

FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES

Seventh session

“Preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities”

Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

PROGRAMME OF WORK

25 November 2014

Morning Session

10:00 - 13:00

I. 10:00-11:00 Opening meeting

Statement by the President of the Human Rights Council, **H.E. Ambassador Baudelaire Ndong Ella**

Video statement by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. **Jan Eliasson**

Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, **Mr. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein**

Video statement by the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, **Ms Rita Izsák**

Remarks by the Chair of the Forum on Minority Issues, **Mr Patrick Thornberry**

II. 11:00 -13:00 Legal framework and key concepts

This session will provide an overview of existing international and regional standards and principles relevant to the protection of persons belonging to minorities from violence and atrocity crimes. The discussion will focus on the promotion and full realization of the provisions set forth in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and other relevant international standards, including the principle of the Responsibility to Protect and the obligations of various national, regional and international actors. Participants will discuss how to ensure that international and regional standards relevant to the protection of minorities from violence are reflected in national legislation, policies and practices.

Presentations by:

- **Ms Astrid Thors**, High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- **Mr Antti Korkeakivi**, on behalf of the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities
- **Ms Anastasia Crickley**, UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).
- **Ms Simona Cruciani, on behalf of Ms Jennifer Welsh** (United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect), Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

Discussion

Lunch Break

Afternoon Session

III. 15:00-16:30: Understanding the root causes of violence and atrocity crimes

This session will discuss challenges and rights violations experienced by minorities leading to violence. It will consider the situations, environments, processes and factors leading to violence and atrocity crimes, including deficits in good governance, rule of law or in the respect for human rights. Participants will consider what factors and rights violations, such as exclusion, discrimination and inequality make minorities vulnerable. The session will discuss how patterns of discrimination against a particular minority in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres can translate into abuse and systematic violation of basic human rights and can escalate into atrocity crimes.

Presentations by:

- **Mr Bacre Ndiaye**, Former Director of the Division of Human Rights Council and Treaties Division at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions
- **Dr. György Tatár**, Director of the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities
- **Ms Diane Ala'I**, Representative to the United Nations for the Baha'i International Community
- **Mr Zuher Lazgeen**, Ambassador of Citizenship, PAX's initiative/Harikar, Iraq

Discussion

IV. 16:30-18:00: Improving prevention of violence and atrocity crimes

This session will consider existing risk assessment methodologies and early warning mechanisms, existing gaps and possible measures to improve existing approaches, channels of communication and information exchange at national, regional and international levels to act effectively to prevent violence at an early stage. This session will also discuss the importance of ensuring the effective participation of minorities in legislative, administrative and decision-making bodies, including the role of inclusive governance, media and challenges and possibilities relating to policing and security as factors directly linked to the exposure of minorities to violence and atrocity crimes.

- **Mr Francesco Motta**, Chief Human Rights Section United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)
- **Ms Patricia Luna Paredes**, Office of the Ombudsman, Colombia
- **Ms Nina Singh**, Joint Director, Central Bureau of Investigation Government of India
- **Dr. Brilliant Mhlanga**, Senior Lecturer in Media Cultures, School of Humanities, University of Hertfordshire, UK

Discussion

26 November 2014

Morning Session

10:00 – 13:00

V. 10:00-13:00: After violence breaks out — essential measures for resolution, protection and security

The session will consider the specific challenges of responding to violence against minorities once it has broken out and concrete measures for immediate operational security responses in order to quickly halt violence at the national level. The session will discuss the role of all stakeholders in finding and implementing rapid, tailored response measures to protect minorities under attack and specific humanitarian concerns affecting minorities. The discussion will look into the role of neighbouring States, and regional and international bodies under the principle of the responsibility to protect and its operational implications.

Presentations by:

- **Ms Pascale Warda**, President of Hammurabi Human Rights Organization and former Minister of Migration and displacement in Iraq
- **Mr. Mark Lattimer**, Executive Director, Minority Rights Group International (MRG)
- **Ms Naomi Kikoler**, Deputy Director of the Center for the Prevention of Genocide at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum
- **Ms Wai Wai Nu**, Director, Women Peace Network Arakan, Myanmar

Discussion

Lunch Break

Afternoon Session

15:00 – 18:00

VI. 15:00-17:45: Avoiding renewed violence — building the peace and managing diversity

This session will focus on the role of implementing minority rights in post-violence and post-conflict situations as a precondition for building and ensuring a stable and lasting peace. Participants will consider specific post-violence reconciliation measures, including ensuring accountability for violent crimes against minorities, the role of transitional justice mechanisms and the importance of key elements such as empowering of victims and the role of memory as key elements to rebuild confidence and trust in post-violence societies.

Presentations by:

- **Ms Yasmin Sooka**, Executive Director Foundation for Human Rights, South Africa
- **Ms Thilagam Ramalingam**, Director of THAI/International Solidarity Dalit Network
- **Mr Mofidul Hoque**, Co-founder and trustee of the Liberation War Museum, Bangladesh

- **Ms Pastor Esther Ibanga**, Religious leader and Co-founder and President of the “Women Without Walls Initiative”, Nigeria
- **Dr. Sajjad Hassan**, Senior Fellow, Aman Biradari Campaign, India

Discussion

VI. 17:45-18:00 Concluding remarks

Remarks by the Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues

Session Closes