

Zarina Sautieva

OHCHR Minority Fellow

Statement

Item 3. Public policy objectives for education in, and the teaching of, minority languages

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ди дика хийла массара. I welcome everyone in my mother tongue.

How many of us in this room have even heard of the Ingush speaking minority?

My name is Zarina Sautieva and I represent the Ingush ethnic, linguistic and religious minority of Russia.

The key principles for the regulation of ethnic minorities' languages are stipulated in the Law on the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation. Moreover, Article 29 of the Russian Constitution explicitly prohibits any kind of propaganda of social, racial, national, religious or linguistic supremacy.

However, in recent years the Russian Government undertook some measures which resulted in significant infringement in linguistic rights of its people. For instance, the Law of 2018 which amended the Law on Education added the principle of voluntariness in regard to learning of official languages of the republics at schools, and hence further affected weak position of native languages in comparison to Russian and may lead to the extinction of many minority languages.

My language, Ingush, was marked by the UNESCO as vulnerable 10 years ago and continues to be endangered given inability to compete with Russian, and also because no funds are allocated for its popularization. There is not even one newspaper in my mother tongue, and Ingush authors have to search for sponsors to publish their books. It is a shame that children residing in Prigorodny district who expressed their will to learn their mother-tongue are lacking even basic manuals.

From all mentioned above, I would like to give the following recommendations to the Russian Federation:

Firstly, to annul amendments introduced in the Law on Education in part concerning the learning of state languages of the republics only as non-obligatory part of curriculum;

Secondly, to adopt a framework on preservation of native languages based on the needs of all ethnic minorities residing in Russia, and make the recently created Fund for the same an effective mechanism for support of languages of all the Peoples of Russia;

Thirdly, to implement in full the Law on Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples of 1991.

Finally, I would like to highlight that it is the diversity of the People residing in Russia that makes our country powerful. For this reason, I call upon the Russian Government to preserve this diversity, and not to deprive us of our right to speak and learn our language.

I would also like to express my gratitude to OHCHR for providing us with an opportunity to participate at the Minority Fellowship Programme and be present here today. Thank you!