



National Statement delivered by Amb. Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative
during General Debate under Agenda Item 4
52nd Session
22 March 2023

Mr. Vice President,

We believe that the Human Rights Council is a valuable forum to stimulate international cooperation, and dialogue for promotion and protection of all human rights.

The Council often hears from its members reaffirmations of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action which stipulates that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated.

Yet 30 years since the adoption of VDPA, the global human rights picture presents ever-growing challenges before this Council.

Perhaps it is time to view the agenda item 4 through the prism of VDPA and agree that the approach to selectively prioritize certain human rights situations requiring attention, needs to change.

We believe that today human rights are at the center of every major situation facing the world.

Underdevelopment, climate change, food and energy security, public health emergencies are often sidestepped in a rush to address situations of political nature. The fact remains that social and economic factors and political situations are deeply interlinked.

Mr. Vice President,

At the core of this indivisibility of rights in civil, political, economic, cultural and social domains is the commitment to uphold human dignity.

Denial of the right of self-determination is the most brazen manifestation of degrading human dignity.

This is most often the case in the UN-recognized situations of foreign occupation where human lives, rights and dignity is trampled daily at the hands of illegal occupiers.

Mr. Vice President,

The illegal project to colonize the UN recognized disputed territory of IIOJ&K and to enforce a demographic apartheid is founded on the brutal disregard of human dignity of the occupied



Kashmiris. Denial of rights to Kashmiris is absolute, consistent across the full spectrum of indivisible rights and violative of every human rights instrument on the books.

Accordingly, we reiterate that the Office of the High Commissioner not to lose sight of its responsibility towards the people in illegally occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

Mr. Vice President,

While emphasizing the need to focus on such egregious situations, we also take this opportunity to underscore the need for impartiality and to avoid politicization of human rights.

We have always supported engagement as the preferred manner to promote human rights and in this regard recognize constructive efforts made by some countries including China. We hope that human rights will not be instrumentalized to interfere in its internal affairs.

A politically driven smear campaign on the pretext of human rights diverts the energies of this Council away from addressing human rights in a holistic manner. We urge the Council to abandon this beaten path.

Thank you.