

My name is Gonzalo Bonnin. I am speaking on behalf of Sine Qua Non, a non-profit based in Geneva that works to protect and promote human rights, peace and democracy.

The role and attitude of some states towards minority groups is of deep concern to us. Their lack of interest in crucial issues affecting minorities is compounded by growing hostility towards them. Moreover, when it is known that neglecting these groups demands and needs is often at the core of latent and active violent conflicts around the world.

Growing support for extreme right-wing movements and ultra-liberal authoritarianism puts minorities in the spotlight, using hate speech and systematic and structural discriminatory policies that specifically target their rights. This goes hand in hand with a growing global trend to restrict existing human rights and democracy.

For all these reasons, and as the former Special Rapporteur, pointed out in his last thematic report, a new legally binding instrument is necessary to further protect the rights of minorities and to prevent States from breaching their obligations towards them.

It will also provide an opportunity to broaden the definition of what constitutes a minority, so that more realities can be included and thus protected by this new framework. Strengthening the legally binding nature of a new treaty on minority rights could help to ensure compliance with the protection of rights included in it. It could further empower minority communities by incorporating issues and realities that are neglected in the current framework.

Thank you.