

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk on the issue and the suffering of the Arab people in the province of Al-Ahwaz in South-West Iran and on serious violations of human rights which occur there at the hand of the Iranian authorities.

After 20 years have passed since the international declaration of the rights of minorities and nations, none of its provisions have been applied in regards to nations, minorities and various people spread out in Iran. Our Arab people of Al-Ahwaz still suffers from the deprivation of all civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights and extreme types of racist policies have been exercised against it by the Iranian authorities aimed to change its ethnic, cultural and national identity.

The authorities do not recognize the presence of this people and have not presented any official statistics on the number of its population, just as they don't allow this people to create parties or institutions and civil society organizations which would grant it the opportunity to participate in political and cultural life or civil activities.

I was one of the activists detained because of my activism in the field of human rights and I was subjected to torture and imprisonment, I was prevented from traveling, working and studying. I know the extent of the challenges faced by human rights activists and civil organizations in Al-Ahwaz, where they pay with their souls and their lives as the price for making their voice heard on the suffering of their people, which has been suffering from national oppression and discrimination for decades and which today faces a campaign of genocide reaching [the level of] systematic ethnic cleansing through execution campaigns, collective punishment, filling up prisons and jailing activists.

The operation of demographic change in the province of Al-Ahwaz is ongoing and the Arab have been displaced from their original areas of residence, and Persian immigrants and from other nations have been brought in, settlements were built for them and they were housed in all cities and areas of the province, giving them luxurious possibilities and job opportunities, while in return the Arab indigenous inhabitants were deprived of jobs, wealth and the opportunities available on their land. A change was made to the national identity of our people through the deprivation of its mother tongue in education, culture, publishing and the media to the extent of prohibiting poetry readings and educational seminars and banning all forms of cultural and civil work which would preserve the identity of the people from loss and blending into the ruling culture.

Iranian authorities have multiple times rejected the request of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human rights In Iran Mr. Ahmed Shahid and from here we demand, pressuring the Iranian authorities, [for him] to be allowed to visit the country and view the situation of the nations and minorities and the amount of suffering and tragedy in which they live in the shadow of the regime of the Islamic Republic.

The broad violations in regards to humans, the environment and the Arabic culture in Al-Ahwaz require today a firm stance from the international community to demand the end of the ethnic cleansing campaign and the protection of the identity of people, nations and minorities.