

Dear Mr President, ladies, and gentlemen:

I am a representative from the Human Rights Organization in Syria - MAF. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to tell you about the suffering of my people, the Kurds in Rojava, officially known as Syria, where more than 30,000 martyrs have died fighting the terrorist organisation, the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

Mr President, it is a lamentable irony that we gather here, at the fifteenth session of the Minority Forum, which coincides with the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Minorities, while Turkish fighter planes enter Syrian and Iraqi airspace, ignoring international law, to bomb Kurdish civilians, and destroy the infrastructure in their areas. Turkey does so while invoking United Nations law, specifically Article 51, which permits United Nation member states to defend themselves if attacked by an armed force. Turkey does so despite the self-same article stipulating that the Council must take measures to maintain international peace and security. The question that must be put before any Security Council or this esteemed forum in relation to the actions perpetrated by Turkey, Iran, and Syrai against the Kurds is: are not these people humans and deserving of United Nations protection? Or is it a case of one law for the strong and another law for a weak populace that must pay the price.

Dear Mr President, ladies, and gentlemen: the Kurdish people exceed 40 million in number and are spread across Syria, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran. They have had national minority status imposed on them by current geography. The Kurdish people live in these circumstances, and carry the national identities of these states, but regrettably and under the gaze of the United Nations, suffer the most heinous kinds of suppression, which threatens the very human existence of this group.

The dialogue you call for in your report cannot equal the laws framed by the states for their own benefit, which the United Nations then adopted.

These minorities do not have real support. The reports and directives issued by the international organizations, including this forum, do not constitute support or any alteration to the situation of these minorities; as long as rogue states find laws and articles under the United Nations Charter that they can rely on to justify their actions. Just as in the case of Turkey currently, which under the standard of United Nations law dedicated to protecting state security, is killing civilians, and expelling them from their homes, while imposing its culture and law. All of which threatens the very existence of these minorities.

Reinforcing equality and protecting the rights of minorities requires effective support. It requires the provision of actual capabilities and enabling these minorities to defend their existence, as well as to protect their heritage and culture from state tyranny.

Mr President, while I was travelling here some of my people gave me a letter which asked, "Is the United Nations an organisation for the protection of the strong? Or is it an organisation for the protection of all, including the vulnerable?"

I put this question to you with the hope that we will restore public confidence in this organisation, and reinstate its status as an international organisation that cares about and defends universal rights, not just those of the powerful.