



## Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

### **National statement, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during Annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women at the 44<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**

**(13 July 2020)**

Madam President,

We thank the panelists for their insights and suggestions to strengthen accountability for women and girls in humanitarian settings. Women and girls are often the most vulnerable of all population in situations of armed conflict and natural disasters. Such situations exacerbate discrimination, gender inequality and create additional obstacles to the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls.

One such setting is the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir where the human rights and humanitarian situation has turned from bad to worse, where lack of accountability of the perpetrators of discrimination and violence has led to new levels of impunity.

In this occupied territory, women have frequently been targets of violence and aggression as a means to punishing their families and communities for standing up against illegal Indian occupation. Abduction and molestation of young women during the so-called "cordon-and-search operations" is a favoured tool by Indian occupation forces to punish entire communities.

In the past three decades, more than 11,000 women have been victims of rape or gang-rape at the hands of Indian security forces in occupied Jammu & Kashmir. Since August 5, 2019, while everyone in occupied Kashmir is bearing the brunt of repression, women are the biggest victims of military siege and violence. And this reign of oppression and terror has only been exacerbated through COVID-19 related restrictions imposed by the occupation regime. They continue to live in increased paramilitary and military presence; face challenges to even get milk and vegetables for their kids, due to the total curfew; distressed at the widespread illegal detention of children as young as nine or 10 years old.

Diverse acts of violence against women are enabled through a pervasive culture of impunity, reinforced by draconian laws such as Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and PSA that shield the Indian security forces from prosecution for their crimes of sexual violence.



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India's resort to sexual violence in the conflict situation of IOJ&K has been documented by the two reports of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as well as global media and civil society organizations.

The horrific mass rape of Kashmiri women in KunanPoshpura villages of IOJ&K on 23 February 1991 is one of many evidences of systematic use of rape by Indian occupation forces to terrorize the entire population.

Lack of accountability of perpetrators and absence of justice for victims of rape have enabled the occupation regime to continue crimes against women and girls in Kashmir with impunity.

The world must wake up to these war tactics in IOJ&K, in violation of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law as well as applicable UN Security Council Resolutions.

We join the panelists in their call for accountability and effective remedies for violations of human rights of women living in areas of longstanding conflict zones, in compliance with international human rights and humanitarian laws.

I thank you.