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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Addressing minority issues through their root causes

Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Nicolas Levrat

Summary

Acknowledging the specificities of minority issues in each country in which they arise, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues tries to identify what minority issues are in different contexts. He has identified that it is not so much the type of issues faced by persons belonging to minorities that varies from country to country, but rather the root causes that led to the existence of minority issues in a given context. He underlines that most of the understanding of minority issues has been built around the specific root cause of nation-building, generating national minorities. He advocates in his recommendations for an evolution of the approaches to minority issues to tailor concepts and mechanisms to other root causes generating minority issues, such as migration, decolonization, entrenched social hierarchies or non-sedentary populations. The present report also contains an overview of the activities of the Special Rapporteur in 2025.



I. Introduction

1. The mandate of Special Rapporteur on minority issues was established by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 2005/79. It was subsequently extended by the Human Rights Council in successive resolutions, the most recent being resolution 52/5, by which the mandate of the Special Rapporteur was extended under the same terms as provided for in Council resolution 25/5.
2. The Special Rapporteur, Nicolas Levrat of Switzerland, was appointed by the Human Rights Council on 13 October 2023 and assumed his functions on 1 November 2023. Section II of the present thematic report provides a summary of his activities in 2025.
3. The Special Rapporteur wishes to draw the attention of the Human Rights Council to the web page devoted to the mandate on minority issues, where general information is provided on the activities associated with the mandate, including communications, press statements, public appearances, country visits and thematic reports.¹

II. Activities of the Special Rapporteur

A. Country visits

4. The Special Rapporteur looks forward to continuing dialogues with Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Colombia, Egypt, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mauritania, New Zealand, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Suriname, United Arab Emirates and Zambia, to which he has made requests to visit. He regrets that the country visit to Iraq, scheduled to take place in June 2025, was suspended. He is appreciative of the Governments of Chile, Lesotho and Somalia, which have indicated their willingness for the Special Rapporteur to conduct an official visit.
5. The Special Rapporteur on minority issues conducted an official country visit to Nepal between 4 and 13 December 2025. The country visit report is to be presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2026. At the invitation of the European Union, the Special Rapporteur's official visit to the European Union is scheduled to occur from 19 to 28 January 2026. The report of that official visit will be presented to the Human Rights Council in March 2027.

B. Communications

6. Between January and 17 December 2025, a total of 72 communications were sent by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues. Of those, 54 were letters of allegations, 8 were urgent appeals and 10 were other letters. All of the communications were sent jointly with other mandate holders of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. Three communications concerned the sub-Saharan Africa region, 31 concerned the Asia-Pacific region, 18 concerned the North Africa and West Asia Region, 6 concerned the Americas region, 6 concerned the European region and 8 concerned other actors.

C. Conferences and awareness-raising activities

7. The Special Rapporteur has engaged in several activities to promote and raise awareness of minority issues, as well as the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, by attending and participating in person or online in conferences and workshops. He also contributed to various other awareness-raising activities, such as consultations and discussions, and participated in side events to sessions of the Human Rights Council and in media interviews.

¹ See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/SRMinorities/Pages/SRminorityissuesIndex.aspx.

8. From 11 to 19 January 2025, the Special Rapporteur carried out an academic visit to China, at the invitation of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. During the visit, which was restricted to Beijing, he held a meeting with academics from the Academy on issues related to Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and Tibet Autonomous Region, as well as meetings at the China University of Political Science and Law, the Minzu University of China and China Foreign Affairs University. He also held meetings with the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Ministry of Education, the National Religious Affairs Administration and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
9. On 28 January, the Special Rapporteur participated in the online event on the theme “Engaging Romani civil society: a dialogue with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues”, as part of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. The event was organized by Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and participants heard views from the Special Rapporteur, the Chair of Philosophy for Peace of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), representatives of OHCHR, the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies and Romani civil society, including the Roma Advisory Council.
10. On 20 and 21 February, the Special Rapporteur attended the silver jubilee celebration of International Mother Language Day organized by UNESCO and participated in a high-level panel discussion on the theme “How multilingual education is building inclusive societies and supporting lifelong learning”.
11. On 7 March, the Special Rapporteur participated in the technical meeting of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities and presented the plan for activities in furtherance of his mandate in 2025.
12. On 9 and 10 April, the Special Rapporteur participated in a conference entitled “From promise to action: advancing SDG16 for justice and reform”, organized by the National Commission for Human Rights of Pakistan in Islamabad. Speaking as a member of the panel on the theme “Law enforcement reforms and equal protection”, the Special Rapporteur highlighted key human rights obligations that States must report on in relation to law enforcement practices, in particular with regard to minority protection and non-discrimination. In addition, he discussed how reporting processes could be used more effectively to push for accountability and reform in domestic contexts. He discussed how international human rights instruments could be leveraged to strengthen protections for minorities in national law enforcement systems. The Special Rapporteur met with authorities, civil society organizations and the Chairperson of the National Commission for Human Rights to learn more about and to discuss minority issues in Pakistan.
13. On 23 April, the Special Rapporteur participated in a research seminar series at the Institute of Business of the University in Madrid, where he presented his research on the law of diversity from the perspective of the protection of international human rights. He held a session with students, during which he discussed his experiences serving as the Special Rapporteur on minority issues.
14. On 25 April, the Special Rapporteur delivered a keynote speech at the launch of the report of South Asia Collective, entitled “South Asia state of minorities report 2024: economic, political and social participation and representation of minorities”.
15. On 10 and 11 May, the Special Rapporteur participated in a conference under theme “Re-imagine self-determination 2025” that was hosted by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization in Madeira, Portugal. At the conference, the Special Rapporteur chaired the session on the theme “Voices from peoples: resisting new forms of colonization”.
16. On 14 May, the Special Rapporteur presented the priorities he had set for the realization of his mandate and his work as a special procedure mandate holder in an interactive dialogue with students at the University of Geneva.
17. On 20 May, the Special Rapporteur met with the subcommittee on human rights of the European Parliament in Geneva.

18. From 23 to 26 May, the Special Rapporteur participated in the Minority Rights Academy organized by the Hrant Dink Foundation in Istanbul, Türkiye.
19. From 24 to 27 June, the Special Rapporteur attended the twentieth International Conference on Minority Languages in Bogotá, during which he delivered a keynote speech on the theme “From large language models to minority languages: a vision for the international landscape of language rights”.
20. On 1 July, the Special Rapporteur spoke at a side event to the fifty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, organized by the Sikh Human Rights Group on the theme “A declaration on diversity for a world in transition”.
21. On 2 July, the Special Rapporteur spoke at the side event to the fifty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, organized by the Next Century Foundation on the theme of protecting minorities in a future Syrian Arab Republic.
22. On 3 July, the Special Rapporteur spoke at the side event to the fifty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, organized by the International Yazidis Foundation for the Prevention of Genocide on the theme “Protecting minority identity in conflict zones: lessons learned from Iraq and beyond”.
23. On 7 and 8 July, the Special Rapporteur presented the achievements and challenges faced in the realization of his mandate at the Global Minority Rights summer school hosted by the Tom Lantos Institute.
24. On 17 July, the Special Rapporteur delivered a keynote address at a briefing for the Congress of the United States of America in Washington, D.C., on the challenges facing religious minorities in India.
25. On 3 September, the Special Rapporteur met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of North Macedonia, Timcho Mucunski, to discuss minority issues in North Macedonia and the region.
26. On 23 and 24 September, the Special Rapporteur delivered a speech at the Congress on Minorities: National and Ethnic Minorities in Poland and Europe, on the theme “Society, Politic, State”, held at the University of Opole in Opole, Poland.
27. On 25 September, the Special Rapporteur participated in a meeting of the special procedures on the Addis Ababa Road Map.
28. From 13 to 17 October, the Special Rapporteur participated in workshops of the sixth annual meeting of the “Faith for Rights” communities of practice in Siem Reap, Cambodia, and Bangkok, organized by OHCHR, Wat Bowonniwet Vihara, Bodhigaya Vijjalaya 980 Institute and Dharma Alliance.
29. On 22 October, the Special Rapporteur delivered a presentation about minority representation and the right to education of minority children during a webinar organized by the United Nations network on racial discrimination and the protection of minorities.
30. On 23 October, the Special Rapporteur presented his report on minority issues in the context of the United Nations reform process² to the Third Committee of the General Assembly. While in New York, and as part of promoting the recommendations set out in his report, he held strategic meetings with the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, the Director of the Codification Division of the Office of Legal Affairs, representatives of the Development Coordination Office, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, the Chef de Cabinet of the President of the General Assembly, representatives of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations and the Indian American Muslim Council and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support. He also organized an informal exchange, hosted by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations, concerning the recommendations set out in his report to the General Assembly, with representatives of several permanent missions in New York, including those of Austria,

² [A/80/186](#).

Canada, Hungary, Indonesia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

31. On 27 October, the Special Rapporteur gave a presentation to a political science class on ethnic conflict at Columbia University in the City of New York on issues linked to ethnic minorities in contemporary international society.

32. On 28 October, the Special Rapporteur participated in a conference at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, on the theme “Rethinking self-determination in the twenty-first century”.

33. On 6 November, the Special Rapporteur delivered a presentation at a webinar organized by the South Asia Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief about the intersection of freedom of religion and belief, ethnicity and minority issues in South Asia.

34. On 10 November, the Special Rapporteur delivered a welcome speech at the opening ceremony of the 2025 OHCHR Minority Fellowship Programme.

35. On 12 and 13 November, the Special Rapporteur participated in a workshop on governance and civil society organized by the Centre Internacional Escarré per a les Minories Ètniques i Nacionals in Barcelona.

36. On 14 and 15 November, the Special Rapporteur participated in the General Assembly of the European Language Equality Network in Barcelona.

37. On 21 November, the Special Rapporteur participated in an event hosted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to development about climate inequality. He gave a presentation about the differentiated and disproportionate impact of climate change on minorities.

38. On 21 November, the Special Rapporteur participated in a question and answer session concerning the Forum on Minority Issues with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization.

39. On 17 November, the Special Rapporteur had an informal exchange with members of the 2025 OHCHR Minority Fellowship cohort about minority issues worldwide.

40. On 24 November, the Special Rapporteur met with the laureates of the 2025 International Contest for Minority Artists.

41. On 25 November, the Special Rapporteur participated in the panel discussion on the role of States and philanthropic donors in promoting rights-centred development organized by the Special Rapporteur on the right to development.

42. On 26 November, the Special Rapporteur led the preparatory meeting in advance of the Forum on Minority Issues, which was followed by a dedicated dialogue between civil society organizations.

43. On 27 and 28 November, the Special Rapporteur made opening remarks at and guided the eighteenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues.

44. On 27 November, the Special Rapporteur spoke at the Forum on Minority Issues side events hosted by Minority Rights International, the Peace Organization for Supporting Iraqi minorities, the Tom Lantos Institute and the European Language Equality Network.

45. On 28 November, the Special Rapporteur spoke at the Forum on Minority Issues side events hosted by OHCHR Minority Fellows, Dignity Initiative and the European Academy of Bolzano. The Special Rapporteur presented the Award of Excellence for Emerging Voices in minority research to the winners of the 2025 Student Minority Projects Challenge of the Academic Network for Minority Issues.

46. From 1 to 3 December, the Special Rapporteur participated in a conference hosted by the South Asia Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief on the theme “Caste, religion and ethnicity in South Asia: freedom of religion and belief as an instrument of inclusion”, held in Kathmandu.

47. On 18 December, the Special Rapporteur participated in a meeting of the Intergroup on Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

D. Forum on Minority Issues

48. The eighteenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues was held on 27 and 28 November 2025 in Geneva, with measures in place to accommodate pre-recorded interventions. The theme of the session was “The contribution of minorities to diverse, resilient and peaceful societies”. The Forum brought together approximately 1,000 participants from 78 countries, including representatives of States, United Nations mechanisms, bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, intergovernmental and regional organizations, human rights entities, national human rights institutions and other relevant national bodies, minority groups and non-governmental organizations and academic experts on minority issues.

49. The eighteenth session of the Forum was aimed at highlighting the contributions of minorities to stable, resilient and peaceful societies, while also identifying the challenges faced by societies in fully embracing diversity and recognizing the positive contributions that minorities brought through their unique characteristics, perspectives and experiences. The recommendations of the Special Rapporteur emanating from the Forum will be presented to the Human Rights Council at its sixty-first session.

III. Addressing minority issues through their root causes

A. Introduction

50. In its resolution 2005/79, the Human Rights Commission requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to appoint an independent expert on minority issues. The use of the term “issues” allows for the mandate holder, beyond the main task of promoting the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, to cover not only the protection of rights, civil, cultural, linguistic and others, but also broader concerns, such as socioeconomic exclusion,³ political participation,⁴ identity,⁵ education,⁶ language⁷ and conflict prevention.⁸ If all these topics may be qualified as “minority issues”, the Special Rapporteur notes that no systematic study has been conducted with a view to understanding what minority issues are.

51. In the present report, the Special Rapporteur addresses this question, which should not be confused with the quest for a legal definition of “minorities”, for which there have been numerous efforts.⁹ The assumption in undertaking this study was that it was likely that minority issues would be different in different parts of the world. It is often heard that minority issues are, for historical reasons,¹⁰ mostly of European concern. However, research¹¹

³ See [A/HRC/13/23](#). See also [A/76/162](#).

⁴ See [A/79/169](#).

⁵ See [A/HRC/58/54](#).

⁶ See [A/HRC/43/47](#).

⁷ See [A/HRC/22/49](#).

⁸ See [A/HRC/49/46](#).

⁹ From the definition included in the 1977 report of the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Francesco Capotorti ([E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Rev.1](#), para. 568)) to the research and proposals of the previous holder of the mandate of Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand De Varennes ([A/74/160](#), para. 53).

¹⁰ The first international regime for the protection of minorities was set up under the auspices of the League of Nations, mostly for the benefit of European national minorities ([E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Rev.1](#), para. 96).

¹¹ The special Rapporteur would like to thank Abba Zidani, Nadia D’Amico, Sinem Ertugrul (all three master’s degree candidates at the University of Geneva) and OHCHR staff for their invaluable help in conducting research and finalizing the present report.

reveals a different picture. For example, since the creation of the mandate on minority issues, 921 communications have been sent. Among them, 195 addressees may not be geographically identifiable, as they are addressed to private actors or deal with general issues, 321 concern the Asia and Pacific region (excluding Central Asia and West Asia), 208 concern Europe and Central Asia, and 101 concern West Asia and North Africa, but only 49 concerned sub-Saharan Africa and 47 concerned the Americas. It is, however, worth underlining that, among the communications sent by the mandate holders on minority issues, those relating to the Asia and Pacific region predominantly concern religious minorities, whereas those addressed to European or Central Asian countries mostly refer to national or linguistic minorities. Considering the population distribution between these different geographical areas, there is a slight overrepresentation of Europe and Central Asia, as well as West Asia and North Africa, and a below average number of cases for sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas. As regards sub-Saharan Africa, inter-ethnic tensions or conflicts tend to be dismissed as minority issues from a human rights perspective, and are mostly dealt with as a security issue.¹² Furthermore, the concept of minority rights remains underdeveloped in political discourse, largely due to its association with some colonial privileges.¹³ As regards the Americas, decolonization occurred there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – for the benefit of the colonizers. Discrimination based on group belonging is therefore in most situations directed against either Indigenous Peoples or people of African descent scattered through the Americas as a result of the slave trade. Both groups are considered, in the United Nations human rights system, as being in categories of their own, distinct from minorities.¹⁴ The fact that persons who are discriminated against because of their belonging to a given group are not qualified as belonging to a minority, or may not even consider themselves a minority, does not exclude that their situation may be considered a minority issue.¹⁵

B. Main issues faced by persons belonging to minorities

52. Research has revealed that, contrary to initial intuition, the issues faced by persons belonging to minorities are quite similar wherever they exist, even though they vary in their forms and in the intensity of the harm caused. There are six main issues faced by persons belonging to minorities, which will be examined below, namely, extermination, exclusion, “invisibilization”, discrimination in access to public spaces and services, marginalization, and self-representation and organization.

1. Extermination

53. The extermination of human beings because they belong to a minority may take such forms as physical eradication or deportation or take more subtle forms based on preventing intergenerational transmission of cultural, linguistic or religious elements of minorities’ identities, which lead to the extinction of the minority as a distinct group in the State population.

54. The physical eradication of persons belonging to minorities still happens, in the form of systematic killing or mass violence against them. Examples include the Srebrenica massacre of Bosnian Muslim men and boys in 1995,¹⁶ the extermination of Yazidis in

¹² Solomon Dersso, “The African human rights system and the issue of minorities in Africa”, *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*, vol. 20 No. 1.

¹³ Tom Brower, “Reframing Kurtz’s painting: colonial legacies and minority rights in ethnically divided societies”, *Duke Journal of Comparative and International Law*, vol. 27.

¹⁴ As a consequence, there is, since 2001, a mandate of Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and, since 2002, a Working Group of Experts on Peoples of African Descent.

¹⁵ The Human Rights Committee, in the cases of *Poma Poma v. Peru* (CCPR/C/95/D/1457/2006) and *Ominayak and the Lubicon Lake Band v. Canada*, communication No. 167/2006 (see A/45/40, chap. V), in which the authors of the communications were invoking the right to self-determination as “peoples” under article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the definition of which is outside the jurisdiction of the Committee, requalified the claims by Indigenous Peoples as “minority issues” under article 27 of the Covenant.

¹⁶ See www.un.org/en/observances/srebrenica-genocide-commemoration-day/about.

northern Iraq by Da'esh in 2014,¹⁷ the targeted killings of Rohingya in Myanmar since 2017¹⁸ and the forcible evictions of the Hazara in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.¹⁹ Recent targeted killings in the Syrian Arab Republic against Alawis²⁰ and Druzes²¹ also fall into this category. The result is massive loss of life. In most cases, it has or will amount to genocide under international law.

55. Deportation or forced displacement is often labelled as “ethnic or religious cleansing”. Historical and contemporary examples include the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes during the Nakbah in 1948,²² the “ethnic cleansing” of the Bosanska Krajina region by the Republika Srpska Army in 1992 or the forced displacement of Rohingya populations to Bangladesh since 2017.²³ Such acts, regardless of whether they are conducted violently or through coercive measures, constitute crimes against humanity under international law in most cases.

56. Eradication can also occur in more subtle ways, in particular by targeting the identity, language or culture of minority groups by preventing the intergenerational transmission of elements of minorities’ identities. As an example of such practice, the boarding school education system implemented by China in Tibet is aimed at erasing the Tibetan language and identity.²⁴ Such forms of eradication constitute at least a violation of article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

2. Exclusion

57. The worst form of exclusion is the denial of registration for persons belonging to minorities. Children born from forcefully displaced persons, or from single mothers in some cultures, cannot be registered at birth; this constitutes a violation of article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.²⁵ Similarly, in Iraq, numerous Iraqis of African descent and Roma are not officially registered.²⁶ Such forms of exclusion from the enjoyment of any right cannot be tolerated, whether they concern nationals or foreigners with no national status (e.g. potential refugees or stateless persons). Untouchability practices, which are very common in South Asia with regard to the lowest scheduled castes, are also forms of exclusion, and are contrary to the very foundation of human rights according to which all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (see also sect. C.5 below).

58. To a lesser extent, but also a grave violation of international human rights standards, is the refusal by State authorities to register persons belonging to minorities as who they are. This includes the refusal to properly register a name, patronymic or surname. For example, in Morocco, civil registry officials have repeatedly refused to record traditional Amazigh names, such as Yuba or Simane, on the grounds that they were not on an approved list of names, forcing families into additional legal procedures to secure registration.²⁷ In Latvia, a Russian-Jewish minority member was compelled to accept an altered spelling of his name with a Latvian grammatical ending, after his request to use the original form was denied by the authorities and courts.²⁸ States may also refuse to acknowledge religious affiliation. For

¹⁷ See https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/Sinjar%20Brief_Public_UPDATED.pdf.

¹⁸ See [A/HRC/39/64](#).

¹⁹ See [A/HRC/49/24](#).

²⁰ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30176;https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29798;> and <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=38959>.

²¹ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30247>.

²² See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136662>.

²³ See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/07/1165369>.

²⁴ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/china-un-experts-alarmed-separation-1-million-tibetan-children-families-and.

²⁵ Ratified by 196 States.

²⁶ See <https://jummar.media/en/3840>.

²⁷ Human Rights Watch, “Morocco/Western Sahara: more freedom to name their children”, 14 December 2010, see www.hrw.org/news/2010/12/14/morocco/western-sahara-more-freedom-name-their-children.

²⁸ Human Rights Committee, *Raihan v. Latvia* (CCPR/C/100/D/1621/2007).

instance, Ahmadi in Pakistan²⁹ and Baha'is in Egypt³⁰ cannot register their religious affiliation on official documents, which is a clear violation of article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As the Special Rapporteur pointed out in a previous report,³¹ States Members of the United Nations not only recognized the existence of persons belonging to minorities, but also their identities, by adopting the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities; therefore, such forms of exclusion may not be tolerated either. All these forms of discrimination must be firmly condemned and immediately stopped.

3. “Invisibilization”

59. “Invisibilization” is another form of discrimination. It may have a different intensities and consequences for persons belonging to minorities. Some States deny the existence of minorities and therefore of minority issues. Such is the case of France, for example. However, despite the fact that the rights of minorities are not recognized by French legislation and denied by French official discourse, there are minority issues in the country, such as the non-recognition of and discrimination against linguistic minorities and discrimination against religious minorities. Other States, such as Greece and Türkiye, use the recognition of rights to some designated religious minorities under treaty obligations³² as grounds for denying the existence of other minorities and their issues. Such formal denials have no effect on the existence of minority issues. As the Human Rights Committee stated, in its general comment No. 23 (1994) on the rights of minorities, the existence of an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority in a given State Party did not depend upon a decision by that State Party, but was required to be established by objective criteria.³³ It is therefore according to such objective criteria that minority issues must be defined and addressed, and not as States may define them.

60. The most common form of invisibilization is the non-recognition of minorities in data collection. While not directly discriminatory, it has indirect effects, as public policies and budget allocations rely on such data; the absence of specific data leaves minority issues unaddressed. The following two much more severe forms of invisibilization are clear, direct violations of human rights provisions: (a) assimilation policies, which offer to persons belonging to minorities non-discriminatory treatment, as long as they renounce the specific aspects of their minority identity. Such policies that have been used in nation-building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are contrary to the principle enshrined in article 1 of the Declaration through which States committed themselves to recognizing the existence and identity of persons belonging to a minority; and (b) denial of identity registration (see para. 57 above).

4. Discrimination in access to public spaces or services

61. Restricting access to public space or services is unfortunately the most common form of discrimination. With regard to the provision of public services, it is important that in State infrastructure and development strategies, regions where minorities are concentrated not receive less attention and investment than others. This would otherwise lead to systemic discrimination in access to services, be it in the development and maintenance of infrastructure (roads, access to drinking water and irrigation, sanitation) or social services (education, public health, security and public housing). Even though not directly targeting persons belonging to minorities, such unequal attention from State authorities or State budget allocations constitutes structural and severe forms of discrimination, which prevent persons belonging to minorities from equally enjoying their rights within society as a whole. Among other things, clientelistic practices by dominant groups holding positions of power in public

²⁹ See www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/the-ahmadis-deserve-to-practice-their-religion-and-celebrate-eid-without-fear-for-their-safety-and-liberty/.

³⁰ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29803>.

³¹ See [A/HRC/58/54](#).

³² Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, arts. 38–45.

³³ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 23 (1994) on the rights of minorities, para 5.2.

institutions should be closely monitored, in order to avoid perpetuating territorial and structural forms of discrimination.

62. Speakers of minority languages often suffer a barrier to access to health services and social services. Even more worrying, in their interactions with law enforcement authorities, they may not even be able to claim respect for their rights when they have been encroached by public or private actors. This type of discrimination is a clear violation of articles 2, 14 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and should be eliminated by all States. Discrimination in access to education should also be resolved. No child should be prevented from receiving education because his mother tongue is not a State language. Access to early education, and thereby the possibility to later learn in a national language, is to be guaranteed to all children, in conformity with articles 2, 4 and 28 (1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

63. Discriminatory access to public or private services based on ethnicity is rarely entrenched in legal provisions but is unfortunately a common practice in many societies. Such discrimination is also very present in relations between private actors concerning access to private sector jobs and the housing market. In South Asia, caste-based discrimination continues to restrict Dalits' access to employment, confining many to stigmatized occupations, despite formal legal prohibitions. Job applicants with Roma, African or Arab-sounding names in countries such as Belgium, France and Netherlands (Kingdom of the) receive significantly fewer interview invitations than equally qualified candidates bearing names from the dominant community.³⁴ Similar patterns have been documented in Latin America, where applicants of African descent face lower hiring rates and wage penalties linked to skin colour.³⁵ Access and representation in traditional, private and public, as well as social media is also a too frequent field of discriminatory practices.³⁶

64. When such discrimination is the result of the behaviour of public authorities, the State bears direct and full responsibility. States should take all measures – educational, combined with strong and precise regulations indicating prohibited conduct amounting to discrimination, which must be strictly implemented – to combat such forms of discrimination. The Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act of Nepal is an example of legislation explicitly prohibiting discrimination by private individuals, including in employment, housing and access to services, and recognizing the rights of Dalits.³⁷ Such legal provisions must not only exist, but also be strictly enforced, offering effective remedies for victims and genuine sanctions for offenders. Awareness-raising campaigns should not only emphasize equal rights for all, but also highlight the contributions (economic, cultural and political) that persons belonging to ethnic minorities bring to society as a whole.

65. Religious minorities are also often discriminated against in access to public spaces. Such discrimination may take the form of restrictions on places of worship, as illustrated by the 2009 constitutional ban on the building of minarets in Switzerland.³⁸ In Georgia, non-Orthodox religious communities often face bureaucratic obstacles or refusals when attempting to establish, expand or maintain places of worship. Such barriers are frequently

³⁴ Stijn Baert, "Hiring discrimination: an overview of (almost) all correspondence experiments since 2005", *Audit Studies: Behind the Scenes with Theory, Method, and Nuance*, ed. by S. Michael Gaddis (Springer International Publishing, 2018).

³⁵ German Freire et al., *Afro-Descendants in Latin America: Toward a Framework of Inclusion* (World Bank, 2018). See also Edward Telles, René D. Flores and Fernando Urrea-Giraldo, "Pigmentocracies: educational inequality, skin color and census ethnoracial identification in eight Latin American Countries", *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, vol. 40.

³⁶ Hazel Atuel, Viviane Seyranian and William D. Crano. "Media representations of majority and minority groups", *European Journal of Social Psychology*, vol.37 No. 3.

³⁷ OHCHR Nepal, *Opening the door to equality: the Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability (Offence and Punishment) Act, 2011* (OHCHR Nepal, (7 December 2011). Available from https://nepal.ohchr.org/en/resources/Documents/English/reports/HCR/2011_12_07_Opening_the_Door_to_Equality_E.pdf.

³⁸ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2009/12/swiss-law-banning-minarets-clearly-discriminatory-un-human-rights-chief.

linked to local authorities' decisions and to the privileged position of the Georgian Orthodox Church.³⁹

5. Marginalization

66. Marginalization is usually not grounded in positive law provisions, making this form of discrimination more difficult to arrest. It is the result of a combination of discriminatory social behaviours and the lack of efforts from the authorities to prevent and condemn such practices. Marginalization may be spatial, as is the case for Roma communities in Eastern Europe, which often live in segregated settlements with limited access to public services. It can also be territorial, as areas inhabited by minority communities are often less equipped with public infrastructure and services than the rest of the country (see para. 61 above). Many such communities lack permanent local healthcare facilities, advanced schools and affordable transportation options.⁴⁰ Such geographical isolation demonstrates territorial marginalization, which significantly limits opportunities for education, healthcare and infrastructure development.

67. Marginalization may also take educational forms, such as the systematic denial of access to higher education for Baha'is in the Islamic Republic of Iran.⁴¹ Linguistic marginalization can also be seen in Ireland, where Gaelic speakers experience de facto discrimination, due to limited public services, schooling and media in their language, despite Gaelic being an official national language of Ireland.⁴² Marginalization based on physical characteristics or ethnicity affects persons of African descent all over the world, who face systemic socioeconomic disadvantages, as well as Indigenous populations in the Americas and Australia, who are often excluded from political and economic decision-making.

6. Capacity to organize as a minority

68. Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes the right to persons belonging to a minority to enjoy, in community with the other members of their group, their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion or to use their own language. This does not constitute a right to self-determination,⁴³ but it affirms the right to the collective exercise of minority rights, raising the question of how such collective exercise of their additional minority rights⁴⁴ should be organized. It amounts to a form of self-organization, or autonomy, which can be exercised either through public authorities – State institutional structure allowing for genuine forms of decentralized powers – or private organizations, usually civil society organizations. Such autonomy may be normative, organizational or financial or ideally a combination of the three.

69. Normative autonomy refers to the capacity of minorities to adopt rules for the implementation of their rights. In some cases, local or regional authorities may allow minority communities with a relative majority at that level to exercise regulatory powers.

³⁹ Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fourth Opinion on Georgia, 26 June 2024, available from <https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-georgia-en/1680b08a31>.

⁴⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Opportunities and challenges for regional development and mining in northern Ontario, Canada*, (OECD Publishing, Paris, 2021). Available from www.oecd.org/en/publications/mining-regions-and-cities-in-northern-ontario-canada_d3676159-en/full-report/opportunities-and-challenges-for-regional-development-and-mining-in-northern-ontario_614ae43c.html.

⁴¹ See [A/HRC/56/22](#); and [A/71/374](#).

⁴² Antony Hoyte-West, "The 23rd Language: Official EU Status for Irish as Portrayed in the Republic of Ireland's English-Language Press", *English Studies at New Bulgarian University*, vol. 6, No. 1.

⁴³ The right to self-determination is, on the contrary, clearly recognized to all peoples, according to article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations and also specifically to Indigenous Peoples, according to articles 3, 4 and 5 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (General Assembly resolution 61/295).

⁴⁴ In its general comment No. 23 (1994), the Human Rights Committee observed that article 27 established and recognized a right which was conferred on individuals belonging to minority groups and which was distinct from, and additional to, all the other rights which, as individuals in common with everyone else, they were already entitled to enjoy under the Covenant.

Some forms of State institutional arrangements, such as federal States, favour a large degree of autonomy at the regional level, which may allow for specific regulations concerning minorities concentrated in one part of the State territory to enjoy, through democratic processes, a form of normative autonomy,⁴⁵ for example, concerning the organization of the education system (language and curriculum) or the use of language in the public administration or the media.

70. As concerns religious minorities, however, it is possible that religious authorities or faith leaders issue by edict the rules governing the practice of faith. Naturally, whichever norms so issued as part of the autonomous self-regulatory capacity of minorities, which also includes norms emanating from the edicts of religious leaders, will have to be in conformity with the respect of human rights standards, including gender equality and the rights of persons not belonging to the self-regulating minority.

71. Organizational autonomy concerns the ability of minority communities to manage collective services, such as education or social support. They may exercise this autonomy through control of public bodies, if institutional arrangements permit, or by creating civil society organizations. If the institutional organization of States is part of their reserved domain, the freedom of association (to create or to join civil society organizations) is regulated according to international law, notably by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 22 of which stipulates that no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those which are prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Restrictions to the right of association of persons belonging to a minority to collectively exercise their rights should be strictly limited and meet both criteria set out in article 22 of the Covenant. Unfortunately, too many countries place restrictions on minorities' freedom of association, thereby limiting the exercise of rights linked with their minority status with the other members of their community. In Catalonia, civil society organizations report concerns over freedom of association, amid political tensions surrounding governance.⁴⁶ Ethnic or national parties and associations can face bans, such as the pro-Kurdish parties in Türkiye⁴⁷ and Iran (Islamic Republic of),⁴⁸ ethnic associations in China,⁴⁹ ethnic or religious parties in France following the Internal Security Code⁵⁰ and ethnic parties in Bulgaria⁵¹ and Rwanda⁵² following their constitutions. Unfortunately, civil society organizations representing minority interests have been restricted with regard to property and premises, often under the pretext that they are extremist organizations. Such was the case for the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, after the annexation by the Russian Federation of Crimea,⁵³ and with regard to the seizure of assets of Kurdish associations in Türkiye after 2016.⁵⁴ Such civil society organizations should also be bestowed with full legal personality, allowing for them to buy and own property for the collective use of persons belonging to a minority.

72. Religious associations and places of worship face registration and administrative barriers worldwide, such as in Algeria and Egypt.⁵⁵ In Estonia⁵⁶ or in Ukraine,⁵⁷ certain religious communities, in particular those perceived as being affiliated with foreign religious

⁴⁵ This question was thoroughly examined in [A/79/169](#).

⁴⁶ Information received from the International Department of Plataforma per la Lengua and Omnium Cultural.

⁴⁷ See www.hrw.org/news/2009/12/11/turkey-kurdish-party-banned.

⁴⁸ See www.gov.uk/government/publications/iran-country-policy-and-information-notes/country-policy-and-information-note-kurds-and-kurdish-political-groups-iran-october-2025-accessible.

⁴⁹ See www.hrw.org/news/2025/09/28/china-draft-ethnic-unity-law-tightens-ideological-control.

⁵⁰ Stephane Pierre-Caps, "Les minorités et la notion de représentation", *Les Cahiers du Conseil Constitutionnel*, vol. 23.

⁵¹ Article 11 (4) of the Constitution of Bulgaria.

⁵² Article 54 of the Constitution of Rwanda.

⁵³ See www.hrw.org/news/2016/09/29/crimean-tatar-elected-body-banned-russia.

⁵⁴ See www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/5208/2016/en/.

⁵⁵ Minority Rights Group International, "Minority and Indigenous trends 2022: focus on work".

⁵⁶ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/12/un-experts-concerned-escalating-legislative-and-administrative-measures.

⁵⁷ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29850>.

centres, have faced burdensome registration procedures and differential treatment in recent legislation. In China, all religious groups are required to register through State-controlled “patriotic” religious associations; communities that refuse to do so are denied legal status, criminalized and subjected to surveillance and the closure of places of worship, and their members are placed in detention.⁵⁸

73. Discriminatory fiscal treatment of civil society organizations that allow for religious minorities to exert collectively their rights is also problematic. In several countries, recognized or majority religions benefit from tax exemptions, public subsidies or State funding for clergy salaries and religious infrastructure, while minority religions are excluded from such schemes or subject to additional financial burdens. In numerous European States, religious minority communities lack the legal status to benefit from tax exemptions or the public funding available to established churches, placing them at a structural disadvantage. Identically, the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, in India infringes the capacity of Muslim communities to own and operate places of worship.⁵⁹

C. Root causes of minority issues

74. The Special Rapporteur highlights with the present study that it is the root causes generating minority issues that differ, rather than the issues themselves. The root causes of minority issues are not the same in Africa as in the Americas, the Caribbean, Asia, Europe or the Pacific region. The root causes are the historical and contextual elements that led some groups within the population of a given State to be in a minority situation. The first historically identified root cause is linked to nation-building. Initially considered as a European issue that emerged in the first part of the twentieth century, nation-building has been (and is still) taking place in many parts of the world and is still creating or exacerbating minority issues. A second root cause generating minority issues is the displacement of populations, whatever the reason for such displacement. A third cause, which is not without links in specific situations with the two first causes, is decolonization. A fourth cause is the existence and the perpetuation of deeply embedded discriminatory social hierarchies. Another enduring root cause of minority issues is the existence of non-sedentary populations within sedentary societies.

1. Nation-building

75. Nation-building describes the process through which a people realizes their right to self-determination by building a democratic State, in which the holder of sovereignty is the people, that is the nation.⁶⁰ Such processes largely took place in Europe in the nineteenth century and after the First World War.⁶¹ National States were built on the specificities that defined the nation of each given State, including emphasizing what distinguished its population from neighbouring nations. As a result, the inhabitants of the State territory who did not share the national characteristic of the dominant national group became “national minorities”.

76. The specificities of nation-building in decolonization processes are addressed below. Except for some rare States that proclaim themselves multinational (such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia), most State nation-building leads to discrimination against minority groups. For example, China has since 2012 undertaken a nation-building process (to complement or replace the ideological foundations of the Chinese State under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party) which has as an effect, despite constitutional provisions, the

⁵⁸ See www.chinasource.org/resource-library/blog-entries/the-2023-regulations-for-religious-activity-site-registration/.

⁵⁹ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30319>.

⁶⁰ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁶¹ On 11 June 1918, President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson stated: “National aspirations must be respected; people may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent.”

marginalization of minority communities, leading to forms of severe discrimination against non-Han minorities, such as Tibetans or Uighurs.⁶²

2. Migration

77. Despite most societies having become sedentary, people move. They may be forced by dire living conditions in their place of origin (and in some narrowly defined cases they may claim refugee status) or be attracted by better life prospects in other countries. When settled in a significant number in their new country of residence, such groups become minorities, whether recognized as such by State authorities or not, and minority issues arise. Some public authorities recognize such situations and adapt their practices and regulatory frameworks to accommodate these new minority groups. For example, Slovakia recognized in 2023 the Vietnamese population as a national minority.⁶³ At the local level, the city of San Francisco, United States, since 2009, acknowledging the presence of numerous speakers of minority languages in its constituency, issued a Language Access Ordinance,⁶⁴ which requires city departments to provide language access services in four languages: English, Spanish, Chinese and Tagalog (a language of the Philippines). Emerging minority issues are not linked to the reasons for displacement. The situation of persons of African descent, who were forcefully displaced as enslaved labourers in many countries worldwide, and especially in the Americas, is also a minority issue. However, it is dealt with by another special procedure mechanism⁶⁵ and will therefore not be further considered in the present report.

3. Decolonization

78. Decolonization in the second half of the twentieth century, under the Charter of the United Nations, was justified by the principle of self-determination of peoples.⁶⁶ However, in practice, it was rather territories (former colonies that kept colonial “administrative borders”,⁶⁷ according to the principle of *uti possidetis*⁶⁸) that were decolonized, rather than specific people exercising their right to self-determination. As a result, many of the States that came into existence during this second wave of decolonization have State territories encompassing several (and sometimes a myriad of) ethnic, religious or linguistic communities, such as Nigeria, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo⁶⁹ and Zambia. Minority issues in this context therefore do not describe the relations between one majoritarian group and some minority groups, but rather between groups within multi-ethnic or multinational States. In that respect, many features of “minority rights” that have been conceived and developed with the perspective of national minorities confronted with a dominant national majority would deserve to be revisited to consider those very different situations.

79. The first wave of decolonization mostly took place during the nineteenth century, for the benefit of colonist populations emancipating themselves from the metropolitan power. That was the case in Australia, the United States and New Zealand, as well as in the most southern part of the African continent. Except in Africa, where the power of former colonists was successfully challenged in the 1990s, in the wake of the second wave of decolonization, the marginalized communities facing minority issues in these decolonized countries are the autochthonous populations, nowadays categorized as Indigenous Peoples. Despite facing

⁶² Fei Yan and Liz Jackson, “Nation building, citizenship education and ethnic minorities in Chinese textbooks”, *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, vol. 19, No. 2.

⁶³ See www.dw.com/en/vietnam-slovakia-ties-to-improve-thanks-to-new-slovak-pm/a-68747303.

⁶⁴ See https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/Language_Access_Ordinance_-_Amended_June_2024.pdf.

⁶⁵ Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent.

⁶⁶ General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, entitled Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

⁶⁷ See Nicolas Levrat, “La prise en considération de l’ordre juridique étatique dans la définition des frontières internationales”, in Olivier Corten et al. (eds.), *Démembrements d’États et délimitations territoriales : l’uti possidetis en question(s)*, (Editions Bruylant, Bruxelles, 1999).

⁶⁸ Olivier Corten, “Droit des peuples à disposer d’eux-mêmes et *uti possidetis*: deux faces d’une même médaille ?” in *Démembrements d’États et délimitations territoriales : l’uti possidetis en question(s)*.

⁶⁹ United Nations Development Programme. “Marginalized minorities in development programming: a resource guide and toolkit”, 2010.

minority issues, they are not under the scope of the mandate⁷⁰ and will not be further referenced in the present report.

80. The third wave of decolonization started only after 1990 and concerns the dismantlement of the Russian (or tsarist) Empire. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, not being based on a logic of national self-determination after the First World War, escaped the nation-building and resulting national minority movements described above in paragraph 75. However, after the decision of the Russian Federation to dissolve the Union in 1991, 15 new States came into being, including the Russian Federation. Most of the Russian-speaking minorities that had spread within the Russian Empire during the colonial period – most of whose members never learned the local languages – remained in the former Russian colonies and claimed their rights to be protected as linguistic minorities. This is consistent with international texts and principles relating to minority rights. However, the Russian Federation also maintained their Russian citizenship and, as unfortunate developments in blatant violation of the most fundamental principles of international law have shown in recent years, has been championing the rights of those persons and has used existing or supposed encroachment of their rights to intervene, up to and including military aggression, in these newly decolonized countries' affairs.⁷¹ Such behaviour is in clear contravention of Article 2 (7) – and even Article 2 (4) – of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the principle enshrined in article 8 (4) of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Special Rapporteur can only take note that this third wave of decolonization reinstates minority issues as issues linked to peace and security. Such resurgence must be acknowledged as such and resolved by competent bodies within the United Nations system – even beyond the human rights bodies – according to principles consistent with the Charter and the fundamental principles of human rights.

4. Enduring social hierarchies

81. The equal enjoyment of human rights by all human beings is a progressive idea that is enshrined in article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, some societies have conserved systems of entrenched social hierarchies, according to which persons belonging to designated groups are systematically discriminated against from birth. Such situations are qualified within the United Nations system as discrimination based on work and descent. This appellation covers the system of castes (present mostly in South Asia and concerning at least 250 million Dalits), as well as some forms of discrimination linked to hereditary occupations, which persist in African countries, such as among the Dime people of Ethiopia, the Osu in Nigeria and the Sab in Somalia.⁷² These are issues, due to the number of persons concerned and to the intensity of encroachment of their rights (including untouchability and slavery), that must be addressed as a specific minority issue. Societies still based on such entrenched discriminatory systems are not meeting the initial and most basic requirements of human rights, according to which all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

5. Non-sedentary populations

82. Persons having a non-sedentary lifestyle raise many minority issues that are difficult to resolve. This is the case of Roma worldwide,⁷³ but also of Bedouins in the Middle East

⁷⁰ The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 2001/57, created a special procedure mandate on Indigenous Peoples in 2001.

⁷¹ Kairat Abdrakhmanov, "Instrumentalization of Minorities vs. Instruments of Minority Rights: Conflict Prevention through Integration Based on Respect for Diversity and Minority Rights", *Peace Human Rights Governance* vol. 7, No. 1 (2022): 143–147.

⁷² Minority Rights Group International, "World directory of minorities and Indigenous Peoples". Available at <https://minorityrights.org/world-map/>.

⁷³ [A/HRC/29/24](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/2024/03/15/a/hrc/29/24).

and North Africa region,⁷⁴ the Traveller communities in Ireland and the United Kingdom⁷⁵ and many relatively small population groups worldwide.⁷⁶ Issues faced by such communities may differ and can be entrenched in prejudice and social discrimination, but also stem from the displacement of hunter-gatherer and pastoralist communities from their territories (such as the Endorois in Kenya⁷⁷ or the Rautees in Nepal),⁷⁸ the prohibition of traditional activities (such as hunting for the San in Zimbabwe⁷⁹) and competition for limited resources with sedentary populations (such as in the Lake Chad region).⁸⁰ As the Special Rapporteur explained in a previous report,⁸¹ the principle of non-discrimination requires differential treatments for persons in different situations. This is the case with regard to non-sedentary populations, and the current framework of minority rights is not adapted to the type of minority issues that such populations face.

IV. Conclusions

83. In the present thematic report, the Special Rapporteur details the need to better understand the root causes of minority issues, in order to better and more specifically address those issues, for the benefit of persons belonging to minorities, as well as for society as a whole. As was pointed out by the General Assembly in 1948, minority issues have special aspects in each State in which the question arises. The specificity of minority issues is linked not only to the differential forms of issues in different States, but also largely to the different root causes in different contexts. Understanding the root causes and their effects on persons belonging to minorities allows for the design of more specific and targeted instruments and mechanisms to better address and reduce – if not eliminate – the issues faced by persons belonging to minorities. The Special Rapporteur sets out below his recommendations in this regard.

V. Recommendations

84. **Attempts at exterminating persons belonging to minorities should be qualified as genocide and be treated as such by the international community.**

85. **Exclusion and invisibilization are severe forms of violation of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Especially worrying is the invisibilization practised by most States that refuse to collect disaggregated data on minorities. Such disaggregated data would allow for seeing and measuring minority communities and for the design and implementation of policies dealing effectively with minority issues. The Special Rapporteur therefore urges States to collect and use disaggregated data to properly address minority issues.**

86. **Structural and territorial forms of discrimination, especially through territorial differentiations in investment and development policies, should be identified and monitored, with a view to ensuring better territorial cohesion and justice.**

87. **With regard to the capacity of persons belonging to minorities to enjoy their rights in community with other members of their group,⁸² the Special Rapporteur commends those States whose institutional structures allow for persons belonging to minorities to promote their rights and identity through public mechanisms at the local**

⁷⁴ Maisel, Sebastian. “Bedouins: nomadic societies in the Middle East and North Africa entering the 21st century”, *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 61, No. 2.

⁷⁵ Amanda Haynes et al., “The significance of the declaration of ethnic minority status for Irish travellers”, *Nationalities Papers*, vol.49, No. 2.

⁷⁶ Victoria Reyes-García and Aili Pyhälä (eds.) *Hunter-gatherers in a changing world*, vol. 737 (Springer, Berlin, 2017).

⁷⁷ Minority Rights Group International, “Minority and Indigenous trends 2023: focus on water”.

⁷⁸ See www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-06/raute.pdf.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ [A/HRC/55/51](http://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-06/raute.pdf).

⁸² Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 23 (1994).

and/or regional levels. In other situations, when such exercise of their rights is realized through civil society organizations, the Special Rapporteur strongly condemns restrictive and discriminatory practices targeting civil society organizations working for the implementation of rights and principles enshrined in article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. He calls upon States to put an end to such abusive and discriminatory practices encroaching the rights of persons belonging to minorities as spelled out in article 27 of the Covenant.

88. With regard to the root causes of minority issues, the Special Rapporteur implores States to better understand the effect of each specific root cause on minority issues, as it will help to find innovative paths to develop and strengthen appropriate instruments thereby allowing for minority issues to be properly addressed at the local, regional national and international levels.

89. Concerning the decolonization of the Russian Empire (see para. 80 above) the Special Rapporteur urges the international community to work on the existing minority issues that it has revealed in the framework of the United Nations as a whole, including from a peace and security perspective. He expresses the wish that his mandate will be able to contribute to understanding and developing the link that must be made between minority and security issues.

90. Concerning the decolonization process that took place in the twentieth century (see para. 78 above), the Special Rapporteur recommends that the very concept of minority rights – especially the relationship of persons belonging to minorities with other members of a society in which there is no dominant ethnic, linguistic or religious group – be reassessed and reframed for such societal contexts, in which minority issues are not linked to a relationship between minorities and a majoritarian group but to the coexistence of numerous non-majoritarian groups.

91. As migrations is a clear root cause of minority issues, the Special Rapporteur urges the many States that deny the fact that migrants settled in their country do face minority issues to revise their outdated understanding of minority issues and to adapt it to the reality of today's world.

92. As enduring and entrenched social hierarchies are not compatible with the very foundation of universal human rights, according to which all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, the Special Rapporteur calls upon all concerned States to take measure with a view to abolishing such social stratifications, for the benefit of a society based on the equal enjoyment of rights by all. The Special Rapporteur is available to help by sharing best practices and to mobilize support to advance in realizing this Herculean task.

93. Taking note of the specific issues faced by non-sedentary populations, the Special Rapporteur calls for the creation of a specific working group tasked with understanding and tackling the issues faced by such minority communities, as existing mechanisms and principles for minority protections do not seem adequate or efficient to offer specific solutions for the issues of such specific minority groups.

94. As shown above, and taking note of the specificities of each national context and situation with regard to minority issues, the Special Rapporteur calls for States to establish a national plan for addressing the specific minority issues existing within their jurisdiction.

95. The Special Rapporteur also renews his call⁸³ to work on a minority in society index, which would allow for regular and objective monitoring of the situation of persons belonging to minorities, the relationship between these persons and the community as a whole.

⁸³ [A/80/186](#), para. 79.

96. Considering the numerous calls for redesigning and re-initiating the system of universal protection of human rights, and considering how marginalized minority issues have been since 1945, the Special Rapporteur reiterates his call⁸⁴ for a world summit on minority issues, to ensure that those issues will not be left out of the post-2030 agenda, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to consider such issues as a cornerstone of a new human rights architecture, acknowledging diversity as a renewed foundation for the universality of human rights for the twenty-first century.

⁸⁴ Ibid., para. 70.