



National statement delivered by Mr. Umair Khalid, Second Secretary, during Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Peaceful Assembly at the 50th session of Human Rights Council

17 June 2022

Mr. Vice-President,

We thank the SR for spotlighting various challenges threatening civil society's access to resources.

As a participatory democracy, we acknowledge civil society's critical role in promoting rule of law, human rights and development. In line with our constitutional framework, we have elaborated a progressive NGO policy, aimed at providing these organizations with an enabling environment.

We echo SR's concerns about India's systematic persecution of civil society, illustrated by functional dismantling of over 6,000 NGOs through choking their financial resources.

India's retributive attacks on the democratic right to peaceful assembly continue unabated.

Only few days ago, Indian authorities used brute and indiscriminate force against Muslims, registering a peaceful protest over the derogatory remarks made by two officials of the ruling BJP party against the holiest personality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The horrific footages of Indian forces opening fire on peaceful protestors, and demolishing their homes mark a new low in the Hindutva Raj's repressive policies against its own minorities.

The shuttering of Amnesty International Office by India after two years of state-driven harassment campaign represents another example of shrinking civic space. As publicly voiced by a group of UN experts, these punitive actions were in retaliation for the NGO's independent reporting on Indian atrocities in occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

Mr. President, during the last three years, Indian occupation machinery has heightened its systematic assault on fundamental rights and freedoms of Kashmiris. Anyone dissenting India's demographic engineering of the disputed territory is labeled as a terrorist, arbitrarily jailed, physically tortured, and extra judicially killed during staged encounters.

The alarming situation in occupied Kashmiri demands urgent attention. We, therefore, ask the SR to closely monitor and report on the human rights situation in the occupied territory, within the scope of his mandate. Thank you.