



**National statement, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate under Agenda Item-3, at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council**

**(22 September 2021)**

**Madam President,**

One of the core purposes of the UN Charter is to promote universal respect for “equal rights and self-determination” of the people. The UDHR and other core human rights instruments have also reaffirmed the right to self-determination as a bedrock for realization and enjoyment of other rights.

As the global custodian of human rights norms and principles, it is, therefore, incumbent upon this Council to support people struggling for their rights, dignity and freedoms.

The right to self-determination of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir has been codified by several UN Security Council resolutions. For the past 7 decades, India continues to deny this inalienable right to the Kashmiris, in clear defiance of international law.

India’s unilateral actions of the last two years in the occupied territory are yet another demonstration of this willful violation of rule of law. Some of these include the growing colonization of the disputed territory at a biblical scale including through grant of more than 4.2 million domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris-almost half the total indigenous population.

The UN experts have publicly warned that the occupation regime has, by design, made it easier for a non-Kashmiri to get a domicile certificate than an indigenous Kashmiri. This illegal step designed to change the demographic structure not only constitutes a deliberate breach of the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention, it also represents an early warning sign of ethnic cleansing.

India continues to trample upon every fundamental right of the Kashmiris through draconian laws and by invoking the self-serving canard of terrorism.

Brave Kashmiri leaders, journalists, activists and civilians calling out India for its atrocities are subjected to unlawful killings, brute torture, immediate reprisals, and prolonged detentions. Collective punishment in the form of house demolitions during the so-called cordon and search operations is rampant.

The Hindutva colonizers are also systematically marginalizing the majority Kashmiri community, and disenfranchising them of their rights to land, natural resources, livelihoods, and distinct identity.

A hand-picked occupation machinery by New Delhi continues to orchestrate and inflict these grave violations of Kashmiri rights behind the world’s longest running military siege, and even amidst the COVID pandemic.



Since the High Commissioner's second Kashmir report, several independent observers have documented that the human rights situation in the occupied territory has considerably deteriorated. It therefore meets any objective criteria for preventive action. The UN human rights machinery, civil society and global media continue to document and report on India's state oppression against Kashmiris.

This Council cannot remain a mere bystander in the face of this oppression and grave human rights crimes in occupied Kashmir.

The Council must press India to halt and reverse its policy of changing the demographic composition of the occupied territory. The Council must also demand full respect of the basic rights of the Kashmiri people, especially their right to self-determination in compliance with its obligations under UNSC resolutions.

We once again urge States championing the cause of human rights, to express their views in this body on these independently documented abuses. Their silence will only breed further impunity, impede accountability and more ominously, lead to further loss of Kashmiri lives, dignity and freedoms. At a minimum, Kashmir monitoring and reporting process by the High Commissioner must continue.

The Council can no longer afford to ignore these long-standing human rights issues. If it does, it will do so at the cost of its credibility and its main proponents.