

Thank you, Mrs. President

Ladies and gentlemen

Instead of discussing the danger of erasing Ahwazi identity, which is sought by dangerous and systematic policies that frequently result in protests and conflicts between Ahwazis and the Iranian regime, I am talking about the danger of denying Ahwazis the right to learn in their mother tongue as a fundamental and legitimate right. 2019 saw widespread demonstrations, confrontations, and arrests as a result of an Iranian TV show in Ahwaz ignoring the presence of the indigenous population. Only by uncovering the fundamental causes of these conflicts and finding a radical and just solution, sustainable peace can be achieved. Since the environment is a crucial and delicate issue and is regarded as one of the most fundamental human rights, it is impossible to protect people without protecting the environment Ahwazi people live in or around.

According to official Iranian statements, more than thirty percent of Iran's fresh water was found in Ahwazi region. Ahwaz has fertile agricultural lands, but the Iranian aggressive and systematic racist policies towards Ahwazi land and people have turned this environment and its agricultural fields into barren land unfit for cultivation, which forced thousands of Ahwazi farmers to leave their land.

The policy of demographic change that the Iranian authorities have tried to achieve in recent decades by destroying Ahwazi environment, theft of river water, and diverting streams and rivers by building more than 72 dams has not only displaced families but also caused a great deal of suffering, including:

Widespread drought in Ahwazi rivers and marshes, increased poverty in Ahwazi cities, and greater illiteracy after thousands of Ahwazi families migrated from the countryside to the city; these families were unable to support their children's continued education and instead encouraged them to work;

Growing crimes caused by the extreme poverty that Ahwazi families experience as a result of the Iranian government taking over their agricultural lands and evicting them under the guise of establishing economic projects that are in fact political projects to loot the lands, as reported by a number of Iranian politicians and parliamentarians. By implementing these policies, the authorities want to change the Arab demographics in Ahwaz after building tens of thousands of housing units and handing them over to immigrants from other Iranian provinces, which has caused and will continue to cause conflict between minorities in the future; and

Destroying Ahwaz residents' economic foundations after preventing him from cultivating under the guise of water scarcity while the authorities move Ahwazi water to support agriculture in other Iranian provinces, has made Ahwaz, which was ranked first in wheat and date crops, to drop to third place in Iran.

According to international laws, the hostile and racist practises of the Iranian government against Ahwazi minority are among the most serious kinds of violations and crimes. We therefore call on the world community as well as those involved in humanitarian issues and human protection to put an end to such violations that amount to crimes against humanity.

In conclusion, we appeal to the United Nations to protect Ahwazis and urge the Iranian regime not to transfer water to protect Ahwazi environment and to provide drinking water to Ahwazis as a positive initiative to improve the protection of minority rights in Iran and to prevent future conflicts.

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