

FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

“The Contribution of Minorities to Diverse, Resilient, and Peaceful Societies”

27–28 November 2025

Palais des Nations, Geneva

SUMMARY BY THE CHAIR OF THE FORUM

Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 19/23 of 23 March 2012, the Forum on Minority Issues provides a platform for dialogue and cooperation on matters concerning the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. It also contributes with thematic expertise to the work of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, **Prof. Nicolas Levrat** and identifies best practices, challenges, and recommendations for the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

The Forum meets annually for two days, on a different theme each year. The Special Rapporteur on minority issues is responsible for guiding the work of the Forum, preparing its annual meetings and reporting on its thematic recommendations to the Human Rights Council.

The eighteenth session of the Forum was held on 27–28 November 2025 in person at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. **H.E. Ms. Caroline Ziadeh**, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of the Lebanese Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, served as Chair of the eighteenth session. This year’s theme focused on: **“The Contribution of Minorities to Diverse, Resilient, and Peaceful Societies.”**

Attendance was the highest in the Forum’s history, with about 980 registered participants from close to 80 countries, including representatives of Member States; United Nations mechanisms, bodies and specialized agencies; other intergovernmental organizations; regional organisations and human rights mechanisms; national human rights institutions; academics and experts on minority issues; minority communities; and civil society organizations. In addition to the Forum, 12 side-events addressing different issues were organized by various stakeholders.¹ Interpretation in six official UN languages and in international sign language was provided during the Forum, as well as captioning in English, French and Spanish. The Concept Note, the Agenda of the Forum and the Programme of Work were made available to all Forum participants in advance of the Forum on the webpage of the eighteenth session of the Forum.² These documents formed the basis for the discussions.

¹ See the programme of the side events here:

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/forums/minority-issues/session18/18th-forum-minority-issues-programme-side-events.pdf>

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/forums/2025/eighteenth-session-forum-minority-issues>

Format of the Forum

The Forum followed the procedure developed over its previous sessions. To help focus the discussions and ensure that they would be interactive, each agenda item was introduced by several invited panellists, followed by interventions from the participants.

Outcome documents

The present document has been prepared in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 19/23, which requests the Chair to prepare “a summary of the discussion of the Forum, to be made available to all participants of the Forum”. This summary is to be complemented by the outcome document containing the recommendations of the Forum presented by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues to the Human Rights Council at its 61st session in March 2026.³

This summary does not provide the full details of all presentations that were made during the Forum’s proceedings. The list of speakers and the integral version of the statements submitted to the Secretariat of the Forum on Minority Issues can be accessed on the Forum’s webpage.⁴ The list of recommendations of the Forum will be published in the report presented by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues to the Human Rights Council.

Opening of the Forum

The following panelists provided the opening remarks of the Forum: H.E. Mr. Razvan Rusu, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council; Mr. Volker Türk, High Commissioner for Human Rights; Prof. Nicolas Levrat, Special Rapporteur on minority issues; and H.E. Ms. Caroline Ziadeh, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of the Lebanese Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Chair of the eighteenth session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues.

The **Vice-President of the Human Rights Council, H.E. Mr. Razvan Rusu**, delivered welcoming remarks. He emphasized the Forum’s role as a unique platform for dialogue, reflection and cooperation on the human rights of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Highlighting the 2025 theme, H.E. Mr. Rusu stressed that minorities face persistent challenges but also make vital, often overlooked contributions to cultural life, innovation, community resilience and peaceful, inclusive societies. Recognizing these contributions strengthens minority rights, social cohesion, conflict prevention and sustainable development. As Vice-President of the Human Rights Council, he underlined the Council’s commitment to minority issues through the Special Rapporteur’s mandate and the Forum’s action-oriented recommendations. H.E. Mr. Rusu concluded by encouraging participants to engage actively in shaping recommendations and reaffirming a collective commitment to advancing minority rights globally.

In his opening statement, **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk**, stressed that protecting and including minorities is essential to building diverse, resilient and peaceful societies. While diversity is natural and enriching, he warned that power

³ A/HRC/61/65

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/forums/2025/eighteenth-session-forum-minority-issues>

imbalances, exclusion and dehumanization have fueled fear, hatred and false narratives. He highlighted the disproportionate impact of poverty, displacement, cultural suppression, police violence, statelessness and underrepresentation on minorities, noting that minority rights are under pressure in both autocratic and democratic contexts. Türk also drew attention to the digital dimension, where most online hate speech targets minorities and often translates into real-world violence, particularly affecting women, LGBTIQ+ persons, youth and persons with disabilities. He called for comprehensive anti-discrimination laws, meaningful inclusion in governance and peace processes, human rights education, protection of defenders and better data systems. Concluding, he emphasized that with political will and inclusive strategies, diversity can become a source of dignity, cohesion and shared prosperity.

The **Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Prof. Nicolas Levrat**, expressed appreciation for the strong engagement of participants and noted that the Forum continues to grow as a space for minority voices to be heard amid global pressure on the human rights system. He highlighted the Forum's expanding role and the challenges of accommodating diverse voices, while stressing complementary initiatives such as the International Contest for Minority Artists, the Student Minority Challenge and the OHCHR Minority Fellowship Programme. The Special Rapporteur reaffirmed that the Forum served as a unique platform for dialogue, cooperation and the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, bringing civil society voices directly into UN processes. Explaining the choice of the 2025 theme, he emphasized that minorities, when respected and included, strengthened social cohesion, cultural richness and resilience. He outlined the Forum's focus on trust-building, recognition of minority contributions and inclusion in peacebuilding and transitional justice. Prof. Levrat criticized the marginalization of minorities within the UN system, called for a World Summit on Minority Issues before 2030, and urged participants to advance concrete, inclusive solutions.

As **Chairperson of the 18th session of the Forum on Minority Issues, H.E. Ms. Caroline Ziadeh** opened the Forum by underscoring the central importance of inclusive institutions, meaningful participation, and respect for diversity in fostering peaceful, resilient, and cohesive societies, drawing on her extensive experience within the United Nations system. She emphasized that minority communities are not only custodians of culture, language, and tradition, but also active and indispensable contributors to economic development, innovation, environmental stewardship, and social cohesion. Stressing that peace cannot be achieved or sustained without the full recognition, participation, and agency of minorities, H.E. Ms. Ziadeh highlighted that the Forum serves as a vital platform for constructive dialogue, cooperation, and the exchange of experiences among States, civil society, and other stakeholders. She noted that the objective of this year's Forum was not only to examine existing challenges, but also to affirm minorities as co-creators of peaceful societies and to identify practical and actionable pathways forward for States and the international community to strengthen inclusion, trust, and long-term coexistence.

ITEM 1: BUILDING TRUST AND SOCIAL COHESION: ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

The first panel of the 18th Session of the Forum on Minority Issues focused on the theme **“Building Trust and Social Cohesion: Addressing Barriers to Peaceful Coexistence.”** The session brought together panelists whose interventions highlighted the entrenched barriers to peaceful coexistence faced by minority communities worldwide, the structural drivers of mistrust and discrimination, and the concrete pathways through which States and international institutions can foster inclusive, resilient, and cohesive societies. The panel underscored that trust and social cohesion cannot be achieved without confronting the historical, social, and institutional factors that fuel discrimination, “othering,” and exclusion. Speakers emphasized that minority communities continue to face multifaceted restrictions - legal, social, political, and cultural - that undermine their dignity and inhibit their ability to fully participate in society. The discussions also highlighted numerous grassroots and national initiatives that demonstrate how inclusion, recognition, and community-led approaches can strengthen peaceful coexistence.

Presentations on the topic under discussion were made by the following panellists: Mr. Christophe Kamp, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities; Ms. Diane Ala'i, Independent human rights and international affairs expert and former Representative to the United Nations for the Baha'i International Community; and Mr. Rup Sunar, Chairperson of Dignity Initiative and former OHCHR Senior Minority Fellow.

Mr. Christophe Kamp opened by emphasizing that trust cannot be imposed but must be built through deliberate, everyday choices, stressing that mistrust and exclusion stem from structural inequalities and deliberate political manipulation. In a context marked by nationalist rhetoric and the securitization of minority issues, he noted that trust-building is increasingly difficult yet vital to preventing tensions and conflict. He highlighted the role of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, established in 1992, as an early warning and early action mechanism that supports States in managing diversity, promoting inclusion and preventing conflict through diplomacy, policy advice and facilitated dialogue.

Kamp observed that minorities frequently face structural exclusion and discrimination in education, employment, housing and political participation, alongside social stigmatization that fuels intergroup mistrust. At the same time, some Governments portray minorities as security threats, creating a paradox in which trust-building appears risky for both minorities and majorities. He warned that exclusion weakens societies, increasing risks of radicalization, disengagement and external manipulation, while inclusion strengthens resilience, innovation and security. He identified four key pillars for building trust: education, dialogue, visibility and accountability.

Ms. Diane Ala'i opened her intervention by situating the conversation within decades of United Nations efforts to advance minority rights, recalling Professor Asbjørn Eide's early warnings about “cynical but skilful political entrepreneurs” who manipulate prejudice and irrational fears for political gain. She noted that, over 30 years later, similar patterns of deliberate exclusion, discrimination, and hostility continue to shape minority experiences across the world.

Drawing on the lived experience of the Bahá'í community in Iran, she illustrated the systematic nature of “othering,” explaining how discrimination begins in early childhood and extends throughout life. She described enforced classroom segregation, denial of university admission despite strong academic performance, bans on entering numerous professions, arbitrary raids and detentions, confiscation of property, state-sponsored incitement to hatred, and even the denial of dignified burial, an approach a former Special Rapporteur termed “persecution from cradle to grave.” Alai also highlighted administrative practices that erase minority identities, such as ID card systems that, despite claims of neutrality, ultimately prevent individuals from marrying or accessing essential services. Despite these realities, Ms. Ala'i emphasized examples of solidarity from majority communities and positive developments in the Gulf region.

Mr. Rup Sunar stressed that trust and social cohesion are essential foundations for inclusive and democratic societies. He explained that historical forms of discrimination, particularly caste-based exclusion in South Asia, continue to shape political and social structures, reinforcing inequalities and marginalizing minority communities. Mistrust, he noted, grows from entrenched structural discrimination, stigmatization and the persistent invisibility of minorities. Despite constitutional guarantees, many groups still face discriminatory norms limiting access to education, healthcare, employment and land, political underrepresentation, cultural and religious persecution, and a widening digital divide that spreads harmful narratives.

Mr. Sunar highlighted how Dalit and minority communities are increasingly mobilizing through grassroots organizing, digital activism, litigation and political engagement. He provided global examples of initiatives that foster trust, including legal literacy programmes for Dalit youth in Nepal, mother-tongue education in India, Social Harmony Committees in Bangladesh, and artistic expression within the U.S. Black Lives Matter movement.

Interactive Dialogue

In the interactive dialogue, participants raised numerous concerns related to building trust and fostering social cohesion among minority communities and the broader society. They highlighted that barriers to peaceful coexistence often stem from the denial of minority identities, lack of recognition in law, and restricted access to public life, which fuels marginalization, exclusion, and mistrust. Several interventions noted that structural discrimination, hate speech, and violence targeting minorities exacerbate tensions and impede inclusive governance, while safe spaces for dialogue and youth engagement are often insufficient or absent.

Participants stressed the importance of recognizing and protecting minority identities as a first step toward trust and social cohesion. Civil society organizations and local groups shared examples of ongoing discrimination and human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, restrictions on political participation, suppression of minority languages, denial of nationality, and attacks on cultural practices. Specific cases were cited, illustrating the global and intersectional nature of these challenges. Minority women, youth, and other vulnerable groups were highlighted as particularly affected by layered forms of discrimination.

Positive examples of initiatives promoting trust and coexistence were also presented. Civil society organizations highlighted grassroots projects that build dialogue across communities, provide education in minority languages, support leadership development, and combat hate speech. Several initiatives demonstrated how intercultural dialogue, inclusive governance, and recognition of minority contributions can strengthen social cohesion and prevent conflict. Participants emphasized the need for comprehensive, multi-level approaches to address barriers to coexistence. This includes embedding minority perspectives in policymaking, ensuring representation in political and public institutions, and creating safe and participatory spaces for dialogue. Many underscored that building trust requires sustained recognition of minority identities, proactive protection of cultural and linguistic rights, and systemic measures to address historical and structural inequities.

Several Member States highlighted good practices and concrete measures to strengthen minority inclusion, trust, and social cohesion. For example, Uruguay shared experiences in promoting cohesion through local governance, municipal capacity building, citizen participation, alignment with national policies, and the use of education, media, arts, and data to combat stereotypes and support vulnerable groups. Pakistan emphasized constitutional safeguards and guaranteed minority representation in Parliament, Government, the military, and the arts, supported by the National Commission for the Rights of Minorities, which provides a quasi-judicial mechanism to address violations. Kazakhstan underscored the Assembly of the People and networks of ethnocultural associations and ethnic media in fostering dialogue and protecting minority rights. Other examples included Lesotho's reforms enhancing access to justice, inclusive education, and community dialogue; North Macedonia's institutional framework ensuring minority participation and education and language rights; Greece's model of the Muslim Minority schools, quotas, and transparent religious leadership; South Africa's constitutional protections combined with education and dialogue; Venezuela's legal framework promoting equality and inclusion; Slovenia's support for Italian, Hungarian, and Roma communities; and Austria's National Minorities Act with funding for organizations, intercultural projects, and multilingualism.

Overall, the dialogue highlighted that fostering trust and social cohesion is not only a moral and legal imperative but also essential for sustainable peace and inclusive development. Recognition, visibility, and meaningful participation of minorities were consistently identified as foundational for building resilient, peaceful, and cohesive societies.

ITEM 2: RECOGNIZING THE FULL CONTRIBUTION OF MINORITIES TO THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FABRIC OF SOCIETY

The theme of this session, "Recognizing the full contribution of minorities to the economic, social, cultural, political, and institutional fabric of society," emphasizes the importance of acknowledging, valuing, and including minority communities as integral actors in building inclusive, resilient, and peaceful societies. Item 2 highlights that without recognition and protection, the substantial contributions of minorities remain invisible, and societies fail to benefit from their economic, cultural, political, and institutional roles.

Presentations on the topic under discussion were made by the following panellists: Honourable Dr. Litha Musyimi-Ogana, Member of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Chairperson of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities and Minorities in Africa; Mr. Surya Deva, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development; and Ms. Angelica Ricaurte Villalobos, Latin America Advisor at Minority Rights Group.

In her address, Commissioner **Dr. Litha Musyimi-Ogana** highlighted the diversity of Africa, pointing out that while the continent is rich in languages, cultures, and traditions, the most marginalized communities including pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, coastal and forest peoples, and religious and linguistic minorities remain largely unrecognized. Drawing on the African Commission's Mapping Study on Minorities, she stressed that recognition is the first step toward trust, and that invisibility and denial of identity fuel exclusion.

Dr. Musyimi-Ogana outlined the foundational contributions of minorities. Economically, they sustain markets, protect biodiversity, and support rural economies; culturally, they preserve endangered languages, spiritual practices, and artistic traditions; politically and socially, their activism has influenced governance, constitutional reforms, and landmark human rights decisions, such as the Ogiek and Endorois cases. She called for legal recognition of minority identities, protection of land and traditional livelihoods, inclusion in development planning, and safeguarding of languages. Importantly, she argued that minorities do not weaken nations, they complete them. Turning to peacebuilding and transitional justice, she noted that minorities often bear the brunt of conflict yet remained excluded from negotiations and reconciliation processes. She argued that peace and justice can only endure when minority voices are meaningfully included at all levels, as essential partners in reconciliation and nation-building.

Mr. Surya Deva emphasized the vital contributions minorities make across economic, social, cultural, political, and institutional spheres, while underscoring that these contributions can only be fully realized when their right to development is respected. Economically, he noted that minorities often face exclusion from formal opportunities, yet continue to sustain national economies through entrepreneurship, job creation, and strong community support systems, including vocational training, microcredit, and temporary shelter for those left behind. Socially and culturally, minorities enrich societies by preserving distinct languages, customs, religious festivals, artistic traditions, and cuisines, helping communities value and embrace diversity.

Politically, he highlighted how minority leaders overcome systemic barriers to participate in governance, shaping reforms that address inequality and mentoring younger generations. Institutionally, he stressed that minority representation ensures that governance structures reflect the diversity of society and respond effectively to the needs and rights of all groups. Mr. Deva argued that realizing minorities' right to development is essential for unlocking their full potential.

Ms. Angelica Ricaurte Villalobos provided examples from the Americas to illustrate the breadth of minority contributions. She highlighted how Afro-descendant communities sustain economies, protect ecosystems, and preserve cultural and historical heritage, citing U.S. Black-owned businesses, Afro-Brazilian cultural influence, and mixed Indigenous/Afro-descendant communities' role in forest, river, and coastal stewardship in Ecuador and Colombia.

She also emphasized the role of minority leaders in democratic reform, advancing human rights, strengthening institutions, and shaping public policies.

Despite these essential contributions, recognition remains limited. Ricaurte called for systemic action to close this gap, including transforming narratives to view minorities as architects of society, institutionalizing meaningful participation in decision-making processes, investing in minority-led initiatives and leadership, and generating disaggregated data to ensure visibility and accountability. Together, these addresses underscore that minorities are foundational to the social, cultural, economic, political, and institutional life of societies.

Interactive Dialogue

In the interactive dialogue, participants highlighted the essential contributions of minority communities to the economic, social, cultural, political, and institutional life of their countries, while also drawing attention to the persistent challenges and barriers they face. Many interventions emphasized that despite minorities' significant role in nation-building, development, and social cohesion, their contributions are often overlooked, marginalized, or actively suppressed.

Participants raised concerns regarding systemic discrimination, exclusion from decision-making, denial of access to education and economic opportunities, and the erasure of minority identities in public and cultural life. Specific issues were cited, illustrating a global pattern of marginalization. Challenges include restrictions on the use of minority languages, lack of political representation, arbitrary detention of activists, denial of property rights, and barriers to public participation. Minority women, youth, and persons with disabilities were particularly highlighted as facing compounded discrimination. Several participants underscored the need to formally recognize the contributions of minorities in all spheres of society. States and civil society organizations shared examples of good practices, such as inclusive legal frameworks, financial and institutional support, and initiatives promoting cultural preservation, minority education, and political participation. Civil society organizations presented grassroots initiatives supporting minority artists, promoting minority-led governance, advancing education in minority languages, and fostering inclusive civic participation.

Several Member States highlighted national measures and policies recognizing and supporting minority contributions across economic, social, cultural, political, and institutional spheres. For example, Albania shared its comprehensive legal and institutional framework, including the 2017 Law on Minorities, the National Committee on Minorities, targeted programs for Roma and Egyptian communities, and the National Minorities. Azerbaijan emphasized its longstanding multicultural policy, guaranteeing minority rights through the Constitution, mother-tongue education, and promotion of ethnic cultures via publications, audiovisual materials, and minority-language media. Canada highlighted multicultural legislation, targeted programs in education, employment, and civic participation, and support for businesses owned by women, racialized persons, and LGBTQI+ communities. Lithuania presented its Law on National Minorities, funding for cultural and language education, and support for diverse religious communities. Ukraine showcased minority contributions to national resilience and democracy while noting conflict-related challenges. Spain stressed the

inclusion of the Roma in decision-making, supported by legal measures against antigypsyism. These illustrations demonstrate diverse approaches to fostering participation, protecting identities, and enhancing societal cohesion.

The dialogue also highlighted that recognition alone is insufficient without concrete structural measures. Participants called for the enforcement of minority rights, protection from violence and persecution, access to public services and leadership positions, and the promotion of cultural and linguistic heritage. Calls were made for international cooperation to hold States accountable for violations and create mechanisms to address historical injustices and systemic exclusion.

Overall, the dialogue reinforced that recognizing and empowering minorities is vital for sustainable development, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence. Participants stressed that meaningful inclusion and acknowledgment of minorities' contributions strengthen democracy, enrich cultural life, and build more resilient and equitable societies.

ITEM 3: AMPLIFYING MINORITY VOICES IN PEACEBUILDING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE PROCESSES

The participation of minorities in peacebuilding, accountability, and transitional justice is critical to achieving sustainable, inclusive, and legitimate processes. Minorities are often the most affected by conflict, violence, and systemic exclusion, yet their perspectives, experiences, and knowledge are frequently ignored in formal peace negotiations and transitional justice mechanisms. Amplifying their voices ensures that peace is not abstract but grounded in lived realities, that justice addresses structural inequalities, and that societies benefit from the unique capacities and contributions of minority communities.

Presentations on the topic under discussion were made by the following panellists: Ms. Fatuma Abdillahi Ali, Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, Certified Professional Mediator and Former OHCHR Senior Minority Fellow; Dr. Farah Mihlar, Senior Lecturer in Human Rights at Oxford Brookes University; and Dr. Tenzin Dorjee, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Political Science at Columbia University.

Ms. Fatuma Ali highlighted the persistent gap between formal commitments to peace and the lived realities of minority communities. Drawing on the example of northeastern Kenya, particularly the Wajir region, she illustrated how minority women, led by Deka Ibrahim Abdi from the Somali ethnic minority, mobilized grassroots initiatives to prevent and resolve conflict. Despite lacking formal authority or resources, these women built an early warning and response system using community trust, local knowledge, and courage, which eventually influenced regional and national peace processes, including the mediation led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan after Kenya's 2007–2008 election violence.

The initiative culminated in the Al-Fatah Declaration, blending customary law with state law, restoring dignity, and introducing innovative accountability mechanisms, including community oversight of security forces and non-violent sanctions. Ms. Ali emphasized that

minorities are not merely beneficiaries but agents of peace, and their participation strengthens institutions, legitimizes peace, and fosters deeper societal healing.

Dr. Farah Mihlar framed the discussion within the historical foundations of international human rights and transitional justice, recalling that both emerged from the commitment of “never again” after the Holocaust. Despite these aspirations, she noted that grave violations, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, continue today in places such as Sudan, Ukraine, and Gaza. Against this backdrop, she argued that transitional justice processes consistently neglect minorities, even though minority groups often bear a disproportionate share of violence precisely because of their identity and non-dominant status. Drawing on examples from Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Afghanistan, and Iraq, Mihlar illustrated how minorities are frequently targeted for atrocities and yet remain invisible in truth-seeking, judicial accountability, reparations, and memorialization efforts.

She called for a comprehensive minority rights approach to transitional justice, one that interrogates how identity shapes victimhood, patterns of abuse, and justice demands. Dr. Mihlar underscored that such an approach must prioritize the core pillars of minority rights - identity, participation, and non-discrimination - and embed minority perspectives at every stage, from data collection and mechanism design to implementation of recommendations. She emphasized that this does not privilege minorities over majorities but instead addresses structural inequalities and prevents processes from becoming delegitimized or exclusionary.

Dr. Tenzin Dorjee focused on the broader contributions of minorities to society and how minorities enrich them in countless ways. For example, through cuisine, labor, scientific innovation, and, most importantly, the minority perspective, which he described as a unique lens that reveals a society’s true character, its injustices, and its potential.

Dr. Dorjee highlighted the situation of Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians in the People’s Republic of China, referring to “a policy of cultural and linguistic erasure”. He emphasised that policies protecting and promoting minorities are not only more conducive to well being and stability but also discourage secessionism, radicalization, and conflict. He urged States to empower national minorities by protecting their languages, cultures, and traditions, and called for the closure of Tibetan residential schooling.

Collectively, these speeches demonstrate that minority inclusion is essential for effective peacebuilding, transitional justice, and societal stability. Minorities are not only victims of conflict but also agents of innovative solutions, reconciliation, and governance. Ensuring their meaningful participation requires recognizing their identities, protecting their rights, investing in their initiatives, and embedding their perspectives into local, national, and international processes. When minority voices are amplified, peace becomes more legitimate, justice more equitable, and societies more resilient, inclusive, and harmonious.

Interactive Dialogue

During the interactive dialogue, participants emphasized the critical role of minority communities in peacebuilding, transitional justice, and accountability processes, while highlighting the persistent exclusion and systemic marginalization that undermines their participation. Interventions drew attention to the intersectional nature of minority

vulnerabilities, including political repression, cultural erasure, gender-based violence, forced displacement, and denial of basic rights.

Participants underscored that meaningful peace and transitional justice cannot be achieved without directly engaging minorities, recognizing their contributions, and addressing historical and ongoing injustices. Concerns were raised regarding the systemic exclusion of minority communities across regions. Specific issues included arbitrary arrests, killings, forced displacement, restrictions on language and education, environmental degradation, and denial of political representation.

Several interventions highlighted good practices and opportunities to amplify minority voices. UNICEF called for the engagement of children from minority communities in peacebuilding and transitional processes. Some Member States and civil society organizations shared examples of legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms aimed at inclusion, protection, and participatory governance. For instance, Mauritius highlighted reconciliation mechanisms and inclusive decision-making, while other countries noted constitutional protections for minorities. Civil society organizations presented grassroots initiatives, including monitoring mechanisms, participatory platforms, advocacy for inclusive policy-making, and documentation of human rights violations.

Several Member States highlighted national measures and policies aimed at empowering minorities and ensuring their active participation in public life, peacebuilding, and transitional processes. Mauritania emphasized its commitment to national cohesion, diversity, and inclusive development through legal and policy frameworks, including the National Strategy for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, which enhances access to services, education, justice, and inclusive governance. Türkiye highlighted constitutional guarantees of equality and the rights of non-Muslim minorities under its Constitution and the Lausanne Peace Treaty, underlining ongoing efforts to foster an inclusive society, protect minorities from discrimination or hate, and ensure accountability, while also illustrating practical engagement in regional peace and protection initiatives.

The dialogue also highlighted the importance of integrating minority perspectives into the design of peacebuilding frameworks and accountability mechanisms. Participants stressed that without the full inclusion of minority voices, peace and justice processes risk being incomplete, inequitable, and unsustainable. The session reinforced that amplifying minority voices is essential not only for protecting rights but also for fostering durable peace, social cohesion, and democratic governance.

Concluding Remarks

In his concluding remarks, the **Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Prof. Nicolas Levrat**, expressed his sincere appreciation for the active participation and engagement of all delegates, panellists, and civil society organizations during the 18th session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues. He highlighted the Forum's continued role as a unique and essential space within the UN human rights system, emphasizing its open access, equal speaking opportunities for States and civil society, and non-hierarchical format that fosters inclusive dialogue. Prof. Levrat acknowledged that while improvements to the Forum's format are always possible, the

session has demonstrated the value of bringing together diverse voices to discuss the critical themes of recognizing minority contributions and amplifying minority voices in peacebuilding, accountability, and transitional justice processes.

He noted the strong engagement of civil society participants, particularly minority-led organizations, and the meaningful interventions from State representatives, underlining the importance for Governments to listen attentively to the perspectives shared. He reflected on the challenges faced by minorities worldwide, including systemic exclusion, denial of identity, and barriers to meaningful participation in peace and transitional justice processes, stressing that these discussions are essential to advancing inclusive, resilient, and just societies. He underscored that the Forum provides an opportunity not only to highlight violations but also to recognize and learn from minority contributions to economic, social, cultural, political, and institutional development.

The Special Rapporteur recalled key statements from panellists and participants, noting the importance of recognizing minority identities, valuing their economic, social, and cultural contributions, and ensuring their voices are amplified in governance, peacebuilding, and transitional justice. He emphasized the critical role of intersectional approaches, local knowledge, and grassroots initiatives, citing examples such as minority women-led peacebuilding in Kenya and the inclusion of minority perspectives in institutional reforms across diverse regions. Prof. Levrat reiterated that sustainable peace, justice, and reconciliation require minority participation at all levels, and that States, UN agencies, and other actors have a shared responsibility to invest in and protect minority rights.

The **Chairperson of the Forum, H.E. Ms. Caroline Ziadeh**, expressed her gratitude to the interpreters, including in international sign language, security personnel, and all behind-the-scenes staff whose efforts ensured the smooth functioning of the session. She thanked all participants for their flexibility and engagement, highlighting the Forum as a vital platform for dialogue and knowledge-sharing on minority rights. She emphasized the importance of creating safe spaces that allow individuals and organizations, including those unable to attend due to visa or resource constraints, to participate meaningfully. She called for sustained political will at national and international levels to implement the recommendations shared during the session, particularly in recognizing minority contributions, safeguarding identities, and ensuring inclusion in peacebuilding and transitional justice processes.

H.E. Ms. Ziadeh also highlighted the need for greater intersectional approaches, wider representation from UN agencies, underrepresented regions, and local authorities, and the importance of embedding minority rights perspectives in policies and institutional reforms. She concluded by stressing that amplifying minority voices is not only a matter of justice and equality but a prerequisite for building stronger, more peaceful, and cohesive societies. Expressing her appreciation to all participants for their contributions, she closed the Forum with warm thanks and encouragement for continued engagement and advocacy for minority rights throughout the year.
