

Forum on Minority issues

Preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities

Oral statement

Item 5 (following the outbreak of violence - necessary measures to settle, protect and secure)

Arabic

Statement by: Maysam Razzaq Al-Adib, representative of the Dutch organization Pax in Iraq

Thank you Mr. President for giving us this precious opportunity,

It's a great honor to be among you, good afternoon,

The roots of the issue of violence in Iraq go back to the delimitation of a narrow scope of permissible religious acceptance, which is constituted on the basis of the acceptance of Islam as the state's official religion in the Iraqi constitution. In this narrow scope an exclusively sectarian Islam appears, which restricts the scope of acceptance to a denomination and banishing others.

The incidents of sectarian violence in the years 2006/2007 and the incidents of violence directed against minorities caused them to leave in search for areas, which would be safer for them, in the region of the Nineveh Plains, one of the most diverse areas in Iraq. In it, minorities intersect and coexist at times in a melting of cultures and intermingle. But in light of all the conflicts between the major groups, Iraq is experiencing surrounding power, wealth and influence. In particular the conflicts between the central and regional governments and their lack of seriousness in reaching a clear agreement with regards to the lands left by minorities. Crushed amid the conflicts, the two sides have given up on their responsibilities to protect this region, leaving it exposed [and therefore] making it easier for ISIS to enter these regions. Today they [ISIS] control 70% of the regions of the minorities changing the political and geographical map as the losses become big making it difficult for minorities to return to their regions. The tragedies and woes being witnessed are another chapter of marginalization and exclusion.

Ladies and gentlemen, while the minority is in danger, - and the fact is that most of them are in danger - [the existence of] the concept of acceptance of the other will be at stake, and this threatens the stability of society.

Accordingly, I put in your hands several recommendations

1. Grant autonomous rule in the minorities' regions protected by laws and legislations and provide protection under international supervision. This is a practical solution in regards to their exodus. Further, insure their independence in the conflicts between the major communities.
2. Prepare a budget specifically for the development of their areas.
3. Carry out a project to build trust and reconciliation between the constituents of the region.
4. Carry out cultural projects by the central and regional governments, intellectuals and men of religion to address the ideology of rejecting the other.
5. Create the infrastructure for the inhabitants of these regions after their return and remuneration for the loss of their property.

Gentlemen, raise your heads and listen to the silent screams of the tormented throughout Iraq, both historically and geographically. Don't forget, after having a gulp of tea, the heart of a mother, who left her child to die of thirst, this is a heart that broken in the summer on the foothills of Mt. Sinjar. [Don't forget] the girl, whose joy of her success, as she escaped, is not complete, [because] in her body there are still 4 shrapnel fragments until now.

Thank you