

Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic

Forum on Minority Issues

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Thank you, Mr. President,

The Syrian Constitution rests on the protection of cultural diversity as a principle, which forms the framework for all national legislation and institutions, including the guarantee to protect the richness of the social fabric, of which the Syrian society is proud, as a national heritage that promotes its national unity in the framework of the territorial unity and integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. It ensures the equality among all Syrians of different religious, ethnic, and racial [backgrounds], as well as the respect for all religions and [it further] ensures the freedom to exercise their rituals, including securing the respect for the personal status [law] of all religious communities.

The penal system is at the heart of the application of this principle. Practices of discrimination have no place at any stage of the criminal justice process, - beginning with the phase of investigation, through the consideration of the case before the courts, to the stage of execution of the judgment - contrary to the fallacies and allegations implied by paid statements with suspicious motivations. The Syrian government is working on the full implementation of this equality in law and in practice, and investigates any individual wrongdoing, which might fall in contravention of the constitutional principles and national legislation, and [ensures] accountability in its regard. This certainly holds true in the field of employment and representation in the criminal justice mechanisms. [Holding p]ublic office under the Syrian constitution is a duty and an honor, its goal being the achievement of public interest, and citizens have equal opportunities in assuming the functions of public service without any discrimination.

But the national framework is not the challenge that must be considered by the Forum in its current session. From Syria's experience, [it is] the campaign of infidel minds insulting the human civilization, who refuse other's beliefs, and want to vandalise and obliterate the cultural identity, and a system of cultural persecution. They wanted to, they and those who used them, remove all human values upon which the Syrian society is based. They tried to sow discord and promote hate speech and discrimination, which are ideas the Syrian society was never accustomed to, and which is contrary to the legacy of coexistence and civil peace upon which it is based. Therefore, [the] fate [of this campaign] was to be increasingly rejected

by society day after day, and its adherence to the national values, its defense of the cultural heritage, and its cultured message to the world, which is a message of peace, tolerance and moderation.