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**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related
forms of intolerance: follow-up to and implementation
of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

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.

[23 January 2024]

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



Freedom of Religion in India

The right to freedom of religion is addressed by numerous international and regional conventions. Religious minorities, in particular, face many obstacles in pursuit of this right in many countries. Country like India where religious freedom conditions are taking a drastic turn downward, various Indian states are involved in widespread harassment and violence against religious minorities with Hindutva ideology. In 2023, religious freedom conditions in India remained poor. During the year, the Indian government continued to promote and enforce policies, including laws targeting religious conversion, interfaith relationships, and cow slaughter, that negatively affect Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, and Adivasis (indigenous and scheduled tribal people). Indian government continued to suppress the critical voices particularly religious minorities and those advocating on their behalf including through surveillance, harassment, demolition of property, arbitrary travel bans, and detention under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and by targeting nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) under the Financial Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA). The pilot implementation of the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state of Assam continued to exacerbate fears of losing citizenship among Muslims, who lack protection under the 2019 Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). Taken together, the manner in which government officials have enforced these policies has enabled intolerance of religious minorities and exacerbated communal divides, resulting in violence, deaths, injuries, sexual assault, destruction of property including houses of worship, arbitrary detentions, harassment including online harassment, and social boycotting of religious, scheduled castes, and tribal communities. This trajectory, alongside an escalating government crackdown on civil society and dissent, is deeply alarming in a diverse, secular, and so-called democratic country. Religious freedom and related human rights in India are under ongoing threat for a variety of reasons, including various government policies. We urge this this council to ask Indian government to review its policies for religious freedom and also protect rights of minorities.
