

My name is Masoud Aqil, a human rights defender (from Qamishlo?)

I would like to draw the Forum's attention to the critical situation of the Kurdish ethnic minority.

Following the brutal murder of Jîna Amini, massive protests have emerged in Kurdistan, Iran, and all around the world to demand justice, equality and women's rights.

The Iranian government however, has responded to these peaceful protests with extreme violence and the most intense repression, especially in Kurdish cities.

Since the beginning of the protests, the Iranian military forces have killed 112 Kurdish citizens, of whom 14 children and 7 women. Thousands have been injured and more than 5000 citizens arrested.

These protests are of course not the first of their kind, given the relentless harassment of religious and national minorities in Iran over the past 43 years.

As the crackdown continues in Kurdistan, minority human rights organizations are concerned about a new ethnic cleansing massacre. The cities of Mahabad, Piranshahr and Bukan are heavily militarized and under siege.

Moreover, over the last week, the Iranian government has launched a series of attacks on the Iraqi Kurdistan region. Iran's targeting of several refugee camps with suicide drones has resulted in the death of over 20 Kurdish citizens.

In tandem, the Turkish government launched a further series of air strikes on the Kurdish regions of North and East Syria (Rojava). Just under 15 civilians were killed, again demonstrating how it's continual policy of targeting refugee camps and endangered the lives of civilians.

These types of attacks not only destabilise the region, but prompt concern over the rise of ISIS once more. Turkey's deliberate strikes of prisons and camps holding thousands of ISIS members, their families and supporters has only served to strengthen their position.

We urge the United Nations and the international community to prevent both Turkey and Iran from massacring Kurdish civilians. Intervene to prevent another humanitarian catastrophe in the Middle East, protecting the Kurds and their right to live in freedom!