

FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES

Ninth session “Minorities in situation of humanitarian crises”

24 - 25 November 2016

Protecting minority rights during humanitarian crises

ITEM 4

Mr. President

On behalf of Zagros Human Rights Centre, I would like to draw the attention of the Forum to the deteriorated situation of human rights in Turkey, especially in Kurdish province in south-east of Turkey.

After the legislative elections in June 2015, the first positive development in settling the Kurds crisis in Turkey, the peace process is interrupted in July 2015, and acts of violence between the Turkish armed forces and Kurdistan Labor Party (PKK) broke out.

Peace process breakdown and spiraling of violence led to increasing numbers of civilian casualties and multiple violations of human rights.

Resumption of hostilities has led to many cases of torturing, intimidating, arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances.

Since 16 of December 2015, the Turkish authorities waged large-scale military operations on majority-Kurdish towns of Cizre and Silopi in Sirnak province, close to Syria-Iraq border. As a result, residents of these towns were forced to leave out their houses.

After the failed military coup on 15 July 2015, the Turkish government, on contradictory to its international commitments to human rights, has taken tough undemocratic measures against its opponents and replaced the elected members in Kurdish municipalities.

The Turkish government has arrested 11 HDP deputies including co-chairs Salah El Din Demertash and Feign Youksa on November 4, 2015

Mr. President

Our organization is alarmed about the state of deterioration in human rights in Turkey, presumably leading to a humanitarian crisis.

Our organization calls for the HRC to conduct a thorough investigation into the recent violations and arrests, and calls for the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues to prepare a detailed report about violations of minority rights in Turkey.

Finally, it's the opinion of our organization that violence leads only to violence; hence, we call upon all conflicting parties to settle their disputes peacefully.

Thank you.