



National Statement, delivered by Mr. Umair Khalid, Third Secretary, at Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues at the 49th session of Human Rights Council

22 March 2022

Mr. President,

Pakistan thanks the SR for his well-researched report.

We agree with his assessment that very often, minorities are among the first victims and targets of violence and conflict.

Unfortunately, the global surge in populism, Islamophobia and hate-based ideologies, amplified through online platforms, are fueling violations of basic rights and fundamental freedoms of minorities.

We are particularly alarmed by the state-driven demonization and dehumanization of minority individuals and communities in some cases.

As chronicled by the Report, the dangerous embrace of the majoritarian Hindutva ideology by one State in our region is a cause of serious concern for us. Sadly, this ideology has even permeated those institutions, which are required to protect fundamental rights. Today, minorities are being forced to choose among basic human rights that we believe are indivisible.

It is on record that public leaders have openly vilified Muslims by labeling them 'termites' and 'foreigners', and incited discrimination and violence against them with full complicity of State machinery.

From 'hijab ban' to anti-conversion laws; from denial of citizenship rights to attacks on mosques; from calls for genocide to state-sponsored anti-Muslim pogroms, the situation of Muslim rights in one country of our region is flashing early warning sign.

We therefore request the SR to press the country concerned to uphold fundamental rights of its Muslim population, dismantle the structures of discrimination against them and hold to account the well-known perpetrators, in compliance with its human rights obligations and commitments.