

14th UN Forum on Minority Issues
Item 4: Focusing on the rights of minorities
and effective early prevention of conflicts



Organisation: Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)
Speaker: Claire Denman

Thank you, Chair.

CSW welcomes the opportunity to participate in this forum and thanks the panellists for their insights and contributions.

During this Forum, we have frequently noted the importance of early warning systems and the need to monitor risk factors, both of which are essential tools in conflict prevention. Adopting proactive measures rather than reactive ones remains key to sustaining peace.

While strengthening inter-agency frameworks, the creation of mandates such as the Special Advisor on Genocide Prevention and maximising initiatives such as Pathways for Peace, are important, greater emphasis must be made on protecting minority rights in conflict prevention.

We have already established that discriminatory legislation, exclusionary practices and incitement to hate negatively impact minority groups and often serve as a precondition to targeted violence against minorities in conflict situations. As such, robustly addressing discrimination against minorities is essential to conflict prevention.

The international community has long failed to act on such warning signs. The Human Rights Council has held three Special Sessions already this year, on Myanmar, Afghanistan and Sudan. As the human rights situation in each country deteriorated, documented violations and the warning cries of civil society organisations, grassroots defenders, UN experts and academics were ignored until too late.

CSW is particularly concerned by the impact such failings have had on the rights of religious and ethnic minorities in all three countries. Furthermore, we are troubled by the inaction of the UN Member States in other situations of grave insecurity, including in Nigeria.

We urge the participants of this Forum and the international community to act - not only when a conflict has begun to escalate, but when the risk factors are initially identified. Early warning mechanisms must prioritise measures for addressing the root causes early on, including reports of discrimination and violent actions against religious and ethnic minorities.

Thank you.