



Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Agenda Items 54 -58: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (2 October 2023)

Thank you, Madam Chair,

I wish to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and other members of the bureau of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Pakistan delegation will fully support you in successfully guiding the work of the Committee.

2. Since its independence, Pakistan has actively championed the decolonization process, promoted by the United Nations in accordance with the principle of self-determination enshrined in the Charter, in common Article II of the International Covenants on Political and Economic Rights, and in Resolution 1514 – the Declaration on Decolonization.

3. Pakistan welcomes the recommendations of the Special Committee, contained in its report A/78/23, requesting the Secretary-General to explore innovative ways of using his good offices to advance the decolonization agenda. We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to implement the decolonization agenda.

4. Since 1946, 80 former colonies have gained independence. Yet, there are people who are still denied the right to self-determination, most prominently the people of occupied Jammu & Kashmir and Palestine.

Madam Chair,

5. Pakistan believes that durable peace in the Middle East can only be achieved through the two-state solution and the establishment of a viable, independent and contiguous State of Palestine, with the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

6. The Indian occupation of Jammu & Kashmir is the worst manifestation of modern-day colonialism. The right of self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir was explicitly recognised in UN Security Council Resolution 47 and several later resolutions, which prescribed that the final disposition of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, should be decided by its people through a free and fair plebiscite held under UN auspices. Both India and Pakistan

accepted these resolutions. Under Article 25 of the UN Charter, both parties are obliged to implement these resolutions.

7. For more than 75 years, through force and fraud, India has avoided the implementation of these resolutions. Since 1989, India's brutal repression in occupied Jammu & Kashmir has killed more than 100,000 Kashmiris.

8. Since 5 August 2019, India has taken unilateral and illegal steps to annex occupied Jammu and Kashmir in what its extremist leaders have ominously termed as a "Final Solution". Resolution 122 (1957) of the Security Council provides that unilateral measures 'to determine the future shape and affiliation of the entire state or any part thereof, would not constitute a disposition of the state'. Therefore, all unilateral actions taken by India on and after 5 August 2019 are not only illegal, but, ipso facto, null and void.

9. Kashmir today is the most densely occupied place in the world, with more than 900,000 Indian occupation troops deployed there who have perpetrated a vicious campaign of extrajudicial killings in fake encounters and so-called 'cordon and search' operations; abduction and enforced disappearances of 13,000 young Kashmiri boys; collective punishments, destroying and burning entire villages and urban neighbourhoods. The entire genuine Kashmiri leadership has been incarcerated since 2019. Several leaders have died in Indian custody.

10. In a classic settler-colonial project, India is seeking to convert occupied Kashmir from a Muslim-majority state to a Hindu-majority territory. Over 3.4 million fake domicile certificates have been issued to Hindus from across India. The land and properties of Kashmiris are also being confiscated for military and official use.

11. India's brutal campaign is turbo-charged by the ideology of 'Hindutva', which asserts the religious and ethnic supremacy of Hindus and hate against Muslims. This has led the organization – Genocide Watch - to warn of the possibility of genocide in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and, indeed, against Muslims within India itself.

Madam Chair,

12. To achieve durable peace in South Asia, the resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute is essential. The onus is on India to create conditions for a dialogue to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. To this end, India must: stop its human rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir; halt and reverse the process of demographic change there; and rescind the illegal and unilateral measures imposed on and after 5 August 2019.

13. The United Nations and all its Member States are bound by the Charter to promote a peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan will continue to promote this objective through all the modalities provided under the UN Charter, including Articles 33, 34 and 99 of the Charter.

I thank you.