

Institute for International Law and Human Rights

(male, English)

Thank you madam Chair, thank you for giving the opportunity to speak on the issue of protecting minorities and potential positive practices that can enhance tolerance and respect. In particular, I recommend the work of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, miss Rita Iszak, and her thought-provoking concept note. Finally, I want to thank Minority Rights Group for providing me the opportunity and support to be able to speak to this distinguished group. I am an Iraqi citizen that works extensively on minority issues in Iraq through my organisation, the Institute for International Law and Human Rights. One of the themes in this Forum is identifying where good practices and policy to implement it to better protect minorities. And in this respect, I should first mention the establishment in 2012 of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights. This new constitutionally mandated institution has the potential to provide critical and historic protection for Iraqi citizens in general, and Iraqi minorities in particular. It is taking its first steps, and we need [attention] as it grows and begins to implement its mandate. The new commission can make an essential contribution and deserves all of the support for this reason. For this reason we support Draft Recommendation Number 20. Meanwhile Iraq's constitution has at least 13 specific articles that are dedicated to protecting minorities and its electoral law provides small set aside for minority representatives in the parliament. It is a state party to several international and regional instruments that call for minority protection. Including the Arab Charter on Human Rights and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam. But in fact, Iraq's constitution call for implementing legislation to make these promises reality. The constitution provides Iraqi's with specific progressive rights but there is not legislation in place that provides any sanction for violating these rights. For this reason, Draft Recommendation number 22 is particularly important. My organisation is working members of the Iraqi parliament and civil society we provide support to develop minority right legislation and local autonomy legislation. It is our hope that draft legislation can be presented these legislative terms. Thank you very much