

World Barua Organisation

Forum on Minority Issues

6th Session (26th-27th Nov. 2013)

Agenda: 3

Protection of the existence of and prevention of violence against religious minorities

Madam Chairperson

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to voice concerns of those millions who are voiceless or their voice is not heard by those who can make a difference. The establishment of the Forum on Minority Issues was seen as a positive development by marginalised groups and civil society all over the world. However, the raised expectations from the international community with regards to what the Forum can realistically deliver; have largely failed to be met in these challenging times. Despite this, our organisation as part of the civil society looks forward to the possible practical role of the Forum in the near future.

We see this at a practical level when we assess the ongoing realities in our communities, and in particular the continuing clashes that have occurred between against religious minorities in Bangladesh. For many years now the Hindu, Christian and Buddhist minorities have experienced various forms of discrimination where the Law enforcing agencies of Bangladesh have been ineffective in upholding law and order and in many instances they have failed to assist religious minorities. The attitude of these law enforcing agencies have promoted a greater atmosphere of impunity for acts of violence against minorities where they are often at the bottom of the social hierarchy and therefore have the least political recourse.

In Bangladesh, Barua minorities are predominantly found among the indigenous populations. As an ancient Pala dynasty inhabiting the land long before Muslims, Barua's have sought to live peacefully with all its neighbours. In the past few years with an increasing frequency, there have been several attacks and many incidents of human rights violations including torture, killings, harassment of Buddhist monks, sexual violence against women and children. Despite the widespread attacks on minorities, the security forces of Bangladesh have just remained a mute witness and have failed to arrest any of the culprits thereby perpetuating the culture of impunity that is rife throughout the security forces.

We strongly urge the Minority Forum and all other International Bodies to intervene with the Government of Bangladesh for its failure to protect minority lives and worship sites and at the same time the Government must implement the UN Declaration Belonging to National or Ethnic,

Religious and Linguistic Minorities in its true spirit to ensure that peace and justice prevails in the region.