

Mr. \ Madam Chairperson, ladies and gentleman, my name is Saba al-Nadawi; I speak as minority rights activist from Iraq,

Since October 2016 the Iraqi government has started a liberation operation to defend of human values of Iraqi citizens, including minorities, against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and its ideology. However, during that liberation additional concerns have appeared regarding the protection of minorities. Specifically where they are effectively being used as human shields. These people are reportedly being moved to strategic ISIL locations, including in Tal-Afar. In addition, there are increasing cases of minorities recently killed while returning to their liberated areas where landmines have been hidden in their houses by ISIL.

It is necessary to capture the unity of all Iraqis post conflict, this requires the Iraqi government and international agencies take immediate action in order address critical issues. This includes restoring the rule of law and formal justice mechanisms to liberated areas as quickly at the earliest possible opportunity, putting in place policies to deter revenge attacks by ensuring justice for the victims, protection of the innocent, and accountability of the guilty.

Creating understanding and acceptance of diversity, particularly amongst the young people and the next generation is a critical priority in post-conflict Iraq. I therefore would like to stress the importance of ensuring education curriculums are revised to include citizenship and peaceful coexistence, and access to education for young people in newly liberated areas is made available at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr Chairperson,

The participation and voices of minorities in Iraq and that minorities affected by the conflict are consulted and have accessibility to appropriate complaint mechanism, that address issues of discrimination and access to humanitarian assistance, including issues of employment. I therefore support adoption of recommendations 26, articles a)b and g) and recommendation 27.

Let's stand here in solidarity with all Minorities of Iraq who have suffered and work to facilitate the return of minorities to their home towns and villages that need to be cleared of unexploded remnants of war and rehabilitated. I therefore support adoption of recommendation 26 articles c and f , ensuring the safe return of minorities to their initial location in a safe manner and the means are in place for restitution of property.

It is also of paramount importance that the Iraqi government and international agencies. Move rapidly beyond the emergency phase and ensure minorities that post-conflict measures, are taken to promote cohesion and are designed and implemented with the full cooperation of minority communities, particularly those displaced by the conflict. I therefore support the adoption of recommendation 32, articles a,c,d,e and f.

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I urge the government of Iraq and the international community to work closely regarding protection of minorities used as human shields during the liberation for ensuring maximum protection for minorities under the captivity of ISIL and for clearing the liberated areas from landmine.

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