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Recommendations made by the Forum on Minority Issues at its eighteenth session, on the theme “The contribution of minorities to diverse, resilient and peaceful societies”

Report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Nicolas Levrat

Summary

The recommendations contained in the present report are drawn primarily from the discussions of and contributions made by participants at the eighteenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues, held in Geneva on 27 and 28 November 2025 on the theme “The contribution of minorities to diverse, resilient and peaceful societies”. The session was divided into three panel discussions, on the following themes: (a) “Building trust and social cohesion: addressing barriers to peaceful coexistence”; (b) “Recognizing the full contribution of minorities to the economic, social, cultural, political and institutional fabric of society”; and (c) “Amplifying minority voices in peacebuilding, accountability and transitional justice processes”. The aim of the Forum is to serve as a platform for promoting dialogue and cooperation on issues faced by persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups and to tackle the multiple challenges faced by minority communities worldwide.



I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 6/15 and 19/23. It contains the recommendations of the Forum on Minority Issues at its eighteenth session, held in Geneva on 27 and 28 November 2025 on the theme “The contribution of minorities to diverse, resilient and peaceful societies”. The work of the Forum was guided by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Nicolas Levrat. The Chair of the session, appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council pursuant to Council resolution 6/15, was Caroline Ziadeh of Lebanon. About 975 participants from 78 countries registered for the session, including representatives of States, United Nations mechanisms, bodies, specialized agencies, funds and programmes and intergovernmental and regional organizations, as well as mechanisms in the field of human rights such as national human rights institutions and other relevant national bodies, non-governmental organizations, representatives of minorities, academics and experts on minority issues.
2. The recommendations contained in the present report are drawn primarily from the discussions of and contributions made by the participants at the eighteenth session of the Forum. The recommendations are based on international law as well as on standards and good practices in the field of protection of minority rights. They are aimed at providing guidance for the further implementation of, inter alia, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.
3. Key elements of the international legal and normative framework from a human rights perspective include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
4. The aim of the eighteenth session of the Forum was to address the contribution of minorities to diverse, resilient and peaceful societies. Participants recognized that minorities often faced tensions not only in relation to dominant groups, but also within and between minority communities, frequently rooted in long-standing structural discrimination, political and economic exclusion and unequal access to basic services. They highlighted during the discussions that challenges were experienced particularly acutely by marginalized groups within minorities, including women, youth, older persons, migrants, persons with disabilities and persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, who were subject to intersectional forms of discrimination both from dominant groups and within their own communities. Against that backdrop, the participants sought to underscore the transformative potential of inclusive societies grounded in representation, participation, non-discrimination and equality, in which minorities were recognized not merely as rights holders in need of protection but as active agents of peace, justice and collective resilience. During the discussions, the participants examined the root causes of exclusion, discrimination and intergroup tensions, highlighted good practices to prevent social tensions in daily life and institutional settings and explored ways to ensure that the contributions of minorities were fairly recognized and meaningfully integrated into national narratives, institutions and policies. Particular attention was given to the unique perspectives and essential role of persons belonging to minorities in rebuilding inclusive, stable and sustainable institutions in societies in transition, including post-conflict contexts. Participants were encouraged to share best practices and initiatives that demonstrated the active role of minority communities in advancing multilayered identities, promoting social justice and strengthening societal resilience.
5. The Forum was divided into three panel discussions, on the following themes: (a) “Building trust and social cohesion: addressing barriers to peaceful coexistence”, during which participants examined the structural drivers of mistrust, exclusion and intergroup tensions affecting relations both between minorities and dominant groups and within minority communities, and highlighted effective State and community initiatives to foster trust, including mediation, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, multilingual education and cultural expression in countering stigmatization; (b) “Recognizing the full contribution of

minorities to the economic, social, cultural, political and institutional fabric of society”, during which participants explored how the contributions of minorities were often undervalued and considered approaches to ensure their fair recognition and integration into national narratives and policymaking, drawing on examples of minority engagement in economic development, cultural life, civic participation and human rights advocacy through inclusive, multi-stakeholder processes; and (c) “Amplifying minority voices in peacebuilding, accountability and transitional justice processes”, during which participants focused on the participation of minorities in post-conflict and transition contexts, examined minority-led contributions to reconciliation and justice and considered the legal and institutional reforms required to ensure minority representation in peacebuilding and transitional justice mechanisms, with a view to building more inclusive, stable and resilient societies.

6. The recommendations of the Forum at its eighteenth session are organized into a set of general recommendations and a set of more specific recommendations, classified according to the three agenda items that framed the discussion during the session. The recommendations:

(a) Are aimed at guiding policy and practice at the local, national and international levels to contribute to the integration of minority issues into broader institutional frameworks and efforts towards cohesive and equitable societies;

(b) Are intended to leverage opportunities, practices and initiatives that strengthen the inclusion of minority groups, in line with the principles and rights enshrined in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and other relevant international instruments;

(c) Have an emphasis on an intersectional approach, addressing the compounded challenges faced by minority women and other vulnerable groups;

(d) Reflect the recognition of the important role that the United Nations, as well as other international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, representatives of minority groups and other stakeholders, can play in promoting fair minority representation.

7. The recommendations build on the recommendations prepared at earlier sessions of the Forum, in particular the fourteenth session, on the theme “Conflict prevention and the protection of the human rights of minorities”,¹ the sixteenth session, on the theme “Minorities and cohesive societies: equality, social inclusion and socioeconomic participation”,² and the seventeenth session, on the theme “Minority representation and self-representation in public spaces and discourses”.³ They also follow up on the recommendations contained in the thematic reports of the Special Rapporteurs on minority issues, in particular the report to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-fifth session on promoting diversity on minority issues to strengthen the universal dimension of human rights⁴ and the reports to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities⁵ and its seventy-ninth session on institutional designs promoting minorities’ effective participation towards diverse and inclusive societies.⁶

8. The recommendations are intended to be implemented in countries across the world and are aimed at assisting States, private companies and other stakeholders in better understanding their human rights obligations in relation to the promotion and protection of the fair representation of minority groups.

¹ See [A/HRC/49/81](#).

² See [A/HRC/55/70](#).

³ See [A/HRC/58/69](#).

⁴ [A/HRC/55/51](#).

⁵ [A/70/212](#).

⁶ [A/79/169](#).

II. General recommendations

9. States should become Parties to, and effectively implement, all international and regional human rights instruments that protect and promote the human rights of persons belonging to minorities.
10. States should ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, including through national action plans, legislation and policies.
11. States should engage with the Forum on Minority Issues, give due consideration to the recommendations emerging from the Forum and promote its relevance among human rights actors at the international, regional and national levels.
12. States should strengthen the Forum on Minority Issues by supporting the establishment of a voluntary fund to promote the meaningful participation of civil society and representatives of minority groups from a wider diversity of countries in sessions of the Forum.
13. States should recognize and promote the role of minorities and diversity in building peaceful, resilient and inclusive societies, including through public discourse, education and cultural initiatives.
14. States should adopt and implement comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and policies to ensure equal opportunities and substantive equality for all, including persons belonging to minority groups.
15. States should consider convening a world summit on minority issues to ensure that minority issues are not left out of the post-2030 agenda. Such a summit would advance global dialogue, visibility and cooperation on the rights of persons belonging to minorities, while promoting diversity as a renewed foundation for the universality of human rights.
16. The United Nations should ensure that minority perspectives are systematically integrated across its regional and country-level programmes, policies and operations.
17. The media, in accordance with international standards on freedom of expression, should responsibly raise awareness of minority issues, counter harmful stereotypes and contribute to public accountability.

III. Recommendations on addressing barriers to peaceful coexistence to build trust and social cohesion

18. States should dismantle structural discrimination affecting minorities by fully implementing minority rights standards and by protecting and, where necessary, expanding special or affirmative measures, including reserved representation, to remedy historical and systemic inequalities.
19. States should prevent, monitor and respond to hate crimes and hate speech, including online and with special attention when they are proffered by prominent political figures, through early-warning mechanisms, independent oversight and accountability measures, while ensuring the protection and safety of affected individuals and communities.
20. States should ensure the meaningful participation of minorities in decision-making at all levels, including in the development, implementation and evaluation of laws, policies and programmes affecting them.
21. States should support sustained intercultural and interfaith dialogue initiatives, particularly at the local level, as tools for trust-building, conflict prevention and social cohesion.

22. States should invest in inclusive education, pluralistic and independent media and cultural platforms that challenge stereotypes, counter misinformation and amplify minority perspectives, including through co-created educational content.
23. States should promote shared civic spaces and initiatives that foster interaction and cooperation among communities and avoid policies or practices that entrench segregation or marginalization.
24. States should establish and adequately fund monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including disaggregated data collection and participatory assessments, to track progress in building trust, social cohesion and minority inclusion, in line with human rights standards.
25. National human rights institutions, civil society and the media should contribute to countering polarizing narratives and promoting dialogue and social cohesion.

IV. Recommendations on the recognition of the full contribution of minorities to the economic, social, cultural, political and institutional fabric of society

26. States should explicitly recognize the contributions of minorities to economic, social, cultural, political and institutional life in laws, policies and public discourse, affirming diversity as a societal asset, including the contributions of minority women, youth, older persons, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and persons with disabilities.
27. States should establish or strengthen inclusive consultative mechanisms to ensure minority participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies and development programmes.
28. States should ensure equal access for minorities to economic opportunities, including through targeted measures supporting entrepreneurship, skills development, access to credit and participation in labour markets.
29. States should remove barriers to minority participation in public life, including in elected bodies, public administration and the judiciary, as well as other decision-making institutions, and adopt special measures where necessary to achieve substantive equality.
30. States should protect and promote minority languages, cultures, traditions and cultural heritage by investing in educational programmes for all and education in minority languages, including support for minority-led cultural initiatives.
31. States should ensure that minorities, including women and youth, have equitable access to quality education and culturally appropriate public services.
32. States should explicitly recognize minority identities in national legal frameworks and, where appropriate, in census and data systems, in accordance with the principles of self-identification, data protection and human rights safeguards.
33. States should protect minority human rights defenders, community leaders and civil society actors by ensuring a safe and enabling environment for their work and participation in public life.

V. Recommendations on amplifying minority voices in peacebuilding, accountability and transitional justice processes

34. States should ensure that peacebuilding, conflict prevention and post-conflict processes are inclusive of minorities from the outset, including by addressing identity-based discrimination and exclusion as root causes of conflict.

35. States should guarantee the effective, safe and meaningful participation of minorities in peace negotiations, mediation, local peace structures and post-conflict governance, in line with the guidance note of the Secretary-General on transitional justice.⁷ They should ensure that minorities are empowered and supported to participate fully and effectively in transitional justice processes and that the recommendations of truth commissions, reparations programmes and related mechanisms are implemented without discrimination.

36. States should adopt a minority rights-based approach to transitional justice, embedded in all stages of the process, including through early mapping of the minority and identity dimensions of violations, disaggregated demographic data collection and the inclusion of minorities in the design of mechanisms to ensure responsiveness to their specific justice needs. Such an approach needs to be embedded in all stages of the process, including truth-seeking, reparations, accountability and institutional reform.

37. States should ensure that minorities participate in the design of transitional justice mechanisms so that selected measures respond to diverse justice conceptions, including, where relevant, collective reparations and culturally or spiritually grounded accountability mechanisms.

38. States should empower and support minorities to participate fully and effectively throughout transitional justice processes, including through capacity-building, protection measures and access to information and by creating enabling conditions for minority communities to engage as capable actors and partners rather than solely as victims or beneficiaries.

39. States should proactively mainstream minority rights and intersectional perspectives into peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution processes, recognizing and investing in the transformative potential of minority inclusion for sustainable peace.

40. States should promote inclusive peacebuilding beyond legal processes, including by engaging minority children and youth and supporting education and professional training on minority histories, languages and plural approaches to justice.

⁷ See https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/transitionaljustice/sg-guidance-note/2023_07_guidance_note_transitional_justice_en.pdf.