

Dear authorities

Dear those present

Geneva finds us, once again, thinking about the demands and aspirations of the victims of conflict. We used to think of the direct victims, unfortunately today we do too. The difference is that today we talk about experience, those experiences that the past gave us. Thanks to them, we can anticipate that the undeniable relationship between racialisation, impoverishment, gender and vulnerabilisation, the so-called "minorities" need the intervention of states and, therefore, also of the international system. Racialised people always bear the brunt of the fighting, and us women and diversities often become an extension of the battlefields.

If we stop to think about it, and add up all these populations that we call minority populations here, we can no longer think of them as "minorities". The term "minority" is not universal: it is a concept that has a geo-political origin, where some nations defined themselves as the standard and labelled the rest as the Other. This does not necessarily apply to the perception and self-perception of the groups that the term "minority" is intended to represent. In most countries of the world, what are stereotypically thought of as "minorities" are in fact popular majorities. That is why it is urgent to continue working for recognition and to highlight the processes of social and institutional invisibilisation that do not allow for the recognition of national, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic differences and belonging. Differences which, according to the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, must be protected by the state, and these states must take measures to preserve their history and traditions, not only to allow the use of their language in all social spheres, but to promote and guarantee it, in short, all these things mean that we states have a lot of work to do to preserve the identity of each member.

These identities present in each of our countries make it possible for us to abandon the old paradigm of multiculturalism and to start working on the paradigm of interculturalism: firstly, because ethnicity, nation, race and gender are categories that intersect in each and every one of us, and secondly, because each of the identities we present also undergo changes, interpenetrations and updates. This is what makes our societies increasingly rich and diverse. It is the task of states, civil organisations, academia and activism to work so that this wealth is seen as a power and not as an obstacle. The 21st century must be intercultural: the two years we are going through teach us that, this

pandemic has left us some lessons and if the pandemic is not enough, it must be enough to look at us in this room, in this hybrid meeting. We are in these conditions and this silent enemy called COVID-19 has plunged us into what Gramsci would call "darkness": when the old world has not yet died and the new one has not yet been born, it is in this chiaroscuro that monsters can awaken. The only thing that can save us from these monsters is dialogue, respect for freedoms, solidarity, coordination, agreement and, therefore, states that defend every one of our rights. It is with states present and with strong international systems that we can defend the freedom of every one of our people.

Finally, I propose to think of the approach to these issues from a rights perspective, as proposed by this organisation, so that they can exist not only so that new rights can exist, but also and above all so that states can guarantee the rights that already exist.

I very much look forward to two fruitful days of work ahead of us, and thank you very much for your attention and attendance.