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## Mounting Pressure on Pakistan as Baloch Families Demand Justice and Transparency

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Families of forcibly disappeared individuals and detained activists from Balochistan have launched a sit-in protest outside the National Press Club in Islamabad, calling for an end to enforced disappearances and the immediate release of Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) leaders. The protest, gaining momentum since its start earlier this week, is a bold act of civil resistance against a state accused of suppressing dissent under the guise of national security.

According to *The Balochistan Post*, the sit-in includes relatives of BYC members who have been held for over three months, as well as families of long-missing persons. Many protesters have spent years pleading for the safe return of their loved ones, only to be met with silence or further intimidation. During a press conference held at the protest site, participants condemned the blanket censorship in Balochistan, stating that their voices are systematically shut out from national discourse. “Media censorship is rampant, and the doors to truth have been shut,” one speaker lamented, painting a grim picture of life in Pakistan’s most restive province.

Protesters described Balochistan as an “information black hole,” where narratives are controlled and voices of dissent are routinely silenced. They pointed to the March 19 arrests of several NYC and human rights activists including Dr. Mahrang Baloch, Beebar Zehri, and Shah Jee Sibghatullah as part of an ongoing crackdown. Although courts initially ordered their release, the activists were re-detained under the colonial-era 3-MPO (Maintenance of Public Order) law, before being shifted to anti-terrorism custody with new charges laid. This abuse of legal loopholes, critics argue, reflects a wider strategy to intimidate civil society into submission.



The demands from these families are clear: release all detained political activists and put an end to the cycle of enforced disappearances. Yet the state response has remained largely dismissive, reflecting a dangerous normalization of repression. While Pakistan’s authorities may hope to contain dissent through fear and silence, the growing visibility of these protests suggests the opposite effect. As public pressure mounts and international awareness spreads, Islamabad may soon find that its repressive tools are losing their effectiveness. In a region plagued by injustice, the quiet resolve of these families may be the loudest indictment of all.