



**Pakistan's Right of Reply against European Union, delivered by Mr. Danyal Hasnain,**  
**Third Secretary – Item 2 General Debate**  
**54<sup>th</sup> HRC Session**  
**13<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Mr. President,**

We are exercising our right of reply to address concerns raised by the European Union on the recent incidents of attacks on churches and the treatment of minorities.

We share the concerns of the EU delegation. In fact, we reiterate condemnation of these incidents.

These incidents are violation of Pakistan's constitution and the rights it enshrines for all citizens including religious minorities. We are also mindful of our obligations under applicable international human rights law.

Accordingly, we have actively engaged with, and accepted many of the recommendations pertaining to minorities received during the fourth UPR cycle.

The EU delegation may recall that we have consistently highlighted in the Council, including in this session, our serious concerns over rising religious hatred. This unfortunate trend is neither new nor restricted to any country.

In our view, **Mr. President**, the immediate challenge to our shared efforts to combat religious hatred can be summarized in one word – 'selectivity'.

For instance, the selectivity to raise voice on incidents of religious hatred in one country of a region, while conveniently choosing to ignore the other in the same region.

Another reflection of selectivity is the convenient interpretation of human rights responsibilities that only makes others to be seen as violators.

Under this approach, destruction of a place of worship is a condemnable act of religious hatred which must be prevented – and rightly so; but public spectacles of destruction of Holy books are not condemned unequivocally.

We must resist the temptation whereby a hate-based version of history of a religious minority must be prohibited by law; but caricaturing a historically most revered religious personality must be protected as free speech.

Restrictions on clothes of female students must be opposed for one country, while imposed and defended for another.



Academic interpretations of human rights law that justify such convoluted approaches are unhelpful.

**Mr. President,**

Pakistan's response to the incidents of attacks on churches reflects its approach towards combating religious hatred.

These incidents have been condemned by all political parties without exception. Our civil society and media too have rejected these acts.

The Prime Minister and faith-based leaders have engaged the affected communities through personal visits to express their solidarity.

Strict law enforcement has followed. Affected communities are being compensated and their places of worship rehabilitated.

**Mr. President,**

Those who attacked the Churches last month are in jail and facing the law.

We look forward to similar actions against those who are publicly desecrating the Holy Quran.

I thank you!