

Ephria

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates, I speak on behalf of the European Platform of Azerbaijanis of Iran. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Azerbaijani community continues to face systematic exclusion from decision-making in public policy concerning their well-being and cultural identity, which directly violates Azerbaijani rights as an ethnic minority group. Firstly, despite the community numbering in the millions, Azerbaijani cultural identity and linguistic rights are being violated as education in the Azerbaijani language is banned at all formal levels. Peaceful efforts to promote mother tongue education, including cultural activities, are met with unlawful arrests and baseless charges, such as propaganda against the state, violating Iran's commitments under the ICESCR. Secondly, Azerbaijanis face the criminalization of civic activities and the repression of lawyers and activists. Dozens are currently detained, with student dissident [inaudible] facing execution. All of these individuals are subjected to unlawful detention and arrest, and vague overbroad charges, such as acting against national security, which blatantly violate Iran's violations under Articles 9, 14, and 19 of the ICCPR. Thirdly, Iran continues to mismanage and neglect critical environmental and national resources relevant to the Azerbaijani community. Lake Urmia is drying, unregulated mining pollution at [inaudible], and heavy fuel use at Tabriz are causing dangerous air and water pollution. Yesterday, Iran's representative claimed that Iran's doors are open to everyone. But this contradicts its action on the ground, such as disallowing the Special Rapporteur to visit Iran. The EPIA urges the UN to hold Iran accountable for its lack of independent decision-making bodies that enable proper cross-cultural expression, dialogue, conflict resolution, and violence prevention. Azerbaijanis are entitled to express their culture and voice their opinions when it concerns, whether related to socio-economic rights [CUT OFF BY CHAIR].