

Oral Statement of the Zagros Center for Human Rights on the situation of Kurds in Iran

11th Forum on Minority Issues

November 30, 2018

Madame Chair,

The theme of the Forum is stateless minorities. However, for the Kurds of Iran who have Iranian citizenship, this is not enough to protect them from severe repression. More than 12 million Kurds of Iran have long suffered from deeply entrenched discrimination. Dozens of Kurdish militants were executed this year, and hundreds of civilians working in the border region of Iranian Kurdistan were killed or injured by the Iranian Border Security Forces. No Iranian has yet to be held responsible for these daily violations. The Kurdish regions have been economically neglected, which has led to persistent poverty.

The use of the Kurdish language in education is still prohibited. Human rights defenders, civil activists, and Kurdish journalists are at risk of arrest and judicial prosecution.

Some become prisoners of opinion: people imprisoned for having peacefully expressed their convictions.

Others are subjected to torture, unfair trials before revolutionary tribunals, and the death penalty. Religious minorities that are primarily or partially Kurdish are targeted by measures conceived to stigmatize or isolate them.

The environment and nature of the regions are always degraded. Forests are burned, rivers are dried up as a consequence of them being flowed into underground tunnels to certain regions of central Iran.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our organization, the Zagros Center for Human Rights, calls upon the Iranian authorities to take specific measures to end discrimination and related human rights violations in accordance with their obligations under international law.

More generally, our organization calls upon Iranian authorities to:

- Enact effective measures so that Kurds and other members of minority communities in Iran can enjoy their human rights;
- Abolish all laws that discriminate against minorities;
- Promote and protect the rights of human rights defenders who are members of minorities in the country.

Thank you.