



Full text of the statement by Dr. Shireen Mazari, Minister for Human Rights, Pakistan, at the High-level Segment of the 46th Human Rights Council session

(23 February 2021)

**Madam President,
High Commissioner Bachelet,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I congratulate you, Madam President, on your election and members of the Bureau to steer this august body.

I commend High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet and her Office for their contributions in advancing the global human rights agenda.

Today, the global human rights landscape presents a bleak picture. The abuses and impunity are writ large especially in occupied territories.

Some of the leading advocates continue to prioritize political, strategic and commercial interests over human rights values and principles. Even public calls for accountability of some of the powerful and ‘friendly’ states are conspicuously absent.

The pleas of civilians, including women and children, suffering from the devastating human rights consequences in situations of illegal Occupation, continue to be ignored.

State-sponsored hatred, Islamophobia and dehumanization of the suppressed are on the rise – often in the guise of the “freedom of expression” or “secularism”.

The COVID-induced public health and economic crises, coupled with the climate catastrophe, are undermining human rights across the world.

As a guardian of universal human rights, this Council must demand respect for rights and freedoms of everyone including those under Occupation and shun double standards based on political considerations.

Madam President,

This year, Pakistan starts its fourth term as an elected member of this Council. We are gratified at the confidence reposed in Pakistan by a large number of member states.

We will continue to make a positive contribution to the work of this Council and its allied mechanisms. We will support efforts to advance respect for universally agreed values, rights and freedoms.

We will advocate and work for consensus-building, including adherence to the principles of impartiality, non-discrimination, genuine dialogue and cooperation.

Despite challenges, we are determined to uphold, respect, promote and safeguard rights and freedoms of all our citizens. We have made headway on the human rights front at home and are resolved to build on our achievements.



Pakistan's human rights plans and policies are directed at realizing the vision of a humane, compassionate, peaceful and inclusive society.

Our institutional oversight is robust. The Standing Committees of the Parliament, and dedicated Commissions at various levels on women, child and minority rights remain vigilant.

We are following up on recommendations of Treaty Bodies and the UPR process. Treaty Implementation Cells at the Federal and Provincial levels are effectively coordinating programmes and activities in the field of human rights.

Human rights education curriculum for schools is in place.

A national human rights helpline supported by apps provides effective remedy and relief to victims.

Process of legislative measures against torture and criminalization of enforced disappearances are at different stages of the parliamentary process.

The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance is supplementing our Government's proactive measures to eliminate this unacceptable practice. A substantial decrease in the number of cases testifies to continued progress in this area.

Our Government has taken policy measures and created institutional mechanisms to alleviate poverty, reduce inequalities and create viable social safety nets.

We have extended coverage of our shelter programme for the homeless. We have added food kitchens for the homeless and the poor. A new nationwide drive to fight child malnutrition has commenced.

This human rights-centric approach has optimized our State delivery system, which has, in turn, enabled us to respond at scale and with speed to the COVID pandemic.

Using the platform of Ehsaas (meaning compassion) Programme, we have disbursed emergency cash of over PKR 175 billion to more than 15 million beneficiaries with specific focus on women, minorities, and transgender citizens.

Our policy of 'smart lockdowns' during the COVID pandemic have saved lives and livelihoods, particularly of daily wage workers, small farmers and SMEs.

We echo calls to make COVID vaccine a global public good. Avoiding vaccine nationalism is essential to save everyone, everywhere from the virus.

Madam President,

As the world battles the COVID pandemic, our neighboring country India has used the virus to supplement its tools of repression.

Last year, I presented in this House the plea and petition of the Kashmiri people. Prior to and since then, India has exploited the pandemic to accelerate the pace of its colonization project in Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and to consolidate its illegal and unilateral actions of 5th August 2019.



India is deploying unprecedented demographic engineering, in violation of the 4th Geneva Convention, to convert the Muslim majority into a minority in the occupied region.

Over 3 million non-Kashmiris have been illegally granted Kashmiri citizenship; allowed permanent settlement; purchase of properties and lands and apply for local jobs in the occupied territory.

In taking these measures, India is usurping Kashmiri people's inalienable right to self-determination in willful breach of the UN Charter, UN Security Council resolutions, and international law.

This 'Final Solution', as the fascist BJP-RSS regime calls it, can be a major precursor to the genocide of Kashmiri people. The Genocide Watch has already sounded the alarm bells.

8 million Kashmiris are caged up in one of the world's largest concentration camps. Using draconian laws, Indian forces have intensified systematic use of summary executions, torture, and rape as a weapon.

Hundreds of Kashmiri leaders, such as Ms. Asiya Andrabi, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Yasin Malik, Masarat Alam Bhat and journalists like Asif Sultan, remain illegally imprisoned without any due process.

Shamelessly, the occupation forces are using live ammunitions, including pellet gunshots, against peaceful protestors and even religious gatherings, as exemplified by pellet firing on a Muharram procession in Srinagar in August 2020.

During staged encounters, houses and entire neighborhoods are being demolished to inflict collective punishment, even as affected families are left hapless at the mercy of the deadly COVID virus.

A pliant Indian judiciary is acting as a veritable arm of occupation as hundreds of habeas corpus petitions remain unheard before the courts.

Cowed by brave indigenous voices, Indian troops are gagging local media, harassing journalists and carrying out reprisal attacks against human rights defenders.

Even amidst the global health emergency, arbitrary restrictions have not been eased out, infringing upon Kashmiri people's fundamental rights to life, livelihoods, health and education.

Not a single member of Indian army personnel has so far been prosecuted for the widely documented human violations in the occupied territory, including the mass rape of Kashmiri women in the villages of Kunan and Poshpura in 1991- just one of the many such instances of use of rape as a weapon by the occupying forces.

Madam President,

India's credentials as purveyor of state terrorism and violator of human rights are well-established.

Today, the Parliaments, global media and civil society are calling out India for its industrial scale assaults on human rights and dignity of the Kashmiri people. The world's so-called largest democracy has earned the title of 'the most dangerous and violent' country for minorities.

The UN Security Council has met three times to consider the serious peace and security ramifications of India's aggressive actions.



To divert global attention away from its atrocities in Kashmir, India has indulged in dangerous false flag operations in the nuclear environment of the subcontinent and peddled disinformation against Pakistan in this very Council and beyond.

The shocking revelations by the independent EU Disinfo Lab, in its second report namely “India Chronicles” and the Goswami whatsapp leaks have once again confirmed duplicity, deceit and defiance of the fascist BJP-RSS regime.

Madam President,

Last year, leading UN Special Procedures described the situation in occupied Jammu & Kashmir “in free fall” and urged the international community to ‘step up’.

Since then, the situation has fallen further into a deep abyss and therefore meets any objective criteria of being a full-blown human rights crisis.

This Council must consider the Kashmir situation on its human rights merits, and not be influenced by geo-political calculations, and bilateral economic interests vis-à-vis India.

The two Kashmir Reports, issued by the High Commissioner in June 2018 and July 2019, present a clear roadmap.

The Council has also at its disposal the Joint Statement on Jammu and Kashmir, endorsed by more than fifty States at its 42nd session.

As recommended by the two Kashmir reports, the Council should consider establishment of an independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate and report human rights violations in Jammu & Kashmir.

Pakistan has endorsed recommendations of the Kashmir reports. We are ready to allow access, together with similar access by India to the territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

We also urge the High Commissioner to continue with the Kashmir reporting process in exercise of her monitoring and prevention mandate.

Madam President,

Appeasement or inaction is no options. Doing so will only embolden the abuser. Let us not repeat mistakes of the past but rather demonstrate the courage to stand firmly on the right side of the history.

I thank you.