



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
6 September 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 Indigenous People of Africa Coordinating Committee, 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.

[20 August 2022]

---

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



## Violence Against Human Rights Defenders

Under UNHRC agenda item 4, my organization wants to bring council attention towards India where Human rights defenders are facing a diverse range of attacks and harassment from state and non-state actors alike, including killing, physical assault, arbitrary detention, threats and judicial harassment. Police officials are often the perpetrators of violence against Human Rights Defenders. Even armed groups, political people and private companies also target HRDs for their work. On 27 June 2022, Human Rights Defender Mohammed Zubair was arrested by the special cell of the Delhi police because of a tweet published by him in 2018 which police alleged ‘hurt religious sentiments. Mohammed Zubair is a human right defender and the co-founder of fact-checking website Alt News, aimed at combatting fake news and misinformation. He mainly spoke against hate speech and divisive propaganda especially targeting minority communities. In June 2022, he was instrumental in exposing the hate speech by former ruling party spokesperson Nupur Sharma which resulted in public and international outcry. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has since sought to distance itself from the said officials, especially in response to international condemnation. Mohammed Zubair has been targeted in the past due to his work. The recent treatment of the human rights defender based on a tweet published four years ago, is clearly a punishment for his role in exposing hate speech used by senior members of the BJP. On 30 June 2022, the Delhi police raided the human rights defender’s residence in Bengaluru to recover his electronic devices. On 2 July 2022, Delhi Police added further charges including Section 35 of the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act and Sections 201 (for the destruction of evidence – formatted phone and deleted tweets), 120-(B) (for criminal conspiracy). The treatment of Mohammed Zubair since his arrest, his prolonged detention, raids on his house and seizure of his electronic devices, is a blatant violation of his human rights and appears to be an instrument to intimidate him. The selective targeting of Mohammed Zubair on spurious charges, denial of bail, allegations of foreign funding, and medial leaks are indicative of a pattern of violence and threats against Indian human rights defenders. 2 days prior to Mohammed Zubair’s arrest, Indian women human rights defender, Teesta Setalvad, was arrested by Gujarat police based on her legal campaign seeking justice for the victims of the Gujarat riots. On 2 July 2022, Teesta Setalvad was remanded to 14 days police custody by the court. While the cases and subject matter differ, both defenders are being punished for exposing or seeking accountability against senior BJP figures. We urge this council to ask Indian government to stop violence against Human rights defenders and also release them immediately without any further delay.

---