



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

Pakistan's Right of Reply against India, delivered by Mr. Afaq Ahmed, Counsellor, during Interactive Dialogue on the UN Secretary-General's report on reprisals at the 45th session of Human Rights Council

(30 September 2020)

Mr. Vice-President,

India's cacophonous rants cannot deflect the Council's attention away from its well-documented reprisal attacks against people of the occupied Jammu & Kashmir, particularly human right defenders, journalist, lawyers and peace activists.

India's holier-than-thou statements have only exposed India's double-standards, duplicity and deliberate defiance of its international human rights obligations.

Earlier this week, India forced Amnesty International to halt its work in the country through freezing of its bank accounts in an act of reprisal. The only crime of this reputable independent NGO has been its continuous call for justice for Indian minorities and Kashmiri people, being ruthlessly oppressed by the Government of India.

While the world's so-called largest democracy uses financial strangulation as a tool of reprisal against civil society and media, India remains a global hub of terror-financing, including sponsorship of terrorist activities against my country and other neighbours.

A recent report by the US Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) has disclosed the involvement of at least 44 Indian banks, including State-owned banks, in money laundering and terror-financing.

All these facts only reveal the militant and fascist mindset of the Hindutva ruling elite, which conveniently labels anyone critical of government's anti-minority policies, laws and acts of violence as 'terrorists', 'traitors' and 'anti-nationalists'.

Amidst the COVID pandemic, the Hindutva league has escalated its witch-hunt against civil society as its agents of terror harass, torture, and summarily kill human rights activists and journalists with full impunity under the cover of repressive laws.

Rightly so, India has been declared as 'the world's deadliest country for journalists and human rights activists', where such incidents have unfortunately become a routine matter.

The recent illegal arrest of Mr. Umar Khalid, as 'one of the conspirators' of the Delhi pogrom, is a clear travesty of justice as its main instigators Kapil Mishra, Aurang Thakur and Parvesh Verma roam scot-free.



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Mr. Vice-President,

Outside India's sovereign territory, in IIOJ&K, the same militant Hindutva mindset is brutally repressing free speech and curtailing civic space as it has accelerated its colonial agenda in the disputed territory.

From Jalil Andrabi in the 1990s to Babar Qadri last week, human rights defenders have been ruthlessly silenced by Indian occupation forces in IOJ&K.

During the on-going HRC session with India as its member, Kashmiri journalists Kamran Yousuf and Auqib Javed have been brutally harassed and thrashed for speaking truth about Indian injustices against Kashmiri people.

These two cases are among hundreds of similar attacks and acts of reprisals against Kashmiri civil society, which have been well-recorded by UN human Rights machinery, independent NGOs and global media.

We, therefore, once again urge the ASG and OHCHR not to be deterred by Indian phony rhetoric and continue to give voice to the plight of Kashmiri human rights defenders, braving Indian reprisals.

I thank you.