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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 Human Is Right, 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.

[23 May 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Freedom of expression

The Vienna Declaration on Human Rights guarantees the right to freedom of expression. The Declaration refers to specific ways in which human rights defenders exercise their right to freedom of expression, for example, the publication of reports, discussing publicly the human rights situation, criticising government policies, etc. In 2021, the Indian government allotted the land to JSW Utkal Steel Limited to build an integrated steel plant on the land of Dhinkia village, in Odisha's Jagat Singh Pur district. Establishing the steel plant would mean depriving the villagers of their land, which would consequently deny them access to livelihoods. Villagers of Dhinkia organised protests against the acquisition of land and the destruction of their betel vine plantations by the Indian Government. Human rights defenders who supported these villagers and fought for their rights were arrested by the Indian government. On 14 January 2022, human rights defender Narendra Mohanty was arrested by Indian police at Dhinkia, in the state of Odisha. His arrest was due to his support for the peaceful protest by the local community against the forcible destruction of their betel vine plantations.

Police violently repressed the protest, injuring many including women and children, and baton-charged those present. Narendra Mohanty and two community leaders were arrested. They are currently held at the Samagola sub-jail under FIR 0021 after being denied bail.

My organisation condemns the arrest of human rights defender Narendra Mohanty and asks the Indian government to release Narendra Mohanty and protect the rights of human rights defenders in India.
