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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.

[22 January 2024]

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



Media Freedom and Poor Condition of Journalists in India

Journalists reporting on conflict or civil strife, investigating corruption or reporting on human rights violations often find themselves as targets by a range of perpetrators from armed groups and narco-trafficking gangs to the state itself. Journalists act as human rights defenders when reporting on or investigating human rights issues or using their media outlets to defend the rights of others. The right of journalists to work safely and without fear is inseparable from the concept of media freedom. However, unfortunately in country like India, the journalists are still subjected to all kinds of harassment and violations because of their work to report events in a transparent way. In India the right to freedom of expression is still restricted by national legal proceedings that make journalists' future either in prison death. Despite all violations against journalists, high level conflict situation emerged because of the failure of India to comply with international human rights standards in Manipur. If journalists were allowed to do journalism in India's north-eastern state of Manipur, the situation would not have been like this and Manipur would not burn. Ongoing unrest in India's Manipur state has entered its fifth month. Journalists in Manipur are still being harassed on transparent reporting. On September 2, 2023, Editors Guild of India (EGI) released the Report of the Fact-Finding Mission on Media's Reportage of the Ethnic Violence in Manipur. The report said that an internet shutdown ordered in the state governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) contributed to biased reporting by local media aligned with warring ethnic groups. Immediately after reporting, Indian government have filed two cases against four members Bharat Bhushan, Sanjay Kapoor, Seema Guha and the press body's president, Seema Mustafa of the Editors Guild of India (EGI) working on this report. All four journalists are being harassed by Indian authorities. On 6 January 2024, in Manipur journalist of Meitei language newspaper Hueiyen Lanpao's editor Dhanabir Maibam was arrested for reporting on violence. Maibam has been booked under fake ellegations by Indian government and booked him sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion), 505 (publishing report containing rumour or alarming news), 120 (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC and sections of the Official Secrets Act, 1923. The journalist's arrest came on Friday, days after the newspaper published a report on the "deteriorating" law and order in Moreh – a Kuki-dominated small town in Tengenoupal district on Manipur's border with Myanmar – which has been the site of escalated violence since 31 October 2023. It is worrisome if journalists face threats or muzzling of their voices as such an environment is detrimental to the nation's democratic ethos. We urge this council to ask Indian government to stop harassing the journalists and allowed them to report events in Manipur in a transparent way.
