

Remark presented to

Forum on Minority Rights in its 8th session

24-25 November 2015

The eighth session of the Forum on Minority Rights takes place in difficult circumstances, which the international community in general, and the Middle Eastern region in particular, are experiencing, as a result of terrorist groups carrying out criminal acts, which influence in a negative way religious, numerical, and ethnic minorities. A strengthened cooperation is required between the different countries to provide better protection for minorities, which no longer only suffer from shortcomings in the legislative and cultural structures in the countries in which they live, but also face the danger of terrorist groups.

We appreciate the effort of the special rapporteur on minority issues regarding the recommendations put forward, accordingly we support recommendations 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 26, 30, 49, 57, 56, 59.

At the same time, it has become a necessity to link the fight against the crimes of terrorist groups with the protection of minority rights, as a consequence of the slaughter of 22 Christian Egyptian citizens in Libya at the hands of elements of the terror organization ISIS in March 2015, the killing of a Christian man in North Sinai in June 2013, the attempt to target churches by planting explosive devices in their vicinity in Egypt, what the Assyrian and Chaldean Christians are subjected to in Syria and Iraq, and what the Yazidis face in Iraq at the hands of the organization ISIS, in addition to the flight and displacement of hundred thousands from their countries in the Middle East to Europe. To achieve this link the following is required:

States shall take measures to deal with the circumstances and causes that led to the spread of terrorism.

States shall take effective measures to prevent and restrain terrorism, and cease the financing of terrorist acts. [They shall] fully implement pertinent resolutions of the security council concerning fighting terrorism, and commit to international cooperation in pursuing, tracking down, turning in and prosecuting terrorists.

[In addition,] the state is committed to provide effective ways for victims to complain, including receiving compensations.

The international community shall also implement the responsibility to protect, to which it committed to in the 2005 World Summit, where the concept of responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity was adopted. This concept is based on three basic pillars:

First, the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity rests with each individual state.

Second, in helping countries to protect their population from those crimes, including through helping countries experiencing tensions before they erupt in crises and conflicts.

Third, take collective action, in the appropriate time and in a decisive manner, through the Security Council, according to the Charter, including chapter VII.

The international protection of refugees

Provide international protection for refugees and respect the principle of non-refoulement and of not returning any person, directly or indirectly, to a country in which they face oppression and real danger of torture, or the deprivation of the right to life. The principle of non-refoulement is not only applied to those officially recognized as refugees or recipients of forms of supplementary protection, rather it is also applied to asylum seekers awaiting the final determination of the status of their applications. Finally, dangerous and terrorist criminals should not benefit from international protection.