

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 Badrakhan, 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.

Over the last 5 years, 29 Kurdish soldiers in the Syrian army were assassinated through mysterious circumstances. Despite repeated requests from YASA and many other international NGOs to set up an investigation about these killings, the authorities in Syria have showed no movement toward solving the crimes and instead, have banned the families of the killed soldiers to talk to any human rights organizations. The Kurds in Syria are continuing to suffer under the prejudiced policies of the Syrian government, 350 000 Kurds have lost their Syrian nationality and the Arabic-Belt is still surrounding the Kurdish region in Syria and pushing further onto Kurdish land.

Instead of changing the old policies of nationalism, Syria is continuing to marginalize the Kurds population. Decree 49, issued on 10.09.2008 has established further measures to subjugate the Kurdish minority and deny them the right of ownership. The President of Syria furthers this discrimination; Mr Bashar Al Assad has declared a large area of the Kurdish region in Syria as a border, taking away further opportunities of the

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Kurdish population to have their own property. The Syrian government must take a huge step towards modern times and human and 'minority rights.

Thank you very much.'

Jian Badrakhan •

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