



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

Statement

43RD SESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Agenda Item-3 Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights

Defenders

04 March 2020

Statement by Pakistan

Mr. Vice President,

Pakistan welcomes the Report, which documents the contributions made by human rights defenders as well as highlights their multi-faceted challenges.

Human Rights Defenders in conflict affected areas are handicapped by the repressive militarized regime and draconian laws that limit their access to international audience.

All important thematic issues raised by the Special Rapporteur resonate with the plight of human rights defenders, fighting a physical and digital siege for over 200 days in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

Since 05 August 2019, India has illegally locked up hundreds of human rights activists, lawyers and journalists in Occupied Jammu & Kashmir under the draconian Public Safety and Armed Forces Special Power Acts.

These laws allow physical attacks, harassment, threats and reprisals by Indian forces with impunity.

There has been systematic muzzling of media in IOK through direct pressure, internet and social media shutdown and round-the-clock surveillance of journalists by Indian security personnel.

Denial of access to international media and civil society organizations to IOK further compounds this Orwellian situation.

Madam President,

The issue of reprisals against human rights defenders in IOK is long-standing and systematic, and has been well-documented by the High Commissioner's two reports on Jammu & Kashmir.

When these two reports were presented, the Indian delegation attacked the world's primary human rights defender, the OHCHR, from the floor of this House with nasty adjectives. This verbal onslaught is part of the official record of HRC's proceedings. If Indians has the audacity of attack OHCHR from the floor of this House, imagine the plight of human rights defenders on ground in India or in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

We request the Rapporteur to continue monitoring and documenting the situation of human rights defenders in IOJ&K and India in his future reports.

I thank you.