



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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 Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, 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.

[26 May 2021]

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



## **Pilferage of uranium in India - Threat to Global Security and human lives**

In May 2021, the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) in Maharashtra India, has arrested two men with 7-kg of natural uranium worth Rs 21 crore in Mumbai. Uranium is considered a rare element and is highly radioactive. It is used for making nuclear explosives which is very dangerous for human lives.

The arrested men have been identified as Jigar Jayesh Pandya and Abu Tahir Afzal Hussain Choudhary.

The Nagpada unit of the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) had apprehended a 27-year-old Thane resident, Jigar Pandya, with some small pieces of the valuable substance on February 14 this year.

The ATS subsequently nabbed Choudhary from the premises of Kurla Scrap Association in Mankhurd and seized 7.100 kg of natural uranium from his possession.

The seized uranium was sent to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) at Trombay for analysis. The report received from the research centre mentioned that the substance was natural uranium, which is "highly radioactive and dangerous to human life.

It is the second time in India that such a highly radioactive substance has been seized by police in recent years. In 2016, police seized almost 9 kg of depleted uranium in the Thane area of Maharashtra. Such repeated incidents of pilferage of a dangerous radioactive material speaks a lot about weak control of the Indian state.

India is one of the nuclear capable state which binds it to abide by the nuclear security regime. Smuggling and pilferage of a radio active material like uranium puts a big question mark on the systems in place for security and safe custody of such material.

These radioactive materials are very dangerous for the human life and such irresponsible and casual handling of such materials may lead this world to another catastrophe. Pilferage of such deadly material will not only put on risk the life of Indians but it is equally dangerous for the humanity and people living around the globe.

These are the two cases which were highlighted by media, and immediately complete media black out was observed and no follow up was given by any media group. Media houses were told to stop reporting on such issues which is also against the basic freedom of speech and freedom of expression. It is likely that similar breaches of radioactive materials also happened in past but were not reported on media due to the pressure of government. This issue is of global good and well being and such pilferage in future may leads to a bigger human crisis putting many human lives in danger.

We look forward to a positive response from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Special Rapporteurs (SR) on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the Special Rapporteurs (SR) on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Special Rapporteurs (SR) on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

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Conseil Universel Des Droits De L'Homme - France, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.