



**National Statement, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate under Agenda Item 8: Follow-up to and Implementation of Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action at the 46<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council**

**(18 March 2021)**

Madam President,

VDPA continues to provide us with a compass to navigate the increasingly complex global human rights landscape.

VDPA affirms that situations of foreign occupation constitute obstacles to the full and effective enjoyment of all basic rights. These situations remain the epicenter of widespread violations and abuses under the cover of pervasive impunity. The global human rights agenda will remain unfulfilled, unless occupied people are granted their inalienable right to self-determination.

India's heightened and systematic assault on Kashmiri people's inalienable right to self-determination presents one such alarming situation before this Council.

Since 05<sup>th</sup> August 2019, India continues to take a series of illegal measures to colonize the disputed territory, in willful subversion of the UN Charter, UNSC resolutions, and international law.

These unlawful measures are clearly designed to convert Kashmiri people into a minority, and deprive them of their right to self-determination. Through demographic engineering over 3.5 million non-Kashmiris have been granted Kashmiri citizenship, and allowed to permanently settle in the occupied territory.

India has also disenfranchised the Kashmiri people of their right to freely pursue their socio-economic and cultural development.

Kashmir lands, riverbed and mines are being doled out to Indian entities to exploit without any independent oversight or environmental consideration. Amidst the mounting unemployment caused by the physical and digital lockdown, local jobs have been opened for foreign settlers.

India has also changed the status of Urdu and Kashmiri languages associated with Muslims, and their identity.

The situation in occupied Jammu & Kashmir qualifies as a human rights crisis on any objective criteria. The Council needs to respond credibly to the early warning signs of ethnic cleansing, as reported widely by civil society and independent media.



We, therefore, urge the Council, the High Commissioner and UN Special Procedures to call on India to reverse its illegal actions in IIOJ&K, fully respect and uphold fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people, in particular their right to self-determination, in compliance with its international obligations.

I thank you.