



National statement, delivered by Mr. Sumair Gul, Second Secretary, during the Interactive Dialogue with UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at 48th session of Human Rights Council

27 September 2021

Madam President,

Pakistan thanks the SR for documenting the negative impacts of the COVID pandemic on rights of indigenous people. We echo his concerns that in many situations, the pandemic has especially been exploited to infringe upon their inalienable right to self-determination.

India's heightened onslaught on indigenous Kashmiris' right to self-determination is a contemporary case of such willful defiance of basic human rights norms, law and principles.

Since 05th August 2019 and using COVID as a smokescreen, India continues to take illegal and unilateral actions, aimed at robbing the indigenous Kashmiris of their distinct religious and cultural identity as well as their natural resources, lands, and livelihoods.

These actions have been militarily enforced upon the Kashmiris, and scaled up by imposing a 'double lockdown' during the pandemic.

Framing its colonial project as a development strategy, India has unlawfully doled out 57,000 acres of indigenous land to India-based businesses, and preferentially awarded them mining leases for resources exploitation along the environmentally fragile River Jhelum. The occupation forces have themselves illegally grabbed over 50,000 hectares of land for so-called 'strategic development', increasing militarization of the conflict-ridden territory.

More alarmingly, India is altering demography of the disputed territory, by granting non-Kashmiri foreigners Kashmiri citizenship, and allowing them to permanently settle, seek job, and buy lands in the occupied territory.

India's nefarious designs are clear i.e. to convert the Kashmiris into a minority in their own homeland, and deprive them of their inalienable right to self-determination, as guaranteed by the UN Charter and UNSC resolutions.

Pakistan, therefore, urges the SR to continue to monitor and report to the Council on these systematic and gross violations of the rights of indigenous Kashmiri people. I thank you.