

Item 2: Review:**Normative frameworks and the mainstreaming of the Declaration at the UN**

Address by Awat Hussam Al Deen at the Forum on the Protection of Minorities and Peaceful Global Coexistence.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased to be participating in this forum. I thank the Alliance for Minority Rights and the forum organisers for inviting me to participate in this important international conference addressing the issues of peaceful coexistence between religious and ethnic groups and the protection of minority rights.

Throughout the course of history humankind has endured bloody conflicts on the basis of religion, ethnicity, power, and material greed. The time has come for us to unify our efforts as human beings and eradicate the impacts of previous human tragedies. The significant dangers facing the world require all of us to take serious action to ensure the spiritual and ethical advancement of humanity, by disseminating love and peace amongst human beings. We must all pursue every avenue to facilitate human reconciliation, by encouraging humanity to abandon malevolent choices and move towards benevolent and peaceful choices. Thus, humanity would reconcile with nature by protecting the environment and other living creatures that share life on this planet with us, and by maintaining a balance between the progress of life and science.

The Zoroastrian religion is founded on the spreading of love and peace by practising the three moral principles of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds in relation to yourself as a human being, in dealings with others, and in relation to nature. These principles are practised for the sake of human happiness, to enable humans to continue restoring the planet, and to get closer to knowing the Creator. This is the wisdom of the Creator expressed in his creation of the universe, as confirmed by all human religions and belief systems.

Since 2015, we Zoroastrian in the Kurdistan Region have practised our religious rituals and ceremonies in total freedom and under the protection of the Law on the Freedom of Religion and Belief, known as, Law No.5 of 2015. The Zoroastrians are amongst eight religions recognised by this law. We work together within the Peaceful Coexistence Process overseen by the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. We participate in spreading a culture of love, forgiveness, and peace. The Peaceful Coexistence Process in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region is unique in the region, as we participate in all of each other's religious occasions.

Zarathushtra stated in one of his Divine Songs on acting to strengthen the love of good and peace in humans:

Oh Mazda,
I adore you,
Oh Mazda, increase my wisdom, so that I can:
Love everyone,
Care for the earth,
Create joy for all and for everything in existence, and
To create peace everywhere on earth.

In his teachings Zarathushtra called the Creator Mazda Ahura, the wise Creator of the world, all that is in existence, the entire universe. His intelligence is present in every atom of this cosmos, in accordance with the universal law known as the Asha. Namely, the material reality that embraces all of existence, including planet Earth, which is the mother of creation, as we are born and continue life on it. We are formed of four elements, which are the same elements that constitute Mother Earth, which are fire, water, air, and earth. We must preserve and protect these elements for life to continue on the planet and to ensure human happiness. Therefore, we firstly have to reconcile as humans, then we have to reconcile with nature by preserving other creations including animals, trees, and all the rest of creation. Thus, gain the knowledge to reveal the secrets of the universe and gain greater knowledge of the Creator.

I hope that this forum will succeed in serving peace and the advancement of humanity's ability to coexist in peace, in order to protect and advance human civilization.

With my appreciation and respect.