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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 May 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



The continuous arrest of Human Rights defender and newly MLA Akhil Gogoi

Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture wants to bring into the world's knowledge the pathetic treatment being meted out to peaceful human rights defenders who dare to exercise their basic right to peaceful protest against the highly discriminatory and controversial Indian law named CAA or the Citizenship Amendment Act.

The continuous arrest of Human Rights defender and newly MLA Akhil Gogoi, who remains in Indian custody without violating any law since December 2019. India shamelessly continues this. Akhil Gogoi is very popular in his area as a human rights Defender. He, the chief of the newly formed Rajgor Dal who defeated the BJP's Surabhi Rajkonwari from the Sibsagar constituency, is the first Assamese to win an election recently from behind the bars without any physical campaigning. While in prison Akhil Gogoi become mentally ill and is not better treated for his mental disease. On May 21, 2021 he was brought in Assembly to take oath as an MLA in police custody. He is currently in judicial custody for protesting against CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act).

India mistreats anybody and everybody who dares to challenge the imposition of biased laws and systems by way of peaceful political protests. The protestors are categorized as terrorists by India and then a series of unauthentic character assassination accompanied by social persecution and judicial injustice follows the victims of discriminatory Indian laws. The friends and families of such peaceful protestors are forced to go into hiding or leave their homes under intense social pressure from the extremists who support the CAA. Lawyers and other sympathisers also face multiple challenges due to coercion by the Indian authorities as well as a highly misguided, religiously polarized Indian media. Trolling on social media comes as a gift package from Indian extremists.

We would request the Council to ask India to take serious redressal measures and protect these vulnerable persons and immediately set Akhil Gogoi free.

We look forward to a positive response from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Special Rapporteurs (SR) on the situation of human rights defenders and Special Rapporteurs (SR) on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

European Institute For Economics, Political and Social Research, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.