

Madam Chairperson thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk...

Ladies and Gentlemen here present...

My name is Aref Gabeau from the Organization Yaşa - the Kurdish Centre for Legal Studies and Consultancy...I belong to the Kurdish nation in Syria, whose population amounts to about 3 million people, which is about 15% of the population of Syria, whose number amount to more than 23 million people...Regarding the good practices and positive measures, among them the national laws and policies, which the Syrian government issued in order to strengthen the rights of persons belonging to minorities and their impact on the enjoyment of rights by minorities, among them the Kurds, which are stipulated by the declaration, they are very little...After depriving 10% of the Kurds, which is about 300 thousand, of the Syrian nationality and the civil rights tied to it for about 50 years, they were returned to them last year. But [the Syrian government] still does not recognize the Kurds as a national minority and the rights mentioned in the declaration, which we are celebrating today with the passing of 20 years since its issuance. There are still laws and exceptional procedures through which Kurds are oppressed and deprived of their legitimate rights as a national minority. These procedures and laws are many, there is no space to mention them all today. But as an example: the prevention of the use of the Kurdish language and teaching it both in governmental schools and private institutes. Further, the prohibition of any Kurdish cultural or media activity in Syria. This without mentioning the lack of recognition of the Kurds as a nation in the Constitution of the country. And our situation has become increasingly worse since the outbreak of the revolution and the crisis, which Syria has lived through in March 2011.

Facing this, we, the Kurds, try through political parties and civil organizations like our organization Yaşa - the Kurdish Centre for Legal Studies and Consultancy, to exercise our rights. Firstly, by raising consciousness about these rights, especially those mentioned in the declaration, the laws and other international conventions, through lectures, workshops and media. Furthermore, we organize - jointly with other organizations inside and outside of Syria - courses to teach the Kurdish language and protect and spread the Kurdish culture.

Thus, there are significant steps being taken both on the individual level and on the level of Kurdish civil and political organizations, and it is the continuation and the establishment of relationships with organizations and citizens of the Arab nations and other nations to introduce them to the situation of the Kurds and their suffering from oppression and the deprivation of their

basic human rights and to introduce them to the declaration and the rights mentioned in it; then gain their support and their participation in spreading those rights and condemning the oppression, which the Kurds face, and they too do their part in the defense of the Kurds and their rights.

In conclusion, we can't in the end, but hope for the return of security and stability to my country, Syria, and that the Kurds and other minorities enjoy their legitimate rights mentioned in the declaration and for the respect of the basic human rights in Syria.

Thank you for your attention..

Yaşa - the Kurdish Centre for Legal Studies and Consultancy...