



**Speech of Patriotic  
(PADMAZ) in the 11<sup>th</sup> UN Forum on Minorities, on 29-30 November 2018**

**Arab Democratic Movement in Ahwaz**

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Madam chairperson,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am giving my speech today on behalf of Patriotic Arab Democratic Movement in Ahwaz (PADMAZ) which has been struggling for the sake of Ahwazi Arabs since it was established in 2002. Through its activities, PADMAZ aims to oppose the Iranian arbitrary and racist policies against Ahwazi Arab people by peaceful means. Moreover, we work to gain Ahwazi right of self-determination.

Ahwazi Arabs are among the most brutally oppressed peoples in the Middle East, and one of the biggest stateless nations on the world.

They have been suffering from the Iranian ethnic cleansing policies, since their country was occupied forcefully by Iran in 20<sup>th</sup> April 1925.

Since then successive Iranian regimes have implemented racial policies against our people. As a result of these policies every aspects of Ahwazi life was affected

These policies have had a destructive impact on every single aspects of Ahwazi life such as: Cultural, Political, Agricultural, and most importantly they target the Identity of our nation.

The Iranian have worked continuously to make a major demographic changes in Ahwaz a fact that has been mentioned in the reports of Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Issues in Iran and in the Annual Report of United Nation High Commissioner. The policy of Persianization of an Arab territory was followed by Reza Shah and continued by the current Islamic Republic Regime.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES:**

In terms of human rights issues it has become obvious to any follower of Iran news that there is no days in Ahwaz without a major human rights violation for instant the Iranian regime have arrested hundreds of Ahwazi Arabs during September and October 2018 a situation of whom still unknown to their families. Un-approved news of execution of 22 detainees.

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The Workers of Steel Company, Sugarcane Companies, Teachers, have been demonstrating for several month claiming their unpaid salary which they haven't received for more than 5 months. Sadly the Iranian regime instead of solving the problem, its authorities detained the protestors.

Ahwazi have experienced a tragic and disastrous year. Three mass movement have occurred in Ahwazi since the beginning of 2018 including the Uprising of Solidarity with Jelizi residents protest against the land confiscation, the uprising of Dignity, Intifadat al-Karama, against the ignorance of Ahwazi Arab by the Iranian regime, The Uprising of thirsty which was held in solidarity with Abbadan and Almohammara residents who don't have clean drinking water. The Iranian authorities have treated the demonstrators with brutality more than 1000 were detained in March 2018, around 400 in June, more than 600 in September and October. The

### **Environmental Issues :**

In term of environmental issues I remind you of PADMAZ's report of on 2016 which was presented to the UN 9<sup>th</sup> Forum on Minorities Issues. In that report we briefly explained the critical and sophisticated environmental crisis in Ahwaz.

The Iranian regime violates the rights of the Ahwazi people with its policy of dam- and tunnel-building to divert the region's rivers. The building of over 100 of these structures has resulted in the drying-up of the rivers and marshland. This is an outright violation of international laws with respect to water rights and legislation.

Iranian policy has led to the drying-up of the Ahwazi Marshland. The HOR AL-ADIM territory has decreased from 3,500 square kilometres in the 1970's to less than 200 in 2016.

The people of Ahwaz suffer 200 days of dust-storms per year caused by the drying of the rivers and marshland. The level of dangerous substances in the air is five times the normal level. Thousands of farmers have left their villages because of the drying-up of the rivers and wetlands.

### **Identity of Ahwazi:**

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## **Arab Democratic Movement in Ahwaz**

The Iranian policies of building one nation out of several nations including Ahwazi Arabs, Baluch, Turk, and Kurd and other ethnic minorities who have been living for thousand on their father lands, have resulted into destroying the indigenous people's identities. In terms of our area of concern, Ahwaz, the Ahwazi are not allowed to study in their own language, they do not have a

Lady President,

This critical situation afflicting our people brings us here today to ask the International Community to help put an end to Ahwaz's environmental crisis before it kills thousands more people and spreads to neighbouring countries.

We ask the United Nations to:

- Force Iran to stop its changing demography policies.
- Put a halt to Iran's dam- and tunnel-building projects until they can be monitored by the International Community.
- Give the Ahwazi the right to practice freely their cultural, political, and social life
- Put pressure on Iran to Unconditionally release all detainees
- Support the Ahwazi to enjoy the Right of Self- Determination which is guaranteed by the United Nation Declaration

Madam Chairperson,

What I have presented here today is just a small fraction of what amounts to a systematic policy to eradicate the Ahwazi nation. This requires urgent action from the International Community. We strongly suggest the appointment of an investigative- and monitoring committee by the United Nations.

**Thank you for giving me the opportunity to raise part of Ahwazi people issues**

**Abdulrahman Heidari (PADMAZ Representative)**

