



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN

Geneva

**National statement, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi,
Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during Interactive
Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Racism
at the 44th session of the Human Rights Council**

(15 July 2020)

Madam President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur (SR) for her report.

The new xenophobic political discourse and ideologically motivated hate speech is being practiced in the garb of patriotism, inciting religious and racial hatred, increasingly through social media platforms. As noted by the Special Rapporteur in her report, in 2019, India completely restricted Internet access to specific regions, with the effect of preventing nearly all communication in or out of those regions. These restrictions have been imposed by India in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir as a policy tool to hide its illegal actions and continued human rights atrocities.

Today Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K) represents a classic case where the self-professed largest democracy has defiantly violated longstanding principles of international law, norms and responsible state behavior. Aided by nearly a million security forces, shielded by draconian laws, India has trampled upon every fundamental right and freedom of the Kashmiri people including denial of their digital rights.

Muslims in India have been increasingly targeted and stigmatized since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was first elected to office in 2014. BJP leaders have since stoked contemporary forms of racism, Islamophobia and intolerance, first as part of its electoral strategy, and implemented later as State policy. BJP leaders have openly incited violent attacks against Muslims and other minorities with political protection, approval but without any accountability. Mobs affiliated with the BJP have, since 2015, killed and injured scores of members of religious minorities amid rumors that they traded or killed cows for beef. As also noted by the SR, social Media Platforms such as Facebook have been used to amplify discriminatory and intolerant content, including content inciting violence against religious and linguistic minority groups in India.



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Such divisive forces pose a grave threat to our shared objectives of respect for and realization of human rights for all, without discrimination. Such state sanctioned incendiary rhetoric and complicity has the potential to also threaten regional and international peace and security. Left unchecked, these actions can undo the work of peacemakers, and undermine the basis for peaceful coexistence.

We agree with the SR that political leaders and political parties must condemn racist hate speech and hold all perpetrators accountable for incitement to hatred and acts of violence. We urge the Special Rapporteur to closely monitor and report on such systematic undermining of human rights in India.

I thank you.