



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram,
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, at the
General Debate of the UNGA Plenary on Culture of Peace**

(2 May 2024)

Madam President,

Pakistan welcomes the consideration of this important agenda item on “Culture of Peace”. We thank the Secretary-General for the reports contained in document A/78/591.

2. The realization of culture of peace, as delineated in Article 3 of the UN Declaration on Culture of Peace, is intrinsically linked with the adherence to the central purposes and Principles of the UN Charter.

Madam President,

3. Unfortunately, despite our unanimously expressed desire to promote a “Culture of Peace”, the world is witnessing the rise of hate, violence and war. Over 300 conflicts are raging across the world. The right of peoples to self-determination is being brutally suppressed, especially in Palestine and in Jammu and Kashmir. We see the spread of discrimination, bigotry, xenophobia and Islamophobia even in mature democracies.

4. Pakistan and the Member States of the OIC initiated the adoption of GA resolution 76/254 designating 15 March as the Day to Combat Islamophobia. On this Day earlier this year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 78/264 on “Measures to Combat Islamophobia”. We look forward to the appointment of the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Islamophobia and the initiation of a Plan of Action to Combat Islamophobia.

Madam President,

5. The world cannot but be deeply concerned at the officially sanctioned manifestations of Islamophobia in India. Since the BJP-RSS government assumed office in 2014, hate, oppression, and violence against India’s 200 million Muslims – and other minorities, Christians and the “lower-caste” Dalits – have become rampant and systematic, fueled by the ideology of “Hindutva”.

6. This ideology, inspired by and born a century ago, contemporaneously with European fascism, was explicitly expressed by Golwalker, one of its early proponents in the following words and I quote:

“The foreign races of Hindustan must adopt Hindu culture and language.... and entertain no ideas but those of the glorification of Hindu race and culture and may only stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing, not even citizen’s rights”.

7. This ideology, Madam President, is being systematically implemented today in Modi’s India. It is led by the governing BJP’s mother organization – the RSS, which has a dedicated militia of 600,000 financial “volunteers”.

8. One of its members assassinated Mahatma Gandhi. A shrine has been made for this assassin. Indeed, over the past 50 year, since it was banned as a terrorist organization, the RSS has paved the way for the BJP’s path to power with violence and hate against Muslims. This was clearly manifested in the series of pogroms:

- In 1992, when RSS-led militants destroyed the historic Babri Mosque in Ayodhya and killed over a thousand Muslims Ayodhya and Bombay;
- In 2002, when over 2000 Muslim men, women and children were killed mercilessly in Gujarat, where Mr. Modi was the Chief Minister. The BBC commentary on this pogrom was banned and the BBC was investigated by the Indian government for tax evasion;
- In April 2020, scores of Muslims were killed with impunity and official complicity in front of the eyes of the world in New Delhi.

Madam President,

9. The repression of Muslims, and Christians, is now systematic and pervasive in India. A Citizenship Law and National Registry list is designed to exclude Muslims from citizenship and to expel them. Protests against these discriminatory Laws have been brutally suppressed. Cow vigilantes, lynch, kill and assault Muslims with official approbation. Muslim men are persecuted for so-called “love jihad” to prevent them marrying Hindu women. Extremist Hindu groups have expressly called for genocide against Muslims. The organization – Genocide Watch – has warned of the possibility of genocide of Muslims in India as well as in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

10. And just last week, Prime Minister Modi himself fueled the hate and violence against Muslims calling them “infiltrators” who would be taking the wealth of Hindu men in India.

11. An official campaign to eliminate India’s rich Islamic heritage is part of the Hindutva campaign. History text books are being rewritten to eliminate references to India’s Muslims rulers and its glorious period of Islamic rule. Muslim place names are being replaced by Hindu names. The Indian Supreme Court not only failed to punish those who destroyed the historic Babri Mosque but allowed them also to build the “Ram Temple” on the site of the destroyed Mosque. This temple was inaugurated with much fanfare by Prime Minister Modi earlier this year. Days later, the 500 year old Akhonji Mosque in Delhi was destroyed with apparent official sanction. Hindu groups are seeking to transform other mosques, such as the Varanasi mosque into Hindu Temples. Thousands of other mosques and Muslims religious sites across India are under threat. We urge the Secretary-General to implement the Plan of Action for the protection of religious sites.

Madam President,

12. India’s Christian minority has not been spared either. The organization Genocide watch says that in June 2023 in Manipur, 249 churches were destroyed within 36 hours. In 2023, there were 525 attacks against Christians. The Dalits face similar discrimination and violence and hate against the Sikhs is rising again.

Mr. President,

13. Hindutva extremism has turbo-charged the repression of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. After the unilateral and illegal measures taken on 5 August 2019 to annex Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, India has deployed 900,000 troops to impose what it ominously calls the “Final Solution” for Kashmir. The Indian occupation is brutal and pervasive. All the pro-freedom Hurriyet leaders remain incarcerated. Several have died in suspicious circumstances in Indian custody. Over 13,000 young Kashmir men have been abducted and many of them tortured. Hundreds of innocent Kashmiris are extra-judicially killed each year with impunity in fake “encounters” and “cordon and search” operations. Pakistan has circulated to the United Nations a detailed dossier, with concrete evidence, of over 2400 crimes committed by named Indian officials in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Madam President,

14. The massive violation of human rights there has been documented in two reports issued by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as by several of the Human Rights Council’s Special Rapporteurs. India has consistently denied the requests for access to occupied Jammu and Kashmir to the High Commissioner as well the Special Rapporteurs. And, yet India falsely claims that the situation is “normal” in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

15. The situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir will never be “normal” until the people of Jammu and Kashmir are allowed to exercise their right to self-determination through a plebiscite held under UN auspices, as called for by several Security Council resolutions and accepted by India. The Jammu and Kashmir dispute is an open wound which can once again trigger a disastrous conflict between Pakistan and India. It needs to be resolved urgently in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Mr. President,

16. Far from seeking a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, the extremist BJP-RSS government has resorted to belligerence and aggression against Pakistan. The Defence Minister of India has threatened to “take over” Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir. The Army Chief has threatened to cross the Line of Control. India is accumulating new and advanced weapons-systems – some say on the pretext of containing China – but which are mostly deployed against Pakistan. India’s armed forces have adopted dangerous doctrines: “Cold Start”, to launch a surprise attack against Pakistan, another contemplating and I quote “a limited war under the nuclear overhang”.

17. To coerce Pakistan and disrupt the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), India is financing and sponsoring terrorist groups, especially the TTP and the BLA, to conduct attacks in Pakistan across our Western borders.

18. Two days ago, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister informed the Security Council, as well as the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly of India’s campaign of targeted assassinations in Pakistan. This extra-territorial state terrorism is not limited to Pakistan. It has been extended to targeted killings of political opponents in Canada and attempted in the United States, and probably other countries. The Washington Post reported that Prime Minister Modi last week told his cheering supporters: “Today, even India’s enemies know: This is Modi, this is the new India. This New India comes into your home and kills you”.

Madam President,

19. I submit; this New India is a dangerous entity. It is a net provider of insecurity and not security. Its arrogance, belligerence and sense of impunity are likely to trigger regional and global conflict.

20. When the forces of fascism and Nazism were appeased and accommodated, a 100 years ago, it led to the Second World War. The Gaza genocide illustrates the consequences of offering impunity to extremist regimes. Unless Hindutva fascism is opposed, unless the sense of impunity of the BJP-RSS is ended, unless the Indian Muslims

are protected against genocide, and unless the Kashmir dispute is peacefully resolved, wider violence and conflict in South Asia is a real and present danger. And, what happens in South Asia, will not remain in South Asia.

Mr. President,

21. In our turbulent world, promotion of a Culture of Peace is not only desirable but imperative. Our strategy must energetically promote the values of peace and harmony under the dialogue among civilizations. But, we must also confront and reverse the dark forces of fascism, aggression and occupation and the threat they pose to peace, prosperity and stability and a world order based on the principles and purposes of the UN Charter.

I thank you.