

**UN Human Rights Council****13th Session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review****Review of INDIA****Geneva, 24 May 2012****Statement by AUSTRIA**

Thank you, Mme President.

Austria welcomes H.E. .... and the delegation of India to the UPR and thanks them for their presentation.

We commend the Government for the recent establishment of the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and welcome the standing invitation for special procedures. We also note that India has signed the CAT and the CED. We furthermore take positive note of the ongoing discussions on bills aiming at the protection of the rights of women.

However, Austria remains concerned about various forms of discrimination and violence against women, in particular pre-natal sex selection, domestic and dowry-related violence and so called honour killings.

We are also concerned about cases of serious physical intimidation against and killings of media professionals, as indicated by UNESCO.

Could the Government explain how it monitors the application of anti-conversion laws in several federal states, which measures it has taken to ensure that these laws do not infringe on the right to freedom of religion and what steps have been taken to ensure effective and swift prosecution of acts of violence against religious minorities?

Austria offers the following recommendations to the Government of India:

- Ratify the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, the CAT and the Rome Statute of the ICC;
- Take legislative action to ensure every person's right to freely choose one's religion in line with the Indian Constitution and effectively and swiftly prosecute acts of violence against religious minorities;

- Ensure a safe working environment for journalists and take proactive measures to address the issue of impunity, such as swift and independent investigations.
- Take further practical steps to reduce the high level of maternal and child mortality, i.a. through better access to maternal health services.