



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

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**MEMBER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

ON AGENDA ITEM 67 ©:

**HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF  
SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES**

AT THE

**THIRD COMMITTEE**  
**61<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**NEW YORK**  
**18 OCTOBER 2006**

## Pakistan's Statement on Human Rights Questions

**Mr. Chairman,**

I will devote this statement to examine systemic issues of human rights as highlighted in the various reports of the Special Rapporteurs and refrain from indulging in myopic commentary of human rights performance of selective developing countries.

2. The creation of Human Rights Council in March 2006 was a significant step in our efforts to reform the UN human rights machinery. It is an opportunity to take measures to extricate human rights from the bitter past legacy of selectivity, politicization and double standards and move it to a higher plane of dialogue, cooperation, education and awareness raising.

3. We hope that as the Human Rights Council completes its work to review the mandates of the defunct Commission on Human Rights, it will be able to overcome the problems of selective targeting of developing countries, lopsided focus on civil and political rights, lack of respect for religious and cultural diversity, imbalance between promotion and protection aspects and working of the Office of the High Commissioner driven by donor priorities.

**Mr. Chairman,**

4. We have listened carefully the debate on the reports submitted by special procedures. We would like to highlight some points of concern in these various written and oral reports:

- i) There is a marked absence of views by the concerned Special Rapporteurs on the rising trend of Islamophobia. To suggest that because people of all religions are victims of religious intolerance, therefore, 'the Special Rapporteur cannot single out one religion' casts severe doubts on the objectivity of dealing with the issue of religious intolerance and its implications on the enjoyment of other human rights. Besides, the major underlying question of "why freedom of expression is exercised selectively, restricting it, and rightly so, in case of anti-Semitism but justifying its unhindered application with regard to Islamophobia has not been addressed in the context of this debate.
- ii) Some Special Rapporteurs including the one on extra-judicial, summary and arbitrary executions, have agitated questions of sensitive theological

jurisprudence regarding selective religions which are completely unsolicited and beyond the purview of their mandates.

- iii) While many reports on country visits have been presented in a style of charge-sheet, albeit selective in approach, there is complete failure to discuss the criteria on the basis of which countries are selected for these visits. Ironically, quite often, the countries selected for invitation to the Special Rapporteurs happen to be only the developing countries.

**Mr. Chairman,**

5. Thematic mandate holders have the challenging task of trying to do justice to all aspects of their mandates. The responsibilities of the Special Rapporteur on the protection of human rights while countering terrorism and the Special Rapporteur extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions are particularly difficult. They should evenly focus on situations of foreign occupation where instances of State terrorism at the hands of occupying forces and indiscriminate summary killings are too often ignored by the special mandate holders. While reporting on extra-judicial killings, the concerned Special Rapporteur should also look into the extra-territorial nature of these killings in situations of foreign occupation.

**Mr. Chairman,**

6. Poverty and global inequalities, discrimination, armed conflict, violence and a culture of impunity represent the most pressing challenges of our times. We consider the Right to Development as crucial to meeting these challenges and a bridge between economic, social and cultural rights on the one hand and civil and political rights on the other.

7. We support the recommendations of the Working Group on Right to Development to evolve a set of criteria for periodic evaluation of global partnerships with the objective of mainstreaming the right to development in the policies and operational activities of relevant actors at the national, regional and international levels including multilateral financial, trade and development institutions. These rights are in consonance with the Declaration's pronouncement to states "to cooperate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development". We are glad that these recommendations were endorsed by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 2006/4.

**Mr. Chairman,**

8. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the "Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief". The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief has rightly stated that "a global examination of the status of implementation of the provisions of the Declaration" is necessary. The Special Rapporteur has also pointed out the negative role played by some media in stigmatizing certain religious communities and drawn attention to article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which prohibit any form of incitement to religious hatred. We expect that all Member States shall adhere to this call.

9. We also agree with the Special Rapporteur that legislation in some countries which "imposes dress codes on women or men on religious grounds is also a clear violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief and the principle of the 1981 Declaration". To overcome the juridical vacuum that exists in the current international human rights law, the Special Rapporteur has encouraged the international community, under the auspices of the United Nations, "to develop a common global strategy to deal with rising religious intolerance". We fully endorse this recommendation and assure our constructive engagement in evolving strong and universally binding instrument to combat the phenomena of religious intolerance.

**Mr. Chairman,**

10. The Government of Pakistan remains committed to the promotion and protection of all human rights of its citizens. We are hopeful to succeed in ensuring the implementation of the highest standards in accordance with the tenets of our religion, our proud humane conditions and the centuries old cultural values of tolerance, assimilation and social responsibility.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.