

Human Rights Council

Forum on Minority

Issues Fifth session

Geneva, 27-28 November 2012

Intervention under the Agenda Item 5: Challenges and problems encountered in the practical implementation of the Declaration.

Intervention presented by: Dr. Irad Beldjebel - OHCHR Minorities Fellowship Programme -2012

- Mme Chair Person,
Mme Independent Expert,
Distinguished delegates and colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the OHCHR for giving me the opportunity to be part of the 2012 Minorities Fellowship Programme and to take part of this 5th session of the Forum on Minorities Issues.

Since 2003, the Christian population of Iraq have been the target of recurrent violence, which the country is facing; Churches destroyed, religious and community leaders killed, kidnappings, killings, discrimination and persecution at different levels have been their daily life, as a consequence, more than half of its original population had left the country, this community is facing challenge of survival.

We would like to address the following recommendations :

1. Religious minorities and civil society organizations should work jointly with **Iraqi** government to implement the declaration on the Rights of Persons. Belonging to National Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.
2. United Nations agencies in collaboration with the civil society and Iraqi government should organize a conference to examine the issue of "minorities in Iraq" to ensure their continuity and activate their role in their countries, as enumerated in article (9).
3. States of the Middle East and North Africa region should promulgate effective decisions that will help protect the Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq and in other countries of the Middle East.
4. We urge Muslim religious leaders, the Arab League and the Conference of Islamic Countries to collaborate and enforce the article (6) by enacting decisions "Fatwa's" that prohibit aggression against the peaceful Christian citizens of Iraq and MENA region, and promote an effective inter religious dialogue.

5. The government should improve the representation of Christians and other religious minorities in the parliament and, as for the provincial councils, according to article (2.3) of the declaration

6. Implementation of Article (4.5) of the declaration to ensure economic progress and work opportunities for all Iraqis, away from the confessional quota and marginalization, by adopting nondiscrimination laws.

7. Reinforcing article (1) of the declaration, by ending the culture of impunity with regards to religion based violence, and take measures to ensure that victims should be able to avail themselves of effective legal remedies, the state should adopt.

8. Implementing article (2.5) by urging minorities groups to establish their own organizations overcoming their divisions, to promote minorities' rights at the local, national and international level.

Thank you!

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Intervention under the 5th item of the Agenda: Challenges and problems encountered in the practical implementation of the Declaration.

Intervention presented by: Dr. Irad Beldjebel OHCHR Minorities Fellowship Programme -20.12

Mme Chair Person,
Mme Independent Expert,
Distinguished
delegates and
colleagues, Ladies
and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the OHCHR for giving me the opportunity to be part of the 2012 Minorities Fellowship Programme and to participate to the 5th session of the Forum on Minorities Issues.

Religious minorities have always been a part of the Algerian society. The recent development of intolerance and discrimination towards the religious minorities, mainly in the last few decades, create a climate of misunderstanding and violation of the rights of the religious minorities in contradiction with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, limiting its implementation. '

We would like to address the following recommendations:

- The government should reinforce article (1.1, 2) of the declaration, to protect and end the culture of impunity with regards to religion based violence, and ensures protections to those confessing a religion or belief different from the predominant religious group, and drafting laws and regulations punishing the incitement to religious hatred and violence
- The government should consider withdrawing the Ordinance 06-03 adopted as a law on April 2006, enforced since February 2008, in contradiction with the article (2.1) of the declaration, which limits the practice of faiths other than the main stream, controls the importation of religious texts, and orders fines and punishments for individuals who shakes the faith of Muslims.
- National human rights institutions in collaboration with the governmental institutions should
 ensure the promotion and implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, by implementing educational programs promoting the culture of peace and religious tolerance.
- We encourage Algeria to continue its constructive dialogue with religious minorities' leaders, for a better implementation of the declaration.

Thank you