

Item 3:

IRA-Mauritania (NGO), Intervention by Abidine Merzough

Ladies and gentlemen,

My speech deals with the diaspora of people of African descent in the Arab-Muslim world.

We call for attention to the case of accessing to food, water, sanitation, health care, education and employment, of black populations called Haratine in Mauritania, Bella in Mali, blacks in Algeria and Tunisia, and finally, Muhamasheen in Yemen. These ethnic groups and minorities –except in Mauritania where they represent the overwhelming majority—are extremely vulnerable in their countries and they face additional difficulties in accessing basic economic, social and cultural rights.

They are subjected to discrimination on the basis of caste and similar systems of hereditary status. They also suffer slavery by descendance, which was legalized under the abusive usage of the Muslim religion.

It is a crime against humanity that the countries concerned, instead of eliminating it through the application of national and international law, put all their energy to hide and deceive the international community.

There is a need for disaggregated data in the countries concerned in order to quantify the extent of this specific scourge, which is traditional slavery.

Today, in the 21st century, the lack of precise and globally disaggregated data, which would give a better view of how minorities are affected by humanitarian crises, is unacceptable.

More studies and more data are needed to uncover the effects of humanitarian crises and disasters on minority populations.

We call on the international community to continue to support the humanitarian response capacities of national NGOs through training, technical assistance and financial commitments, with a view to strengthening national Intervention for minorities and marginalized ethnic groups.

Thank you

Abidine Merzough

IRA-Mauritania

Coordinator for Europe. Genève 24/11/2016