



**National statement delivered by Mr. Umair Khalid, Second Secretary, during  
Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and  
Opinion at the 50<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council**

**24 June 2022**

Mr. President,

We thank the SR for chronicling the sobering trends about safety of journalists in her well-researched report.

As a progressive democracy, Pakistan has taken wide ranging measures to ensure well-being and safety of its journalist community. Recently, we enacted a comprehensive law which safeguards the rights of every journalist to security, privacy and non-disclosure of sources. It also outlines the formation of a commission for the protection of media workers as a grievance and remedial mechanism.

Pakistan shares SR's concerns about India's vicious crackdown on media freedom as a ploy to hide its widespread brutalities in Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

Under cover of draconian laws and through implementation of regressive media policy, India has penalized dissent and criminalized right to free speech of Kashmiri people.

Media has been issued gag orders; local newspapers critically reporting on Indian atrocities have been force-closed and Kashmiri journalists calling India out for its illegal demographic changes of their homeland have been persecuted through protracted detentions, legal harassment, reprisal attacks, or in worst cases, summary executions.

Through cyber-surveillance, coercion and frequent internet blackouts, India has also tried to silence Kashmiri voices in online spaces.

At the same time, India continues to deny access to international human rights actors and foreign media to the occupied territory. This has enabled Indian occupation troops to perpetrate violations of Kashmiri rights with full impunity.

We therefore encourage the SR to seek access to the occupied territory, carry out an independent assessment of the situation and report it to the Council, within scope of her mandate.

We also reiterate our call on India to immediately release the illegally detained Kashmiri leaders, journalists and activists, repeal draconian laws, and uphold Kashmiri people's fundamental rights and freedoms. Thank you.