



Statement by Ambassador Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, Foreign Secretary,
High-Level Segment
55th Session of HRC
26th February 2024

Mr. President,
High Commissioner,
Excellencies,

I congratulate the brotherly Kingdom of Morocco and members of the bureau on their election.

I commend the High Commissioner, Mr. Volker Turk, and his Office for their valuable work.

Pakistan shares the global ambition to make 2024 a pivotal year for human rights in wake of the 75th anniversary of UDHR.

Yet, varied challenges confront us today:

Politicization of global human rights agenda; partiality and selectivity in approaches; growing inequalities; rising intolerance; misuse of new technologies; devastating impact of the changing climate; and the list goes on.

In this backdrop, the Council, as the custodian of international human rights norms and principles, has an onerous task at hand.

Rest assured; the Council will always find Pakistan a staunch supporter in promoting universal respect for human rights.

Mr. President,

As a five times member of this august body, Pakistan remains a strong voice for protection, and indivisibility of all human rights.

We have always endeavoured to foster dialogue, mutual understanding, and consensus at the Council.

With a similar spirit, Pakistan has contributed to the Council's work in areas of social and economic rights; religious intolerance; disinformation; rights of children, older persons and persons with disabilities; and the frontier issue of emerging technologies.

We are also committed to further deepen our cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms. This is manifest from our regular engagement with treaty bodies; Special Procedures; and the Universal Periodic Review process.



Mr. President,

At home, our commitment to human rights is anchored in the vision of our founding fathers; shaped by our Constitution; and guided by aspirations of our people.

Our domestic human rights architecture is robust with special emphasis on protection of women, children and minority rights.

Despite many exogenous challenges, our investment in strengthening social safety nets and improving standards of education and health continue.

An independent media and a strong civil society enrich our human rights discourse domestically.

A few weeks ago, despite serious threat of foreign sponsored terrorism, Pakistan successfully held a peaceful and fair election. Tens of millions of Pakistani citizens freely exercised their fundamental right to vote.

The peaceful transition of power, which is underway, demonstrates the strength of our democratic tradition and values which are essential to the enjoyment of civil and political rights.

At the same time, we are cognizant that promotion of human rights is a journey, which we are fully committed to pursue for progress and prosperity of our people.

Mr. President,

In Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, India's settler colonial project continues in full swing in breach of UN Charter, Security Council resolutions and international law.

It is a serious travesty of justice that India's unlawful actions of 5th August 2019 were rubber-stamped by its Supreme Court in December last year.

The political and demographic engineering of the occupied territory is being carried out by the world's self-professed largest democracy through an outsized military presence and draconian laws.

In doing so, India continues to systematically violate every single basic human right of Kashmiri people.

Arbitrary arrests, torture, summary executions, confiscation of properties, destruction of homes and excessive surveillance have been inflicted upon the brave Kashmiris.



Freedom of assembly, expression and religion has been outlawed; and political parties banned. Kashmiri political leaders, journalists and human rights activists remain incarcerated, and some face death penalties under fabricated cases.

Kashmiri women and children suffer several layers of institutionalized discrimination, abuse and violence.

Pakistan, therefore, calls on the High Commissioner's Office to continue monitoring the situation in IIOJ&K and produce a third Kashmir report in exercise of its prevention mandate.

We urge the Council to act on the recommendations of the earlier two Kashmir reports and establish a Commission of Inquiry.

We also ask India to grant unhindered access to global media, civil society groups, and UN human rights mechanisms to the occupied territory.

Mr. President,

Longstanding denial of right to self-determination leads to suppression of other rights, and carries plausible risk of genocide. This is what is unfolding in IIOJ&K as well as in occupied Palestine.

For over five months, the world has watched with horror the unprecedented and unforgivable crimes in the occupied territory, especially in Gaza.

Pakistan condemns in the strongest terms Israel's brutal military aggression against the Palestinian people.

Israel's atrocities, ranging from killing of innocent women and children; attacks on health facilities; forced displacement; and starvation, mark a dark chapter in modern history as does failure of international community to stop this inhuman war.

Pakistan, therefore, reiterates its demand for immediate and unconditional ceasefire as well as end to Israel's aggression against the Palestinian people.

With a similar purpose, Pakistan has welcomed the provisional measures ordered by the ICJ for Gaza, and called for their full and effective implementation.

Enduring peace in the Middle East is predicated on a just, comprehensive lasting solution to the Palestinian question. Pakistan supports creation of an independent and viable State of Palestine based on June 1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in line with applicable UNSC and OIC resolutions.



Mr. President

From the desecration of holy books to the demolitions of centuries old mosques to the bombing of ancient churches in Gaza, we must continue to condemn incidents of religious hatred, including Islamophobia.

The Council has an important responsibility to remain united in the face of hate. Consensus is important but it should also be meaningful, and address legitimate concerns of all States.

Mr. President,

Since its establishment in 2006, the Human Rights Council has made good progress in advancing the international human rights agenda.

This has been possible due to conscious choice of States to stand by fundamental human rights principles, norms and values.

To effectively address the complex human rights challenges of our times, a similar moral and political clarity of purpose is needed.

Let us work together to make human rights a reality for everyone everywhere.

Thank you.