



4th October, 2023

Statement on Media Repression and Unlawful Attacks by the BJP Government in India

SMG is outraged by the continuing campaign of suppression of criticism and press freedom by the Hindu Nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party Government of India.

On 2 October 2023, in true Gestapo-style hundreds of police raided over 100 offices and homes and confiscated hundreds of mobile phones and laptop computers of Indian media practitioners. The Indian Police have arrested and detained over 50 Indian writers, editors, and managers associated with the “Newslick” website or with Tri-Continental Research Services. Both of these are Left wing organizations that offer high quality reporting and analysis of Indian and world affairs and that have been vocal in the struggle to prevent escalation of global conflict for example. Those arrested include the highly respected Founder of Newslick, Prabir Purkayastha who has been taken to a special Indian government interrogation facility. It also includes the equally regarded Head of Human Resources, Amit Chakravarty.

Both Purkayastha and Chakravarty were victims of similar outrageous violations by the Indian State in 2021 and have only since maintained their freedom under the protection of Indian judicial rulings. To evade further judicial “interference” the Modi government purports now to be investigating them under the “Unlawful Activities Prevention Act” (“UAPA”), a draconian piece of legislation, which the Modi government believes excludes judicial review of its repression on grounds of national security. Yesterday’s arrests are a continuation of a crackdown on media freedoms that is growing in scope and audacity in India and in many right-wing led countries around the World. In recent years Prime Minister Modi’s government has used UAPA legislation to harass and silence thousands of its critics. Even the New York Times (whose recent irresponsible speculations have without doubt contributed to these fresh attacks) acknowledges that the Indian Government uses “UAPA” to “stifle dissent”. The specific allegation against the media personnel appears to be agency in some fanciful China-based conspiracy against the Indian State. The truth is that the BJP wishes to silence our comrades’ exposure of its unpopular policies and the totalitarian agenda behind these policies.

We join hands with the rapidly growing Indian and international movement calling for the the immediate release of our comrades and the reinstatement of the constitutional rights of media practitioners in India. We call on journalists and activists around the world to condemn this attack on freedom of conscience and expression taking place in India and to take popular actions to drive the



SOCIALIST MOVEMENT OF GHANA (SMG)

message home. We call on all to hold the Modi government fully accountable for any physical or psychological harm to the persons currently in their custody.

Kwesi Pratt Jnr
General Secretary

cc:

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Ghana Journalists Association, **Press Centre, Abdul Nasser Ave., Ringway Estates, Accra, Ghana**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Flat 5 Agostinho Neto Rd, Accra

All Media Houses