

Fourteenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues

Item 3. Legal and institutional framework: the human rights of minorities and conflict prevention

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Overall, non-Persian ethnic groups in Iran make up more than 50 percent of the population, yet they are overwhelmingly marginalized. Ethnic minorities, including Ahwazi Arabs, Azerbaijani, Baluchis, Kurds, Turks, and Turkmen face entrenched discrimination.

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, any peaceful attempts by ethnic minorities is dealt with harsh crackdowns by regime security forces. Authorities typically claim they are fighting “terrorism” and “extremism” when justifying executions, arbitrary detentions, and the use of live ammunition against protesting minorities. Even the most benign of dissident activities — like running a social media page critical of the regime — can carry the death penalty.

The Kurds in Iran which constitutes about 15% of Iran’s population, has resisted the Iranian government’s efforts, both before and after the revolution of 1979, to assimilate them into the mainstream of national life. and has sought a sort of regional autonomy in the Kurdish region of Iranian Kurdistan.

The institutionalised and structural discriminations against the ethnic and religious minorities, the policies of demographic displacement, transferring the mineral and water resources from ethnic areas like Kurdistan, Lorestan and Khuzestan, to Persian populated areas, has exacerbated the condition of these marginalized ethnic minorities in Iran.

Kurds, Azeris, Turkmen, and Baluchis, as well as the Arabs, continue to occasionally demonstrate over injustices with incidents of ethnic unrest. Over the years, ethnic minorities have held protests demanding greater rights. Incidents of ethnic unrest in the outlying provinces are not without precedent.

To conclude, the lack of prospective to solve the ethnic grievances in Iran, can pushes the Iranian society towards more protests and instabilities.

Thank you!