



General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 October 2022

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-first session

12 September–7 October 2022

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Mother of Hope Cameroon Common Initiative Group, 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.

[18 August 2022]

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



Poor Condition of Human Rights Defenders in India

In Indian it is very difficult rather impossible for human rights defenders to work. The human rights defenders are very frequently harassed, threatened and even arrested in India. Our organization wants to bring councils attention about the ongoing harassment of 18 human rights defenders under the UAPA in reprisal for their advocacy work against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019. The CAA has been widely criticized by human rights defenders and the international community for being openly sectarian and discriminatory against Muslims. After the CAA's adoption, protesters across the country took the streets to voice their concerns against the legislation. Police authorities responded by arresting human rights defenders and activists who spoke up against the CAA. Most of them were student activists and human rights defenders from the minority Muslim community. Thirteen of those arrested under the UAPA are currently in Rohini, Tihar, and Mandoli jails, New Delhi. The arrests of human rights defenders began in February 2020 and are still ongoing. Many of them had multiple fake FIRs registered against them and were charged with serious offenses, including under UAPA. Of those arrested, only five human rights defenders Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita, Safoora Zargar, Asif Iqbal Tanha, and Md. Faizan Khan were released on bail. Thirteen others, Sharjeel Imam, Umar Khalid, Khalid Saifi, Tahir Hussain, Saleem Malik, Mohd. Saleem Khan, Meeran Haider, Shadab Ahmed, Tasleem Ahmed, Shifa Ur Rehman, Athar Khan, and women human rights defenders Ishrat Jahan and Gulfisha Fatima are still in jail. Despite prolonged incarceration, the trial for their case has not commenced yet. On 24 January 2022, a Delhi court framed charges against human rights defender Sharjeel Imam while rejecting his bail. Khalid Saifi, Ishrat Jahan, and Gulfisha Fatima have reported to face custodial violence and torture by the Delhi police. There have been no effective investigations into these allegations or responsibility taken for their treatment. Shifa Ur Rehman, who has been in detention since 26 April 2020, suffers from severe kidney disease and has been denied access to adequate medical care in prison. Therefore, we urge this council to ask India to immediately release all human rights defenders arrested for protesting against the CAA, stop torture and other ill-treatment while in police custody, and guarantee their access to adequate medical care and treatment.
