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India: UN body petitioned over ongoing detention of prominent Kashmiri human rights defender

Paris-Geneva, November 22, 2022 - *On the first-year anniversary of prominent Kashmiri human rights defender Khurram Parvez's arrest and detention, four human rights organisations have submitted a complaint to the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.*

“The detention of Khurram Parvez carries all the signs of an arbitrary detention in clear breach of binding legal standards the Indian State has committed to respect. For over a year, domestic courts have failed to uphold the rule of law and international law. This is why we are seizing the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to issue a ruling on the arbitrariness of Khurram’s detention, and to demand the Indian authorities release him,” said OMCT Secretary General Gerald Staberock.

Khurram Parvez has worked tirelessly to document human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir for the past 20 years. He is the Coordinator of the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) and the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), and the Chairperson of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD). Mr Parvez is also a distinguished scholar with the political conflict, gender, and people’s rights initiative at the Center for Race and Gender at University of California, Berkeley.

“In addition to being arbitrarily detained for a year, Khurram Parvez faces a possible life sentence and the death penalty in a blatant act of reprisal for his legitimate and peaceful human rights activities. Khurram ought to not have spent a single minute behind bars and should be compensated for his prolonged and unjust deprivation of liberty,” said FIDH President Alice Mogwe.

Khurram Parvez was arbitrarily arrested on November 22, 2021 by National Investigation Agency (NIA) officers following 14-hour raids on his house and the JKCCS office in Srinagar, during which his electronic devices and several documents were seized. Mr Parvez has since been prosecuted under multiple trumped-up charges related to criminal conspiracy and terrorism, and his fundamental rights to due process and a fair trial have constantly been violated.

The rights groups reiterate their calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr Parvez and for all charges against him to be dropped.

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Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders