



Legal framework and key concepts

9th session of the Forum on Minority Issues

Mr Chairman,

ADF International welcomes this opportunity to promote dialogue and cooperation on issues pertaining to minorities. ADF International is particularly concerned about the fate of Christians and Yazidis persecuted by Daesh in the Middle East. Daesh has committed murder, torture, rape, sexual slavery, sexual violence, and other inhumane acts as part of a widespread attack on religious minorities.

Also, as Daesh was conquering towns in 2014, many religious minority groups were forced to flee. This is also what happened, for example, on 10th June 2014 in Mosul, and on 6th August 2014 in Karakosh, Bartellah, and other neighbouring villages. Thousands had to flee overnight to Erbil, Kurdistan, and other areas. Yesterday, I came back from Nineveh Plains, Iraq, and Kurdistan. In Erbil, I visited some camps for internationally-displaced persons. Two years and three months later, they still hope that they will be able to go back to their homes, and I have seen the homes in Nineveh Plains.

The three towns I managed to visit, Karakosh, Bartellah, and Karamles, are totally destroyed. Daesh looted one house after another, without leaving any stone unturned. The houses, churches, schools, and shops are burned down. In every church that I have visited, the crosses are broken, statues of Jesus and Holy Mary destroyed, Holy Bibles and books burned. Those pictures from the recently liberated areas send one and very clear message: Daesh specifically intended to destroy Christianity in the area, and everything that Christianity is associated with, and this is genocide.

This Daesh genocide of Christians, Yazidis, and other religious minorities is recognised by the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, and a number of States. While military actions and humanitarian assistance are underway, no legal steps have been taken to investigate the crimes and to prosecute the perpetrators, and the main and most relevant steps must be taken by international communities, international institutions.

The UN Security Council can take a number of different approaches to the Daesh atrocities, including establishing a commission of experts on genocide and an ad-hoc tribunal, or referring the situation to the ICC. Either way, actions are urgently needed. We need to remember that the UN Security Council was specifically established to maintain international peace and security, and this role cannot be fulfilled if the UN Security Council remains silent or acts inadequately and too late to reports of genocide. The persecuted minorities need a guarantee that the atrocities committed by Daesh will never happen again. They need a guarantee that they will be able to live safely in their homes and that they will not have to flee in the middle of the night. They also need justice.

Recognising the atrocities committed against Christians and Yazidis and other minorities in Syria and Iraq as genocide is the first step towards an adequate administration of justice, reconciliation, and healing. The Daesh fighters must be prosecuted for the crimes amounting to genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The victims deserve justice, and this justice is overdue.

Thank you.

Une alliance consacrée à la défense juridique de la liberté

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