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**42<sup>nd</sup>SESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**End of Session Statement by Pakistan**

27 September 2019

Pakistan congratulates you, Mr. President, the Bureau, and the Secretariat on the efficient handling of the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Council.

During this session, the grave situation in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IoJK) has been a central focus of our deliberations. On the very first day, the High Commissioner had urged India to end its lockdown in IoJK. Yet, India continues with its relentless repression of the Kashmiri people.

Today, Mr. President, is the 53<sup>rd</sup> the day of the curfew and the lockdown in IOJK.

Mr. President,

The 53<sup>rd</sup> day of 8 million Kashmiris incarcerated in their homes; of continuing abduction of young Kashmiris from their houses; of the indiscriminate use of pellet guns; of repeated incidents of molestation and rape of women and girls; of lack of access to medical services and hospitals; of the detention of Kashmiri leadership and human rights defenders.

Our understanding of what the Kashmiri people are undergoing may be helped if we bear in mind the fact that the population of Indian occupied Kashmir is almost the same as that of our host country. The 8 million Kashmiris also live in a land of high mountains and verdant valleys. There are so many similarities between where we presently live and work and where the Kashmiris live. But, unlike here, the Kashmiris live in fear. 900,000 Indian troops occupy their land. Their cities are ghost towns. Their streets are silent. The fruits in their orchards rot on trees, unpicked. Their shops are shuttered and closed. The schools are empty, devoid of children's voices and laughter. And their desperate relatives outside Kashmir frantically seek information about their well-being.

And yet, India, like all occupiers, brazenly misleads the Council by making false claims of normalcy and removal of restrictions.[India's claims stands exposed by the independent media and the civil society. Five eminent women human rights defenders who recently managed to access IOJK reported, and I quote "nothing about the situation is normal. All those claiming that the situation is slowly returning to normalcy are making false claims based on distorted facts".

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Commissioner and her Office are the prime human rights defenders of the world. Their efforts for the protection of human life and fundamental freedoms of Kashmiris must continue. The High Commissioner must continue to closely monitor and report on the situation in IOJK, and urgently give effect to her own recommendation to establish a Commission of Inquiry.

Mr. President,

In the face of injustice and cruelty, if we remain quiet we have sided with the oppressor. We cannot do so. We cannot avert our eyes to the suffering of the Kashmiri people. For it is the Council's mandate- no, it is its fundamental moral obligation – to give voice to the voiceless, to protect those who are left with no means to protect themselves. The Council must fulfil this obligation with respect to the people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Thank You.