

OpenVoiceNews

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

India Highlights Pakistan's Record of Sexual Violence at UN

August 20, 2025

— Categories: Crime



Pakistan's human rights record came under scrutiny at the United Nations this week, as India accused Islamabad of continuing a “shameful pattern” of sexual violence crimes dating back to the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War.

Speaking at the Security Council debate on sexual violence in conflict, India's Charge d'Affaires Eldos Mathew Punnoose pointed to what he described as “heinous crimes” committed by the Pakistan Army during the conflict in what was then East Pakistan, where as many as 400,000 women were reported to have been raped.

“The utter impunity with which the Pakistan Army perpetrated gross sexual violence against women in 1971 is a matter of shameful record,” Punnoose said. “This deplorable pattern continues unabated and with impunity to this day.”

His remarks came in response to allegations from Pakistan’s Permanent Representative Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, who raised Kashmir during the debate. Punnoose called Pakistan’s position “hypocrisy,” arguing that those responsible for past abuses were now attempting to pose as champions of justice.

Citing United Nations reports, Punnoose highlighted ongoing issues within Pakistan, including abductions, trafficking, forced marriages, sexual violence, and religious conversions targeting women and girls from minority communities. These incidents, he said, had been documented by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

A recent OHCHR report noted that women detained on blasphemy charges in Pakistan face significant risks of gender-based harm. Another review by the UN Human Rights Committee in December expressed concern over high levels of violence against women and girls, including cases of murder, rape, kidnapping, and domestic abuse.

The committee also drew attention to rights violations in Balochistan, where participants in the Aurat (Women’s) March had reportedly faced enforced disappearances, excessive use of force, and arbitrary arrests.

The Security Council session also heard from Pramila Patten, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict, who warned that victims were being left vulnerable due to cuts in humanitarian funding. “We are told there is no money for lifesaving aid, even as military expenditure soars,” she said.

Patten faced questions from a Palestinian journalist who echoed Pakistan’s complaints that her remarks had not addressed Islamabad’s allegations against India. UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric responded by noting that her office had included all information available at the time in its report.

The exchange underscored the sharp differences between India and Pakistan at the UN, with both sides using the debate to highlight their grievances. However, Punnoose reiterated that the issue at hand was Pakistan’s long-standing record of violence against women, arguing that international scrutiny was warranted.