National statement by Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, Counsellor, during 39th Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council "to address the deteriorating human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran"

(Geneva, 23 January 2026)

Mr. Vice President,

Pakistan will always be a friend to Iran and the Iranian people everywhere.

Iran was the first country to recognise Pakistan's Independence.

Regardless of domestic or regional developments, the two peoples have always enjoyed strong bonds of friendship rooted in shared culture, history and faith.

Recent developments in Iran were, therefore, of great concern to Pakistan.

All life is sacred. The deaths of first responders, medical staff, policemen, protestors and bystanders are tragic and deeply regrettable. Rioting, arson and attacks on government offices and places of worship are unsettling.

International human rights law recognises public safety and order as essential for the enjoyment of human rights.

Pakistan welcomes the cessation of violence and the gradual return to normalcy in Iran.

We also note Iran's commitment to uphold the due process of law.

The protests cannot be separated from the context of the tragic loss of life and destruction that the people of Iran suffered as the result of a regional aggressor's unlawful military attacks last June. Maintaining peace and stability remains the best safeguard for the human rights of people in Iran and across the region.

This debate can also not overlook the adverse human rights impacts of unilateral sanctions as aggravating factors underlying the protests. The High Commissioner and Special Procedures have repeatedly warned that these measures affect the dignity and rights of all Iranians. They also constrain the Iranian Government's ability to uphold all human rights.

Mr. Vice President,

The Council must consider what this Session is expected to achieve.

Sanctions, military action and interference have only caused suffering in Iran.

The value of imposed mandates without the consent of Iran remains dubious.

The situation of human rights is improved only with time-tested instruments of dialogue and cooperation.

Geopolitical considerations must never outweigh the imperative for diplomacy and engagement.

We invite the sponsors of this Special Session to reflect.

Confrontation only reduces space for genuine dialogue. It exposes the Counci's universal mandate to charges of selectivity. And it does a disservice to the human rights of the people in Iran.

Thank you.

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