

UN Forum on Minority Issues - 13th session

Causes, scale and impact of hate speech targeting minorities on social media

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My name is Kerem Aptourachim Oglou, and I am representing the Turkish Minority of Western Thrace in Greece.

Unfortunately hate speech tendencies in Greece show substantial increase in recent years. Western Thrace Turkish Minority is targeted very often by hate speech of extremist environments. Slogans like “Turks out of Greece” or “The best Turk is death Turk” that can be observed in every corner of Western Thrace, or recently, can be heard by famous politicians as well, who served as minister in former governments, constitutes incitement to hostility, discrimination or violence, if we locate it on Hate Speech Pyramid, and must be restricted according to article 20 ICCPR.

In addition, nationalistic discourse of local Greek media and activities of an online media platform which shares social media profiles of minority right activists or individual minority members who bound themselves with Turkish history, culture or identity, by making them an open target for extremist groups, are a clear violation of article 19 of ICCPR that provides protection for the rights or reputations of others, public order, public health and morals. Furthermore recent statement examples by national and local nationalistic environments, but also by politicians, including suggestions for necessary balance of demographic structure of Western Thrace, and in some extreme cases deprivation of citizenship rights of those minority members who declare themselves as Turks and have good relations with their Kin-State must create serious concerns for all human rights defenders.

In this respect, it is worth to consider minority policy of Greece which relies on denial of self-identification right of national minorities, marginalization, and isolation of Turkish minority, that open the way to expansion of aforementioned nationalistic discourse and hate speech.

Therefore, we call upon the Greek state, to recognize Turkish national identity of Western Thrace Turkish minority by giving up marginalizing them and take necessary measures for protection of its minorities and other disadvantaged groups from such hate speeches and their natural consequences that are likely to turn hate crimes.