



**Remarks by Ambassador Munir Akram as Explanation of Vote
before the Vote during Emergency Special Sessions of the
UNGA on Resolution Entitled “Protection of civilians &
upholding legal & humanitarian obligations”
(December 12, 2023)**

I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, let me start by expressing our gratitude to you for having convened this resumption of the emergency special session of the General Assembly and in particular, for your clarion call for an immediate ceasefire in the war that is taking place in Gaza.

Mr. President,

Pakistan supports the draft resolution submitted by the Arab and Islamic countries in L-27.

The resolution is identical in its text to the one, which was voted upon in the Security Council and its aim is to seek an immediate humanitarian ceasefire to provide access for humanitarian assistance and to call for the release of all hostages.

This resolution was co-sponsored by over 100 member states when it was submitted in the Security Council. It obtained the affirmative votes of 13 of the 15 Council members but it failed to pass due to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

Yet the international community is not without recourse. The UN Charter provides the General Assembly with considerable residual powers and acting under the Uniting for Peace Process, we can take action to demand a halt to the war, which is taking place and killing thousands of people every week.

The draft resolution is one, we are confident, will elicit the support of the vast majority of the UN membership. Pakistan has not co-sponsored this draft resolution and we have not done so because we reserve the right to submit amendments to ensure that the text, which is adopted by the General Assembly, is equitable and balanced.

And it is a matter, therefore, of deep regret if not surprise that some friends of Israel have introduced amendments to, once again, condemn only one side but exonerate the other. Unlike Canada, I cannot appeal to their sense of equity and justice. But what we can do is to appeal to the sense of humanity; of justice and fairness of the

rest of the UN membership. And I'm confident that this entire membership will not agree to place the blame only on Hamas, but not on Israel. That would be unjust, unfair and inequitable.

Mr. President,

When you deny people freedom and dignity; when you humiliate and trap them in an open air prison where you kill them, as if they were beasts; they become very angry and they do to others what was done to them.

And therefore, for Austria and my friends from United States to blame Hamas in their amendments, is not just. The blame, if is to be placed, has to be placed on both parties, and especially on Israel.

Mr. President,

With the end of the pause, the skies over Gaza are filled with projectiles of deaths, attack helicopters, drones, artillery shells, tank shells, mortars, bombs, missiles. Israel has dropped 25,000 tons of explosives on Gaza. Nearly the equivalent of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Israel's goal is not only to erase Hamas. This is a war against the Palestinian people. Israel's goal is to erase not only a people but also the entire idea of Palestine.

Its campaign is a carbon copy of the massive campaigns of racial slaughter by other settler-colonial regimes in history.

Mr. President, over 18,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed, another 42,000 wounded and more than 1.8 million people, over 80% of Gaza's population have been driven from their homes. Thousands are missing, and buried under the rubble.

And yet Israel is not deterred. Is this any form of legitimate self-defense when you can kill 18,000 civilians with impunity and enjoy the protection in the Security Council against the action?

Therefore, I would appeal to all the members to see this one sided slaughter that is taking place.

If Hamas is named and not Israel, you will provide a justification to the Israeli war machine to continue its roulette wheel of death.

I believe that this is not the intention of the membership of United Nations to give a justification for the genocide that is taking place.

I will therefore, on behalf of my delegation, on behalf of all the Arab countries, and on behalf of the OIC appeal to all the membership to vote against the amendments proposed in L-28 by Austria and L-29 by the United States.

In case these amendments are adopted, Pakistan will submit sub-amendments to these in order to restore balance; in order to name Israel as the perpetrator of the mass crimes that are taking place in Gaza today.