



Right of Reply by India under Agenda Item 3&5 : Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples at the 45th Session of the Human Rights Council(14 September – 07 October 2020) delivered by Mr. S. Senthil Kumar, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of India (Geneva, 25 September 2020)

Madam President,

It is unfortunate that instead of focusing on the agenda of the discussion, Pakistan uses every opportunity to make unfounded and fallacious remarks against my country, which reflect their negative and paranoid state of mind.

Madam President,

2. I would like to bring to the attention of the Council, the terrible situation of ethnic and religious minorities in Pakistan. Pakistan's deplorable human rights records and discriminatory treatment of its minorities has been a cause of persistent concern for international community. In Pakistan, Blasphemy laws are being used against religious minorities such as Christians, Hindus and Sikhs, to violate their human rights and dignity. There are currently at least 80 people in prison in Pakistan for the crime of "blasphemy", with at least half of them facing life sentences or the death penalty. At least 42 cases pertaining to blasphemy were registered across Pakistan in a single month.

3. Enforced disappearances, state violence and forced mass displacements, harassment, extrajudicial killings, army operations, torture, kill-and-dumps, torture camps, detention centers, military camps are regular features in Baluchistan. Nobody knows the fate of missing 47,000 Baloch and 35,000 Pashtuns till date. Sectarian violence has claimed more than 500 Hazaras in Baluchistan and more than 100,000 Hazaras have fled Pakistan.

4. Another recent report states that in Baluchistan, armed men move freely on the streets, despite the heavy presence of the security forces. These armed men are free to kill, abduct and steal with impunity. Recently a group of three such gunmen were caught in a house in Kech, where they killed a lady and injured a baby girl. Gunmen captured by the family, had identity cards of military intelligence and confessed that they work for country's military. People of different walks of life took on to the streets and demanded dismantlement of so-called death squads. Protests continued for months with no result.

5. The Baloch have never felt safe inside Baluchistan and now they do not feel safe even outside Pakistan. The case of the disappearance of Rashid Hussain in

December 2018, and the killing of journalist Sajid Hussain Baloch after he went missing in March 2020, only serves to demonstrate that the Baloch human rights defenders are being targeted and eliminated even after they quit Pakistan.

Madam President,

6. Speaking about acts of reprisals, let me turn to Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir and territories under its control. Cases of enforced disappearances, murders, detentions, custodial deaths and torture of civil rights activists, representatives of local political parties and journalists are common and standard practice adopted to silence voices against the Government and deep state in Gilgit-Baltistan. Rampant media censorship blocks channels of expression of popular resentment and ensures that the correct ground realities are never reported.

7. It is a matter of great concern that the population of religious minorities in Pakistan which was 23% in 1947 has reduced to an insignificant number. The reasons are not hard to find. Systemic discrimination and persecution through killings, violence, forced conversions, forced displacement have nearly annihilated religious minorities in Pakistan. In the Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan has effected demographic change by reducing and driving the real Kashmiris out.

8. Last but not the least, before preaching to others Pakistan must remember that terrorism is the worst form of human rights abuse and crime against humanity. The world doesn't need lessons on human rights from a country which has been known as nursery and epicenter of Terrorism'.

I thank you, Madam President.
