



National Statement, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, during General Debate Agenda Item 9

19 March 2021

Madam President,

Despite international norms and conventions, racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia are on the rise across the globe. Individuals and communities are daily victims of various forms of discrimination, hate speech and violence on the basis of their race, colour, ethnicity or religion.

The international community is still far away from effectively curbing this menace and creating a conducive environment for the enjoyment of human rights by all without any discrimination.

The racially motivated attacks and stigmatization become more systemic and structural in nature when they are used by States as a tool to advance political agenda and electoral gains. Minorities and marginalized segments of societies are both targets and victims of hate speech, racially motivated attacks, violence and socio-economic exclusion. State-patronage for such acts fosters a culture of impunity that tramples upon the rights, freedoms and dignity of individuals and communities.

Islamophobia is another manifestation of racism inflicted upon Muslims minorities. It is nurtured by right wing groups and political parties, amplified by social media platforms and in some cases by sections of mainstream media.

We have witnessed the steady rise of extremist right-wing Hindutva ideology in our region that has targeted Muslims, Christians and Dalits among others through communal violence, deprivation of citizenship, attacks on religious sites, forced conversions, and prohibition of religious practices. Violent attacks have resulted in loss of life and limbs. Many of the perpetrators of these crimes enjoy state patronage and protection, reinforcing a growing culture of impunity.

Even the COVID-19 pandemic is being used as an excuse to vilify Islam & Muslims through online smear campaigns such as “#BioJihad, #CoronaTerroism.

The people under foreign occupation are most vulnerable to multiple forms of discrimination. These disturbing trends are also visible in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir where the occupying power is changing the demographic structure of occupied areas by converting Muslim majority into a minority, in defiance of international law.

The 20th anniversary of DDPA serves an important reminder to meaningfully and urgently combat racism and religious discrimination. The Council should press concerned governments to comply with their obligations under international law and UN resolutions.

I thank you.