



Minority Rights Group International

Agenda item 4: 'Protecting minority rights during humanitarian crises'

Mr. President, distinguished delegates:

Minority civilian populations face many challenges in humanitarian crises, particularly with regard to access to basic services. In Somalia, displaced minority women continue to experience sexual violence at the hands of members of the dominant clans, who act as gatekeepers to emergency IDP assistance.

Equal access is only ensured through independent monitoring.

After the peace process ended in Turkey in July 2015, armed clashes spread across southeastern Turkey. The government declared blanket curfews in many places; some have lasted for months.

Adequate measures have not been taken to ensure that civilians – many of whom belong to the Kurdish community – can meet their basic needs, including access to food and health services. There are credible accounts of civilians being shot while trying to reach hospitals. According to figures compiled between August 2015 and August 2016, at least 321 civilians were killed in the zones where curfews were declared and clashes taking place. 73 died as a result of not having access to emergency health care.

More than 300,000 children in the region have not had regular access to education. According to one survey conducted among displaced, 41 per cent of the children have not been able to attend school.

The curfews have also meant that independent monitoring groups have not been able to gain access to affected areas. Elsewhere, in West Papua,

independent monitoring also remains severely constrained, despite a publicised opening to journalists in May 2015.

Regarding the draft recommendations, MRG would thus suggest the following in para. 23:

Point (e) – add ‘Do not prevent access by independent monitoring groups including media in order to ensure transparency.’

Point (m) - after ‘access to safety’ insert ‘and basic services’ before ‘to all non-combatants, including those with a minority background.’

(written version: Point (p) – insert a new point, ‘Prosecute and/or institute disciplinary proceedings against government or humanitarian agency staff who are found to be discriminatory in their delivery of emergency assistance.’)

Thank you.