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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 Global Welfare Association, 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.

[30 May 2021]

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



Indian government hypocrisy and double standards are very evident during COVID pandemic

Indian government hypocrisy and double standards are very evident during COVID pandemic. Churches, Mosques, Gurdwaras, Schools, colleges are closed. Night curfew is on. Shops are open only for few hours. There are restrictions on wedding, funeral services.

Our organization would like to share that the Kumbh Mela, or pitcher festival, is one of the most sacred pilgrimages in Hinduism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party allowed for the proceeding of the festival at a time when infections are skyrocketing because the government isn't willing to anger Hindus, who are the party's biggest supporters. More than nine million pilgrims attended the festival in Haridwar in April 2021. Due to this festival, people who were infected took back this virus with them, not limiting to India itself, but to other countries as well.

The minority groups of India are accusing the government of a double standard. This means giving priority of vaccination to Hindus, and allowing millions of Hindu pilgrims to participate in large ceremonies like Khumbh Mela, while strictly imposing COVID-19 rules on the worship of religious minorities.

In the wake of this festival, India's new COVID-19 infections broke the global record, with more than 4 lacs cases recorded per day, plus nearly 4000 to 5000 thousand deaths each day. Hospitals and morgues are filled to full capacity, with people dying on pavements from scarcity of oxygen, and crematoriums and graveyards visibility overflowing with bodies. Due to prioritization to Hindus, many Christians, Sikhs, and low caste Hindus such as Dalits die in their homes while trying to get tested. Government and local authorities stand accused of rampant miscounting, covering up and obfuscating the true death toll in their states.

When the situation went out of control due to the incompetence of the Indian government, it also stopped permitting the export of vaccines so it could meet domestic needs, which then had serious knock-on effects, limiting or delaying supplies for dozens of countries.

The international community should also ask the government about human rights protections, the protection of human lives and having equitable access to vaccines to all Indian citizens.

Therefore, we request your august office to ask the Indian government to end its abusive and discriminatory policies targeting minority communities, particularly Christian, Sikhs, Dalits etc and ensure basic human right of freedom of religion and equality.

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 obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment and Special Rapporteurs (SR) on freedom of religion or belief.
