



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

30 October 2023

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Pakistan by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 42nd session in January/February 2023. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of Pakistan was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 53rd session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/pk-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volker Türk

His Excellency
Mr. Jalil Abbas Jilani
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

The inclusive and participatory national consultation process with relevant stakeholders that the Government of Pakistan has undertaken in the lead up of its UPR review is noteworthy, as well as the increasing engagement of Pakistan with human rights mechanisms, including the submission of overdue reports to Treaty Bodies and the invitations extended to Special Procedures mandate-holders.

Pakistan's policy of zero tolerance against enforced disappearance and the work of the national Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances are also welcomed. The ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons against Enforced Disappearances and its further incorporation into national legislation are measures that Pakistan could consider to further strengthen protection against enforced disappearance. Pakistan is also encouraged to consider reforms to its blasphemy laws and to repeal other legal provisions that may unduly impact religious minorities, in line with its international commitments to promote and protect freedom of religion in accordance with international human rights law.

The recent adoption of anti-torture legislation is highly praised. Pakistan is invited to take further action towards its implementation, including through the formulation of comprehensive rules and procedures for the investigation, documentation, and prosecution of torture in line with the Istanbul Protocol and the Méndez principles. Continuous efforts are also needed to strengthen the rights of women and girls, mainly focusing on the elimination of violence against women, ending child and forced marriage, and promoting and protecting reproductive rights.

Pakistan is encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the National Assembly and the Senate, the judiciary, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations of other international or regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The Government is further encouraged to establish a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/50/64).



Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Pakistan may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
30 October 2023