

Oral Statement of «Zagros Human Rights Center» on the situation of minorities in Iran, for the eighth session of the Forum on Minority Issues, in Geneva, 24 and 25 of November 2015

Thank you Mr. President,

My name is Samira Mohammad, a human rights activist at the Zagros Human Rights Center. I would like to draw the attention of the Forum to the conditions of the minorities (Kurds, Arabs, Balochi, Azeri or Turkmen) in Iran. We want to inform you that the scale of repression against ethnic minorities and national groups in Iran is very worrying. Hundreds of political prisoners and civil society activists belonging to minorities are currently in prisons in Iran and dozens were sentenced to death.

Recent statistics show that more than 40% of prisoners belong to the Kurdish minority in Iran, whereas Kurds in Iran constitute about 15% of Iran's population. These activists are accused of belonging to Kurdish political opposition parties in the Islamic Republic of Iran and of posing a danger to national security. They are further accused of spreading propaganda against the Iranian state.

Mr. President,

in Iran the repression against human rights activists and civil activists, which work on the issues of minorities, has continued.

Mohammad Seddigh Kaboudvand, founder of the Human Rights Organisation in Iranian Kurdistan, is still imprisoned for his work as a journalist and rights activist in the field of human rights, and for peacefully practicing his right of freedom of opinion and expression.

Despite the fact that Article 15 of the Iranian constitution allows for limited use of languages and alphabets of the ethnic minorities in schools and the media in addition to Persian, in reality, the Islamic Republic of Iran has not implemented any part of this article.

We ask that the Forum demand that the Iranian government cease the repression and oppression in politically marginalizing the Kurdish people and other national minorities in Iran, and recognise the basic rights of the national minorities as well as the ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities in Iran.

We demand that the Iranian government cease the violence and persecution of social activists and defenders of minorities' rights in Iran.

For the application of article 15 and 19 of the constitutional law on minorities and their education in their mother tongue.

Thank you