



**National Statement, delivered by Mr. Muhammad Salman Khalid Chaudhary, Third Secretary, during Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues at the 46<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council**

**(15 March 2021)**

Madam President,

Pakistan thanks the Rapporteur for his well-researched report.

70 percent of victims of hate speech belong to different minority groups. We, therefore, endorse SR's conclusion that online hate speech is at its core an issue of the rights of minorities.

The 'hate ecosystem' is sustained by ultra-nationalist, populist and racist ideologies, with social media platform as its conveyer-belt.

Populist political narratives misuse digital space for accentuating xenophobia, negative stereotyping against and stigmatization of minorities, especially Muslim communities and individuals.

In certain cases, public leaders and State machinery are themselves complicit in inciting targeted violence against minorities, often for electoral gains.

The continued prioritization by social media companies of profits over human rights principles remains a growing cause of concern. The enhanced use of algorithm-based processes for promoting content virality; and stonewalling third-party review of moderation policies are disturbing facts.

These two toxic realities have coincided, resulting in real-time human rights consequences, accentuating loss of lives, and assaults on basic rights and dignity of minorities.

For example, in one country of our region, Facebook chose not to remove hateful posts by several ultra-nationalist ruling leaders to safeguard its business interests. In the same country, "WhatsApp lynching" has full state patronage, resulting in routine cow vigilante attacks, and organized violence against Muslims.

Legally, we have seen diverse views on combating the daily drip of online hatred, which falls short of the threshold established under Article 20 of ICCPR.

Pakistan call for prioritization of human rights and dignity over flawed business models of social media companies through a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder strategy to counter the pandemic of hate. We invite SR's views in this regard. Thank you.