

Assyrian Universal Alliance (second statement) by Jennifer Babaie

Female/English

Thank you Madam Chair.

On behalf of the Assyrian Universal Alliance I want to propose concrete steps regarding the effective mitigation of an issue deserving special attention today. That is post-conflict human trafficking particular to refugees and internally displaced persons.

As an example I offer to the Forum the case of the Assyrians. They are a linguistic minority caught in the crosshair of Iraq's sectarian violence. There are currently at least 1-1,5 million Iraqi refugees living in Syria of which Assyrians constitute at least 15%. Because they are not allowed to work, many families are impoverished. In addition to this, the number of female headed households are increasing leaving very little options for the survival of the woman and their families. They are forced to sacrifice one basic human right for another. The situation affectedly reduces the woman's participation in public life, while at the same time increasing their forced participation in the sex trade occurring between Syria and Iraq. Paragraph 28 of the Draft Recommendations rightly refers to bilateral regional communication as a proper way to combat human trafficking. However, this alone is not enough to truly mitigate the sources leading to the victimisation of refugee women within the human slave trade. If a country is producing refugees it would be insufficient for the state to on communication alone with its neighbouring country to solve this problem. Rather we call for a modification to explicitly address more concrete steps encouraging states to work together to create a regional or bilateral body, who's sole purpose would be to combat the slave trade and to protect the woman caught within it. Such a body would also be called upon whenever a woman was detained in either state and would also assist in collecting quantitative data so that we would have accurate numbers as to how many women are actually trafficked across the border. This body would also actively recruit women to work within it, so it could enhance their self-reliance and could give them an opportunity to assist members of their own community.

Lastly, we call for the recommendation to explicitly state that vocational training is a concrete measure directly linked to mitigating violence and exploitation of minority woman, especially refugees. In my previous example of the Assyrians, if Iraq wishes to enhance its new democracy and legitimise it, it would need to work directly with Syria on the refugee situation and provide a more secure home for the Syrian community to return to.

Thank you.