



National statement delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Peaceful Assembly at the 47th session of Human Rights Council

01 July 2021

Madam President,

We agree with the Rapporteur that access to justice and enjoyment of fundamental right to peacefully assemble and associate are organically linked.

Obstacles to justice have a chilling effect on exercise of fundamental freedoms, lead to shrinking of civic space and act as force multiplier for other abuses.

This disturbing chain of events is more pronounced in situations of foreign occupation. Armed with draconian laws, and thanks to a pliant judiciary, occupation regimes obstruct access to justice, and deprive people of their inalienable right to self-determination.

The endemic nature of justice crisis in Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir demands urgent attention.

The nearly two yearlong military and digital lockdowns have disenfranchised Kashmiri people's right to peaceful assembly and association. Between August 2019 to February 2020, mosques were closed and religious processions banned.

Since then, India has shamelessly exploited the COVID pretext to further deprive the Kashmiris of their rights and freedoms.

The Hindutva Raj continues to torture, arbitrarily detain, arrest, and extra-judicially kill innocent Kashmiri civilians and peaceful protestors, resisting demographic engineering in their homeland.

To add insult to injury, a pliant judiciary has emerged as a veritable arm of Indian oppression. Hundreds of habeas corpus petitions are pending before local courts, as illegally imprisoned Kashmiris are languishing in overcrowded jails, hundreds of kilometers away from home, amidst the pandemic.

The continued illegal detention of journalist Mr. Aasif Sultan for close to three years, and sentencing of Ms. Asiya Andrabi by a kangaroo court on trumped-up charges exemplify the scale of injustice in the occupied territory.

We, therefore, ask the Rapporteur to closely monitor the situation in IOJ&K within the scope of his mandate and report it to the Council. Thank you.