

Geneva Institute for Coexistence
Non-governmental Organization
Minority Forum 2021
United Nations—Geneva

Minority Forum 2021

Monsieur de Varennes,

I could very well recount the suffering suffered by Kurds in the Near East and those in the Diaspora to underline the fact that they demand protection at the Minority Forum.

However, I would rather draw your attention to women, from minority backgrounds, and I will focus more specifically on Kurdish women.

Women suffer from war with the consequences that you all know. But for them, war can take an additional form of domination.

Kurdish women suffer twofold!

First, because they are part of a minority as a whole, without state rights that protect them and also suffer the instrumentalization and abandonment of their own minority.

In 2019, the Turkish army was able to invade Serê Kanîyê because the US suddenly withdrew. This withdrawal will have forced more than 400,000 people to quickly leave the country, making them displaced, becoming a new minority.

Second, Kurdish women suffer simply for being a woman.

Barin Kobanê, whose real name is Amina Omar, was killed in 2018. The Guardian, the BBC and Women's Kurdistan have written about this woman, but there are many others like her.

Women, who we see on the internet, naked on the ground! Both breasts cut off. Humiliating photos, where genital mutilation is recognized as being used as a weapon of war by the Turkish military. Intrinsic symbol of triple domination: military, ethnic and masculine.

In Afrin, the UN Commission of Inquiry determined that women were raped to shame them and discourage them from taking part in political debate, but also that these women were questioned about their ethnicity and their beliefs!

Do political differences justify such actions?

It is therefore in the name of women and Kurdish women that I ask this Forum to take concrete actions against these horrors and, that in the name of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad, Yezidi survivor of Kurdish origin who knows what women suffer during the war.

Let me finish by quoting Mukwege who said that "To close your eyes to tragedies is to be complicit" and that with technology, no one can say that they did not know.