

Dear Mrs. President,  
I'm Mustafa Bitari,  
UN OHCHR minority former fellow

I am a third-generation Palestinian refugee forcibly displaced from Yarmouk camp, currently residing in the Netherlands.

I would like to draw your attention to the suffering that minorities are currently experiencing in Europe due to the intensifying hate speech and acts, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. Many politicians tend to incite hatred toward these minorities, especially through social media, to cover up their failure to deal with the pandemic and their historical failure to integrate these minorities in society, leaving them hostage to political strife and using their issues and differences to achieve electoral gains.

Accordingly, I would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Urging these politicians to think more consciously about their communities by using social media responsibly, to maintain the balance of society, especially in times of crisis.
2. Drafting new laws and programs to combat hate speech and discrimination in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, because minorities are currently facing discrimination and are being accused of fueling the pandemic crisis, in addition to the high level of hatred acts in health, legal, service and even social institutions towards these minorities, putting at risk the lives and freedom of many of them. You are free to look at the statistical data of the devastating repercussions of these acts in Europe over the last year, especially the last quarter; the Netherlands is one of the glaring examples that must explain these figures, describe its causes, and seek to address those causes.
3. Drafting urgent and clear laws and rules for how these governments and their institutions should deal with refugees in refugee camps during the pandemic period. This category suffers from shameful neglect, escalating hate speech, isolation, physical and psychological violence, and violation of all human norms and laws. You are free to refer to the documented reports of physical and psychological violence, especially against women and children in refugee camps across Europe, including, but not limited to, Greece, Spain, Italy, Croatia, and Bulgaria.