

Thank you Chair,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Farkhat Ibragimov. I am a former OHCHR Minority fellow. I am current Senior Fellow at the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia. I belong to the Uyghur ethnic minority in Kyrgyzstan. I am going to speak about **Focusing on the rights of minorities and effective prevention of conflicts.**

8 out of 10 of the world's poorest countries are suffering, or have recently suffered, from large scale violent conflict. Wars in developing countries have heavy human, economic, and social costs and are a major cause of poverty and underdevelopment.

Minorities around the world are also often the victims of armed conflicts and internal strife. The situation of refugees and internally displaced persons from minority backgrounds, in particular women and children, is of special concern. Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities are also often victims of multiple discrimination and they may lack access to, among other things, adequate housing, land and property, and even a nationality.

However, even when there are clear evidences of ethnic roots of the conflict, certain governments tend to argue that this is not an interethnic conflict, but a “Misconduct”, “Huliganism” etc. For instance, in Kyrgyzstan the most recent interethnic incident took place when a perpetrator threw a calculator at a female cashier of the mall. He was unhappy she was speaking Russian. The district court of Bishkek terminated the criminal probe against him.

Another example is recent unrest in Kazakhstan on 27 October 2021, when the village Penzhim, near Kazakhstan's southeastern border with China became the scene of an ugly brawl between local Kazakhs and Uyghurs. According to reports a massive fight between teenagers in a local school degenerated into a riot in the ethnically mixed village. The Interior Ministry and local media were initially up front about the clashes, describing them as interethnic violence. However, the authorities soon changed their tone and denied that ethnic tensions had anything to do with the violence.

I would therefore recommend the following:

- 1) Take seriously every case of intolerance against ethnic and religious minorities, since if not addressed properly, this would lead to impunity of perpetrators and in reoccurrence of even more large scale

- 2) Ensure inevitability of punishment for those involved in the interethnic conflicts
- 3) Remove vicious practice of terminations of criminal cases due to in the event of “reconciliation between the parties”

Thank you!