

Honourable Chair
Distinguished Delegates

I would like to speak about the lack of realisation of the minority rights of the Kurdish people.

The history of the Kurds is marked by genocide, violence and oppression - to this day.
Every generation of Kurds has experienced political violence.
Every Kurdish child knows what it means to be insulted, beaten, kidnapped or even killed just because of their Kurdish identity.

Kurdish civilians are experiencing state terror by Iran as we speak.
They are suffering massive military violence by Turkey on the borders of Syria and Iraq. And Iraq is consenting to these military operations on its territory, undermining its responsibility to protect its own Kurdish population.

These are ongoing crimes against the defenceless Kurdish people to which the international community seems to have become used.

Yet, we all benefit from the achievements of the Kurds in the Middle East.
It is the Kurds who fought the Terrorist Islamic State (ISIS), it is the Kurds who are peacefully demonstrating for basic human rights on the frontline in Iran.
The Kurds represent hope for coexistence and democracy in the Middle East.

Defenders of human rights cannot work effectively in states where minority rights do not play a role. This is especially true for states where Kurds live.
That is why it is important to give Kurds their own voice where decisions are made about their lives. The largest nation without its own state needs at least its own voice.
Therefore, Kurds must be integrated more seriously into international organisations with observer status.

For a sustainable implementation of minority rights, it is essential that the Kurds are given a permanent role in monitoring mechanisms.

It is time that the international community starts to talk with the Kurds themselves instead of always just about them.

Thank you very much.