

16th session of the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues

(30 November 2023 to 1 December 2023)

Agenda Item: Challenges to Inclusion & Equality

submitted by: Iranian Elite Research Center

Mr. Chair

Today there are tensions and conflicts between peoples and races in almost all regions of the world, exacerbated by socio-economic inequalities. While international instruments address forms of oppression arising from the intersection of gender, race or disability, the experiences of groups at the intersection of other social categories are rarely recognized. While minority refugees have fled persecution due to their minority status, the impact of their situation on the right to preserve cultural and religious identity is not recognized at international level.

If the international community fails to recognize the particular experiences of minority refugees, it risks being complicit in their oppression. Moreover, the current practice not only has potentially negative consequences for minority refugees and host societies, but could even undermine the UN's ability to achieve its overarching goals.

The ban on hijab in some European countries is a clear example of these offences. It restricts the access of Muslim women and girls to schools and universities, weakens their ability to find decent employment and affects their economic situation. We take this opportunity to draw attention to the negative impact of the hijab ban on the socio-economic empowerment of Muslim minorities and call on this forum to recall the need to protect Muslim women.

I thank you