

Afaghe Jahan Centre for culture studies & strategic communications (ACSC)

6th Minority Session

Mr/Madam President,

Afaghe Jahan centre for culture studies & strategic communications (ACSC) congratulates the UN with the 21st anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and welcomes the initiative to dedicate the 6th Forum to addressing the further implementation of the Declaration. We also thank the OHCHR for the opportunity to participate in this Forum and to present our comments.

21 years ago, UN Member States adopted unanimously this Declaration. The Minority Rights Declaration established that States have an obligation to acknowledge and promote the rights of minorities to enjoy their cultures and identities, to profess and practice their own religions and use their own languages.

UN member states acknowledged that a gap existed in minority rights protection. This gap persists still today. Nowadays, minorities in all regions of the world continue to face serious threats, discrimination and racism, and are frequently excluded from fully taking part in the economic, political, social and cultural life available to the majorities in the countries or societies where they live.

With regard to the Articles 2 and 4 of the Declaration, which states that persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in economic and public life and States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country, the ACSC wishes to note the situation of Shiite minorities, which have been suffering high and disproportionate levels of poverty, discrimination and marginalization that impacts on their rights and opportunities in all fields of life.

According to the historical facts, minorities have had peaceful life with the other religious, national, ethnic and linguistic groups in their respective countries. In spite of these historical facts, Shiite minorities receive high levels of violence, detention, harassment and torture from their government. Situation of human rights of Shiites in many countries, especially Pakistan, Saudi Arabia as well as Syria is an accurate example in this field.

With regard to Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, ACSC recommends that the situation of human rights of Shiite minorities be improved and Shiites be allowed to participate effectively in political, economic, and public life. Also ACSC recommends that Shiites enjoy their legal rights in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.