



General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 February 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda item 3

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

Written statement* submitted by Integrated Youth Empowerment - Common Initiative Group (I.Y.E. – C.I.G.), 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.



Violence against Journalists, Politically Partisan Media, Concentration of Media Ownership on India and Its Effect on Human Rights

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, as stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Media freedom and access to information feed into the wider development objective of empowering people. Through this statement, we draw the attention of the Human Rights Council towards India where Violence against journalists, politically partisan media and concentration of media ownership all demonstrates that press freedom is in crisis in the world's largest democracy, ruled since 2014 by PM Modi the leader of BJP & embodiment of Hindu nationalist rights. Reporters Without Borders survey about media ownership revealed that the level of concentration is more alarming because the leading media owners tend to be very close to ruling party representatives. When Narendra Modi became prime minister, he engineered a spectacular rapprochement between his party BJP and big families dominating media. Prime example is undoubtedly Reliance Industries group led by Mukesh Ambani, a personal friend of Modi, who owns more than 70 media outlets being followed by at least 800 million Indians. Similarly, takeover of New Delhi Television (NDTV) channel at end of 2022 by tycoon Gautam Adani, who is also very close to Narendra Modi, signalled end of pluralism in mainstream media. This takeover triggered departure of many leading NDTV journalists. Thus, media acquisitions by oligarchs are clearly endangering pluralistic public debate in India. Sequel to take over of NDTV by Gautam Adani, a billionaire & Modi ally, acquiring nearly 65% of independent news channel, many journalists were either fired or stepped down being under coercive circumstances. Prominent journalists Nidhi Razdan, Sreenivasan Jain, Suparna Singh and Arijit Chatterjee left different media channels in 2023. Previously in December 2022, NDTV group's founders, former journalists Radhika and Prannoy Roy also resigned. Modi Regime used ads as a temptation and exploit this to impose its own narrative and is now spending more than 20.4 million euros a year on ads in print and online media alone. Recent years have also seen rise of Godi Media, a play on-Modi's name and lapdogs media outlets such as Times Now and Republic TV that mix populism and pro-BJP propaganda. Furthermore, enormous diversity of Indian society is barely reflected in mainstream media. For most part, only Hindu men from upper castes hold senior positions in journalism or are media executives a bias that is reflected in media content. For example, fewer than 15% of participants in major evening talk shows are women. With raids, arrests and hostile takeovers on journalist and media groups who critics of the BJP government, India press freedom continues to decline. BJP' takeovers of media outlets are not unique to India. But New Delhi-based independent journalist Mukul Kesavan, says Indian media takeovers by Modi government allies are "symptomatic of a larger malaise" posing threats to rights. We urge this council to ask Indian government to stop such measures to control and manage national media.
