



National Statement, delivered by Ambassador Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative, during General Debate under Agenda Item No. 4 at the 49th session of Human Rights Council

21 March 2022

Mr. President,

Pakistan considers dialogue and constructive engagement with the concerned State as preferred vehicles to address human rights situations.

As global custodian of human rights principles and norms, the Council should pay special attention to the state of human rights in UN-recognized situations of foreign occupation. These situations are global epicenters of systematic abuses due to brazen impunity for occupation regimes.

Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) is one such situation, where India has defied international law, violated UN Security Council resolutions and flouted the 4th Geneva Convention, particularly since 05th August 2019.

To illegally alter its demographic structure and disputed status, India has granted Kashmiri citizenship to over 4 million non-Kashmiris, allowed its occupation forces to garb lands, and efface the religious and cultural identity of the indigenous Kashmiris.

To enforce this demographic apartheid, armed with oppressive laws, over 800,000 Indian troops continue to terrorize, torture, abduct, kill and maim Kashmiri men, women, girls and youth. They have also systematically deployed home demolitions and sexual violence as weapons of collective punishment.

In order to hide its widely documented violations, the Hindutva Raj is muzzling local media, persecuting Kashmiri civil society, and denying access to independent human rights actors to the occupied territory.

The irony is that while India itself is the world's pioneer and largest purveyor of state terrorism, it uses the self-serving narrative of terrorism to de-legitimize Kashmiri freedom struggle.

The grave human rights situation in Occupied Kashmir fulfills any objective criteria for consideration by the Council. Silence and inaction by this august body and its proponents raise legitimate concerns over their credibility and avowed commitment to international law and human rights.

We, therefore, urge the Council to consider the brewing human rights catastrophe in occupied Kashmir on its merits, as recommended by the two Kashmir Reports.

We also urge the High Commissioner to continue monitoring the situation and produce an updated Kashmir report. We also call on global champions of human rights to practice what they preach, and speak out against Indian crimes. Thank you.