

Mr. President

Ladies and gentlemen

Speaking about durable solutions to post-crisis Minorities Rights should be on top of our agenda, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. In the wake of years that witnessed radical changes and turmoil left behind several humanitarian crises, almost often compounded in case of minorities. Most of these crises are based on ethnic, religious, sectarian, and language discrimination. For example, Isis practices in Syria and Iraq are brutal and cruel, however much heavier on the religious minority groups in the two countries.

Intensity and implications of crisis in different countries varies according to historic, social, political and cultural aspects. During Egypt's January 25th revolution, for instance, Egyptians have set a prime example in finding means of co-existence and acceptance of the other in a context of patriotism that astonished the whole world. But that soon changed, ethnic squabbling began to infiltrate into the Egyptian fabric - driven by vested interests inside and supported by many parties outside who have much concern that the revolutionary state spread into their countries, thus threatening their underpinnings, or because they benefit from the case of stalemate in Egypt.

After this revolutionary state and in spite of multiple failures, still there are some triumphs which we could depend on to reach durable solutions for minority problems. We should even seek to transform these solutions into laws and practice on the ground. In terms of the constitution, according to article 53: "All citizens are equal before the law and in regard to their public rights and duties, without distinction as to religion, creed, gender, origin, race, color, language, disability, social position, political or geographical affiliation, and/or any other reasons. Discrimination and incitement of hatred is a crime punishable by law. The country shall take all necessary actions to eradicate all forms of discrimination. The law shall regulate the establishing of an ad hoc committee for that purpose. On our part, we are fully prepared and committed to give any help in terms of legal or research aspects in order to bring this law into light, in addition to establishing this commission in a way that befitting Egypt's status and civilization in the world.

On other part, we have a deep conviction that the problems of minorities in Egypt are mainly out of cultural problems, which resulted in ignorance among all parties. Such ignorance was turned into hostile actions due to a number of factors, mainly school curricula in general and religious ones in particular. For example, school curricula barely mention the history of Copts and Nubians. While religious curricula contain a big deal of incitement to violence against the others, which could only add fuel to fire and makes the situation uncontrollable, as well as providing a legalized cover for violence. Solving this problem has been explicitly reflected by the Egyptian government's move to make a change in the religious discourse. However, we call for a wider

change that goes beyond changing the religious discourse alone to encompass the whole culture in order to create a favorable climate for peaceful co-existence to all Egyptians.

We can't deny that the country's modus operandi of solving the Copts' problems is restricted to security solutions and informal "reconciliation councils" only exacerbated tensions and violence on the ground. Discriminative practices have become regular to offenders as they know there are no appropriate deterrents. However, we see the primary viable solution to minority problems in Egypt should be socio-political, not only security one.

Therefore, I make the following recommendations;

Recommendations No 26,27,28,31

Concerted work is required from the international community so we are able to have a specified and clear definition of "Minorities" that's binding to all party states in international covenants and treaties in this concern.

Ladies and gentlemen, the past has gone, and the present starts now. I hope our efforts are concerted today for a future that guarantees peace for all.

Thanks.