

Dialog der Kulturen: Bildung, die verbindet und bereichert

Akademie für interkulturelles Miteinander



Academy for Intercultural Cooperation

ForumMinorityIssues_Right to self-determination and territorial integrity_Faisa Younes

The Secretariat of the 16th Session of the UN Forum on Minority Issue.

Honored Audience,

Today, I address the paradox between the right to self-determination and the preservation of territorial integrity and national sovereignty of states. The right to self-determination is crucial for stateless nations in their struggle for liberation. The contradiction arises when occupying powers use national sovereignty to suppress these nations' aspirations for freedom. For instance, in the last century, the governments of Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria have employed this to perpetrate over 45 instances of genocide, mass murder, and massacres in Kurdistan.

This principle of self-determination, enshrined as a human right, underpins other rights, allowing people of all ethnicities, races, genders, and religions to govern their own political, social, economic, and cultural affairs. Mentioned in the United Nations Charter, it is a fundamental principle of international law aimed at reducing human rights violations, particularly those against minorities. True self-determination is achieved only when the rights and freedoms of all, especially minorities, are secured. Neglecting this can lead to minorities resorting to undemocratic means to reclaim rights.

The Kurdish nation exemplifies this struggle, with over two million lives lost and three million displaced in pursuit of self-determination. Despite the presence of international institutions, we still witness ethnic cleansing in Kurdistan, evident in places like Shingal, Afrin, Infernormato, and Sarkani.

I urge human rights institutions and the United Nations to address these critical issues.

Thank you for your attention

Faisa Younes

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