39th Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Pakistan's explanation of vote before the vote by Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, Counsellor, on A/HRC/S-39/L.1, as orally revised

"The situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially in the context of the repression of nationwide protests starting on 28 December 2025"

(Geneva, 23 January 2026)

Mr. Vice President,

Pakistan has always upheld the universality of this Council's mandate. Its ability to respond to situations as they emerge is an advantage that ought to be cherished but employed with responsibility. It weakens the Council to squander it; more so at a time of resource constraints, disengagement and attempts to undermine its mandate.

Across the Middle East and other parts of the world, socio-political movements and calls for change have often been instrumentalised to further geopolitical interests. And such instrumentalization has been used to justify interventions; bringing about conflict, human suffering and lasting instability. Is this the recipe that the Council seeks to re-create for Iran?

The people of Iran, whether living in the country or abroad, are heirs to a rich legacy and ancient civilization whose culture has influenced its own and adjoining regions like South and Central Asia. Pakistan is confident that all Iranian people and their country's government remain fully capable of addressing any challenges and resolving any differences – peacefully, by themselves, without external pressure or incitement to violence.

Mr. Vice President,

This Council has often been forced to act when other bodies within the UN system did not. This has resulted in proliferation of mechanisms misaligned with the IB package and UN General Assembly resolution 60/251.

At the Council's 35th Special Session, my delegation objected to the establishment of the Fact-Finding Mission on Iran owing to the mandate's departure from the foundational principles of this Council. I will not repeat these concerns, although they remain valid.

I note also that Iran has not sanctioned any mandate holders.

Earlier today, my delegation invited reflection on the outcome of this Special Session. The proposed resolution in document L.1 falls short. Special Sessions are not for pushing through one-sided mandate renewals.

During informal consultations, my delegation commented on the several open questions and notable omissions. We regret that the proposal before this Council, as orally revised, still:

i. Omits the root causes of socioeconomic hardship in Iran that triggered the protests, namely the imposition of unlawful unilateral sanctions without UNSC authorisation;

ii. Describes the duty of the Iranian Government to promote and protect and human rights and yet seeks to portray domestic avenues as unavailable and discounts the value of state cooperation; and,

iii. Prejudges the outcomes of investigations that it is mandating in duplicate to monitoring mechanisms that are ill-equipped to undertake them.

Pakistan therefore requests a recorded vote on the draft resolution contained in document L.1 and would vote against.

Thank you.

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