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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 Platform for Youth Integration and Volunteerism, 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.

[22 January 2024]

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



Detention and Killing of Journalists in India

Journalists play a central role in fostering a society based on the open discussion of facts and the pursuit of the truth, as opposed to one based on rumour, prejudice, and the naked exercise of power. As a result, journalists are often literally in the line of fire and deserve special protection. The new UNHRC resolution urges States to do their utmost to prevent violence, intimidation, threats, and attacks against journalists and media workers. My organization wants to bring council attention on India where journalists still in peril and they are facing harassment, detention, physically attacks and death. At least 194 journalists in India were “targeted” by government agencies, non-state political actors, criminals, and armed opposition groups in 2023, as per data encapsulated by different think tanks. In 2023, 103 journalists were under government officials’ radar, while the remaining were targeted by the non-state actors, including political activists. Of the 91 journalists attacked by non-state political actors, “at least 41 were targeted by armed opposition groups in Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur and the Naxal affected areas”, the report said. Of the journalists subjected to police arrest, detention, court cases or even physical assault, Indian-Administered Jammu and Kashmir had the highest count at 48. Telangana was closely behind, with 40 journalists targeted there. At least 14 journalists in Odisha, 13 in Uttar Pradesh, 12 in Delhi and 11 in West Bengal were also targeted, said the statement issued by the rights group. At least 70 journalists were arrested or detained last year, with a staggering 40 arrests made under the K Chandrashekar Rao-led government in Telangana. Six arrests were made in Uttar Pradesh, four in Indian-Administered Jammu and Kashmir and three in Madhya Pradesh. An FIR was lodged against 14 journalists in India last year, four journalists were summoned by the police and Enforcement Directorate, and 15 were physically attacked, threatened or harassed by public officials. A maximum of four incidents involving physical assault against journalists took place in Odisha. Meanwhile, the statement spotlighted those three journalists – Aakash Hussain, Sanna Irshad Mattoo and Rana Ayyub – were stopped by immigration officials last year from flying abroad. From charges of sedition to defamation, to outraging religious sentiments, violating the IT Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the cases under which the journalists were booked last year covered a wide spectrum. Seven journalists were killed, with at least one of them, Subash Kumar Mahto, being murdered for his work. A total of 320 journalists across the world are behind bars, and seven of these mediapersons are incarcerated in India, as per the 2023 prison census report by the Committee to Protect Journalists. The seven journalists incarcerated in India is also a record high for the country for the third consecutive year. The report said three journalists were released last year, but three more were also jailed. The incarcerated journalists are Aasif Sultan of “Kashmir Narrator”, who has been in jail since August 2018; Sajad Gul of “The Kashmir Walla”, jailed since January 2022; independent journalist Rupesh Kumar Singh, jailed since July 2022; independent journalist Gautam Navlakha, under detention since April 2020; Prabir Purkayastha of NewsClick, who has been incarcerated since October last year; and independent journalists Majid Hyderi and Irfan Mehraj, in detention since September and March last year, respectively. We urge this council to ask Indian government to stop violation against journalist and release all journalists detained on trumped-up or politically motivated charges for their critical reporting.
