

Speaker: Thank you Chair. Southeast Asia has become the hotbed of atrocities against minorities. The largest democracy, India, systematically negates the rights of the minorities. In many right wing ruled provinces, the state decides the menu of minorities as there is a ban on the consumption of beef. The Citizenship Government Act has targeted exclusively on the Muslims and Tamils. The Anti-Conversion Laws target the Muslims and Christian in the name of religious conversions. Attacks on religious places of minorities are on the rise. In the state of [inaudible] Muslim girls are banned from wearing hijab, leading to the drop out of many Muslim girls. In Pakistan, minorities constituted more than 15%, till a few decades ago. Now, it is less than 4%. Relentless attacks of Hindu churches and temples continue. The Blasphemy Laws target the minorities legally. In Bangladesh, when the country became independent, minorities constituted 18% of the population. In 50 years it has declined to 11% and there are several reports of forcible conversions. In 2020, 40.703 Hindus were affected in violent attacks on temples and property. Rape, forced conversions are on the rise. In Afghanistan, the population of the Hindus and Sikhs has reduced from 200 thousand people in 1992 to a mere 395 families. Even in the right to cremate the dead is snatched by the Taliban and minorities are forced to pay the [inaudible] tax. Sri Lanka denies the Tamils all their basic rights, including their right of peaceful assembly. For more than 2000 days, the Tamils, protesting to know the whereabouts of the disappeared, face surveillance, intimidation and harassment by the state apparatus. Occupation of the Tamil land by the military continues. For every 3 Tamils there is a Sri Lankan soldier in the Tamil heartland. The governments in southeast Asian countries have remained mute spectators and tacitly support the attackers of minorities. The UN must ensure that all southeast Asian...