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## **United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland National Statement**

### **Universal Periodic Review – Pakistan**

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Thank you Madam President,

The UK welcomes the Pakistan delegation to Geneva as well as the progress the Government of Pakistan has made on human rights issues. However, significant challenges still remain. We would welcome the delegation's view of the Blasphemy laws and the impact they have on human rights. The recent case of Rimsha Masih demonstrates the danger that misuse of these laws poses to innocent members of Pakistani society, both Muslims and non-Muslims, especially considering that these laws can carry the death penalty.

We note that no executions have taken place in Pakistan since 2008.

The UK opposes the use of the death penalty and encourages the Government of Pakistan to consider making its de facto moratorium on the death penalty official.

We appreciate the measures Pakistan has taken to improve human rights, including withdrawing the majority of its reservations to the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT). However, two key reservations remain (articles 3 and 25) and are critical to ensure equal rights for men and women, and equal opportunity for political participation.

Credible elections in Pakistan will require that the rights of women are protected and political participation is ensured. All groups, including minority groups such as the Ahmaddiya community, should be able to vote freely if these elections are to be free and fair.

Two NGOs have reported allegations of extra-judicial killings in Balochistan. We urge the Government of Pakistan to investigate these allegations and work to ensure a credible security and justice system can process any criminality.

**Our recommendations are:**

- Declare an official moratorium on the death penalty
- Ensure equal political participation and withdraw reservations to articles 3 and 25 of the ICCPR

Thank you Madam President.