

June 10, 2016

Parliamentary questions by member Voordewind (ChristianUnion) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs about the restriction of freedom of expression in India [no. 2016Z11756]

Question 1

Do you know the Human Rights Watch report *Stifling Dissent – The Criminalization of Peaceful Expression in India* and the legal analysis of UN Rapporteur Maina Kiai on the Indian law that regulates foreign donations to Indian organizations?⁽¹⁾

Question 2

Do you share the analysis of the report by Human Rights Watch that Indian authorities routinely use vaguely worded, too broad laws as political weapons to silence and intimidate critics, and the analysis of the UN Rapporteur that the law does not comply with international law and with international guidelines and standards, and that the law gives the government wide discretionary powers that can be applied in an arbitrary and unpredictable manner?

Question 3

Are you prepared to discuss these very worrying developments with the Indian Government? Are you prepared to inform the parliament about this?

Question 4

Are you prepared to address this issue in the framework of the Dutch Presidency at EU level with the objective that the EU will discuss this developments incisively with the Indian government?

Question 5

Are you willing - partly in view of one of the recommendations in the HRW report - to address the strong lack of freedom of expression in India during India's Universal Periodic Review in 2017 and encourage India to invite the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of freedom of expression for a fact-finding mission?

Question 6

What do you think of the conclusion in the HRW report that laws against terrorism are used disproportionately against religious minorities and marginalized groups such as Dalits? Are you willing to include this specifically in your discussions with the Indian Government?

(1) <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/24/india-stop-treating-critics-criminals>