the affairs of the administration. Everyone in Balochistan is aware of the reality of such gatherings and their agendas are not hidden to anyone. The involvement of the so called literary persons in the event has exposed the dark reality existing behind the shelter. Joining such programs for some petty interests have exposed a bunch of so called literary intellectuals in Balochistan.

Quite interestingly, On one hand, Baloch youth are the prime targets of enforced disappearance, with many bodies dumped and killed in fake encounters, and on the other hand, such so called events are being conducted to manipulate them. Yet now they speak of 'Youth Development' in Balochistan? In reality, their true intentions are to distance Baloch youth from their nation and its genuine national issues. Pakistani institutions, teachers, media journalists, and so-called Pakistani intellectuals who participate in such programs are well-paid and instructed to create a distorted image of Balochistan for the world. They conceal critical facts through elaborate literary and cultural events. Pakistan shows no respect for Baloch culture and tradition, evident in how they mistreat and drag our mothers and sisters on the streets during protests for the safe recovery of our loved ones. Despite this, they hypocritically claim to love Baloch culture and tradition. Sarfraz Bugti, who served as the chief guest at the Pakistan Literary Festival in Quetta, is himself a notorious death squad leader who later became the puppet Chief Minister of Balochistan while addressing on event, the so-called CM of Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti distorted the truth about Former Chairman of the organisation Zahid Baloch, asking about his student career and activism. Zahid Baloch has done his graduation at University of Karachi and he was leading BSO Azad at front. Additionally, he has given a false and misleading story about the occupation of Balochistan.

The state sponsored so-called literary festivals are nothing but to manipulate the public and make a misleading narrative to cover up the Baloch genocide and counter Baloch national moment. What more can we expect from this Pakistani administration? The Pakistani army allocates millions of rupees to these NGOs and literary events solely to distract Baloch youth from their genuine national responsibilities.

The Baloch nation must exercise caution regarding such NGOs and programs, avoiding participation in them. Youth represents the future of our nation and should fulfill its duty to the national liberation movement. True development lies in the right to live freely and enjoy freedom within our own land. As long as we remain colonized, genuine progress and competitiveness in this modern world will elude us. The initial step toward development is securing our freedom, a crucial aspect that we currently lack. The Baloch nation should never align itself with these illusory dreams and so-called development initiatives.