



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Forum on Minority Issues
Geneva, 12 – 13 November 2009

Thank you, Mr/s. Chairman, for giving me the floor. My name is Jian Badrakhhan, I am from YASA, the Kurdish Centre for Legal Studies & Consultancy. Our Organization advocates for the rights of Kurdish People in Syria, the population of which is estimated to be about 3 million.

The Syrian government has described the Kurds in Syria as a part of the Syrian society, however, officially in Syria no other nation but the Arabs exists. The constitution mentions in the preamble the role of the Arab nation only, and those who are part of building human civilization but nothing about the other people based in Syria. In addition, it can be read in Article 1 section (2) that the Syrian Arab country is a part of the Arab homeland and in section (3) that the people in the Syrian Arab country are a part of the Arab nation. They work and struggle to achieve the Arab nation's comprehensive unity. Still today, Kurds in Syria are not officially recognized as an ethnic group and the existence of the Kurdish minority as such, is still officially denied.

Furthermore, the constitution names in Article 8 a national socialistic party "Al Baath" as the leading party in the society and the state, which leads a front of other Arab-nationalistic parties seeking to unify the resources of the people's masses to take part and be at the service of the Arab nation's goals. Therefore no Kurdish political party is officially registered and allowed to participate in the political process in Syria, as participation without recognition is not imaginable.

The Kurdish minority in Syria is marginalized in all sectors and on all levels. To have a simple post at any government office or to be allowed to do their own business without any complications, people belonging to the Kurdish minority need to be a member of the Baath party or work closely with the state or political security or pay a high bribery.

Our recommendations for the Syrian government are as follows:

- Implementation of the international standards of minority rights into the constitution and the national laws
- Recognition the political parties and human rights and cultural organisations of the Kurdish minority and register them to make their participation in the political process possible
- Recognize the existence of the Kurds in Syria as without the recognition of existence their participation is not imaginable
- Remove all racist articles from the constitution and the national laws and decrees like the decree 49 from 10 September 2008 which deny the Kurds in the border areas the right of ownership
- Give the 350000 Kurds the Syrian nationality back as without possessing the nationality, people can practically have no rights and of course can not participate in the political process in their own country.

Thank you very much.

Jian Badrakhhan

YASA e.V. – Kurdish Centre for Legal Studies & Consultancy

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Kurdish Centre for
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Kurdisches Zentrum
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