



National Statement delivered by Mr. Umair Shakoor, Assistant Director, during the Interactive Dialogue with the SR on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers

53rd HRC Session

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Mr. President,

We thank the SR for her first report to the Council. We wish her a successful tenure and reaffirm Pakistan's support for the mandate.

We agree with the SR that Judicial independence is an issue of vital importance in our shared struggle for the realization of human rights. Judicial independence also acts as a significant safeguard in protecting the most vulnerable segments of societies and ensuring protection against exploitation.

Pakistan's Constitution guarantees the fundamental right of its citizens to legal counsel as well as due and fair process.

In Pakistan, the Government as well as Judiciary have taken several steps to overcome the judicial backlog by amending relevant laws, strengthening of public prosecution service and providing adequate training especially in the domain of international human rights law.

The Government has also taken a wide range of measures to enable lawyers in the discharge of their duties without fear or interference of any kind. Pakistan has active bar associations, which are vital platforms to safeguard and advance legitimate interests and rights of legal fraternity.

To provide legal assistance to the people who cannot afford litigation, the Government has established a Legal Aid and Justice Authority.

We invite SR's attention towards the dire situation of dispensation of justice and independence of judiciary in UN recognized disputed occupied territories where the legal systems are unable to dispense justice. On the contrary these promote impunity.

I thank you.