



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement

by

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on

**Agenda Item 69:
Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

**Third Committee
67th Session of the UNGA**

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Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan's founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah said: "If we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor". These words remain the guiding norms for successive governments and the state of Pakistan.

Human rights ensure the inherent human dignity and equality of all human beings. The normative edifice of human rights that started with Universal Declaration of Human Rights continues to grow stronger.

Without ensuring the fundamental human rights there can be no real peace which is a pre-requisite for development. We must continue to strengthen promotion and protection of all human rights. We should also create necessary safeguards against new and contemporary manifestations of discrimination, injustices and obstacles that impede their full realization.

Progress has been made in building the normative framework of the human rights law, implementation of the international human rights instruments remains a difficult task. Millions of people continue to endure conflicts across the world, especially in the developing countries – conflicts often sparked and sustained by the politics of scarcity, greed and exploitation. Millions continue to suffer under the yoke of foreign occupation and are denied fundamental freedoms and their right to self determination.

Mr. Chairman,

The strong link between civil and political rights and the economic, social and cultural rights and their equal status must always be respected and preserved. Violations of one set of these rights undermine all others. Poverty alleviation, therefore, should become the central theme of the human rights machinery. Non-implementation of the right to Development remains an obstacle for millions of those aspiring to be lifted out of poverty. The UN and the international community must do their part to make it a reality, which would also lead to genuine realization of universal human rights.

Together with other important rights, each individual has a basic environmental right. We must work together to ensure reversing its negative trends, which do not distinguish between developed and developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The growing trends of racism, racial and religious discrimination including xenophobic tendencies are threatening the multi-cultural fabric of many of our societies. Recent incidents of Islamophobia have once again highlighted the need to collectively combat stereotyping, incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence on the basis of one's religion or faith. This is imperative to avoid their negative fallout on international peace and security. The OIC sponsored resolution 66/167 adopted by consensus provides the basis for this collective action at different levels. We look forward to its effective implementation by all States that would strengthen democracy and combat religious intolerance.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan is proud to be one of the founding members of the Human Rights Council. Our membership of the Council and its predecessor Commission on Human Rights has served as a catalyst for the promotion and protection of human rights in Pakistan.

Pakistan attaches importance to the work of OHCHR as well as mandates of all Special Procedures as important tools in promoting and protecting human rights. Our engagement with these mechanisms is evident from our regular interaction with them in Geneva as well as country visits undertaken by the High Commissioner, Special Rapporteur on Independence on Judges and lawyers as well as the WG on Arbitrary Detentions. We shall further this constructive engagement that should be based on mutually respectable and cooperative approach. Special Procedures are entrusted specific responsibilities to report under carefully crafted inter-governmentally agreed mandates. They must discharge their duties with full independence within the given mandate with needed impartiality, transparency and strict avoidance of politicization.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan's Constitution is based on the principles of equal rights and equal treatment of all citizens and persons without any distinction. It guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms, including social, economic and political justice, freedom of thought, expression, religion, faith, worship and association.

It directs the state to take appropriate measures to enable women to participate in all spheres of life and community activities, and safeguard the rights and interests of the minorities. Aspirations of our constitution and people are for a modern, moderate and democratic polity that would uphold all human rights and foster respect especially for the rights of women, children and minorities.

In line with our commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, we are a State party to seven core human rights instruments. Remaining instruments are also under active consideration of relevant authorities. In the interest of harmonization, Pakistan also withdrew a number of its reservations to ICCPR and CAT.

Mr. Chairman,

In Pakistan, the Ministry of Human Rights monitors and addresses human rights violations and trends, with special reference to women, minorities and vulnerable segments of society. Our media is one of the freest and most vibrant in South Asia. Besides acting as a watchdog on government policies, our Media has also worked zealously to raise awareness in the masses of their human rights.

A strident and determined civil society is playing an active role in assisting the victims of human rights in getting their grievances addressed, helping the government in shaping human rights compliant policies, fostering a culture of accountability and assisting in changing societal attitudes through awareness raising. Similarly our independent judiciary has taken wide ranging steps to guarantee protection of constitutional rights of all citizens.

The Government of Pakistan is determined to pursue the legacy of our founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah, his message of tolerance, respect and moderation, and to translate these into an ethos and a popular culture for the promotion and protection of human rights in all spheres of life.

Before I conclude, let me state that we were a bit surprised by a reference made by a pastor from the Russian Federation desk expressing his concern about the Christians in Pakistan. I assure the pastor and the Russian delegation that Christians are part of the political, economic and social fabric of Pakistan. Their rights, as of other minorities, are protected by our Constitution and laws. Moreover, our Government, Parliament, judiciary, civil society and media are guarantors and protectors of their rights. Incidents of discrimination do occur, as I am sure they occur in Russia. But as soon as they occur we move swiftly to staunch them and address them.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.