**ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO INDIA (SECOND BATCH)**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

* In the last UPR cycle, India supported the recommendation to ratify the Convention Against Torture, Cruel, or Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) given by 31 countries, and the Indian Law Commission recommended the Government consider the possibility of ratifying UNCAT. What steps have been taken to ratify this convention?
* Several concerning trends in the press freedom space have been noted across the country and online. Access Now found that India has the highest number of internet shutdowns globally. Reporters Sans Frontiers ranked India 142 of 180 countries in its 2021 World Press Freedom Index. In a similar vein, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported that India has the highest number of journalists killed in retribution for their work. What steps are being considered by the government to reverse these trends, including ensuring freedom of expression both online and offline?
* Many civil society groups have assessed that the Foreign Contribution Regulation Action (FCRA) inhibits civil society from conducting important work and is sometimes utilized to constrain the activities of civil society. What steps does the government plan to take to ensure that FCRA is implemented transparently in cooperation with civil society?
* The protections of the constitutional rights of members of religious minority groups have been challenged by discriminatory laws such as anti-conversion laws, marriage restrictions, and cow slaughter laws. A law in one Indian state infringes on wearing religious garb in educational institutions. In addition, we are concerned about acts that intimidate religious and ethnic minority communities, such as hate speech and the targeting of their homes and businesses. What steps are being taken by the government to protect members of religious minority groups from discrimination?
* We note the Government of India’s rollback of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act to promote accountability and justice. We continue to have concerns about section 197 of the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure, which does not fully address accountability for security forces and prevents victims from accessing justice. How does the government intend to proceed with further legal reforms and ensure Police Complaints Authorities (PCA) in all states take disciplinary action against officers found to be credibly complicit?
* We are concerned by the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, National Security Act, Public Safety Act, and sections (124A, 499, and 500) of the Indian Penal Code as they have been applied to free speech advocates, activists, and faith leaders. What steps are being taken by the government to ensure these acts comply with international human rights obligations and commitments?
* How does the government intend to prevent, track, prosecute, and punish crimes of sectarian violence, or threats of violence committed by officials, individuals, or groups against members of religious or social minority groups?
* We urge the central and state governments to harmonize their mandates for, and implementation of, protection and compensation programs for trafficking victims, especially children, and ensure immediate access to care. This includes training prosecutors and judges to increase the number of restitution orders for trafficking victims and eliminating the condition of a trafficking conviction as a prerequisite for bonded labor victim compensation. What action is the Government of India taking to improve survivor access to restitution, and how are you ensuring trafficking victims are aware of available compensation mechanisms?

**PANAMA**

* The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that India take measures to ensure the implementation of inclusive education for students with disabilities and redouble its efforts to reduce illiteracy among persons with disabilities. We would appreciate if India could provide an update on the progress made in the implementation of this recommendation.
* What specific measures are put in place for the protection and assistance of stateless persons and those at greater risk of statelessness?
* What legislative and policy measures have been adopted to protect the human rights of older persons?
* What steps have been taken to raise public awareness about the prohibition of caste-based discrimination, especially in rural areas?