



## **Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN**

### **Geneva**

### **National Statement, delivered by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan Permanent Representative to the UN, during General Debate under Agenda Item 8: Follow-up to and Implementation of Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action at the 45<sup>th</sup> session of Human Rights Council**

**(01 October 2020)**

Madam President,

The Vienna Declaration represents a landmark document in our collective efforts to promote respect for human dignity, worth and fundamental rights.

VDPA's unequivocal condemnation of foreign occupation as a systematic obstacle for enjoyment of basic rights validates that unless occupied people are given the opportunity to freely exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, our quest for freedom, justice and peace will remain a distant dream.

Historical evidence and contemporary human rights challenges attest to this sad reality as people, living in UN-recognized situations of foreign occupation, remain the primary victims of the most gruesome, widespread and well-documented atrocities.

The prevailing human rights crisis in occupied Jammu & Kashmir, accentuated by India's illegal and unilateral actions of 05<sup>th</sup> August 2019, is one such classical case before this Council.

Madam President,

During the last 14 months, India's long-standing brutal repression of the brave Kashmiri people has entered a new and dangerous phase.

In militarily imposing a 'final solution', the neo-fascist Indian ruling elite is systematically changing the demographic structure of the disputed territory, and converting Kashmiri people into a minority with the ultimate goal of depriving them of their right to self-determination.

These unilateral actions by the world's self-professed largest democracy clearly contravene the UN Charter, UNSC resolutions and international law.

Already, over 1.6 million Indian citizens have been granted Kashmiri citizenship, who can now acquire lands, properties and jobs. Administrative rules and requirements have been eased for Indian army personnel-the very agents of this colonial enterprise-to buy lands in the disputed territory.

Reprehensibly, India has also exploited the COVID pandemic to usurp Kashmiri people's lands, livelihoods, natural resources and distinct identity. Kashmir land, riverbed and



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mines are being offered to Indian entities to exploit without any independent oversight or environmental consideration.

In another attack on the cultural identity of Kashmiri Muslims, India has recently introduced a bill to change the status of Urdu - a language associated with Muslims, and their identity - as the exclusive official language of the territory.

These troubling developments represent early warning signs of ethnic cleansing and a clear war crime under the Geneva Conventions and international customary law.

Madam President,

Since the publication of the last Kashmir report by the High Commissioner in July 2019, India's illegal actions have added many new dimensions of human rights abuses at industrial scale.

We, therefore, urge the High Commissioner and UN Special Procedures to continue to monitor and report on the growing human rights crisis in the occupied region to the Council.

We once again call on India to reverse its illegal actions taken since last August, and respect and uphold fundamental rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri people, in particular their inalienable right to self-determination, in compliance with its obligations under international law.

I thank you.