

Fizza Khawar

Thank you Madame Chair, my name is Fizza and I am a legal and human rights expert from Pakistan. Minorities contributions to peacebuilding and justice efforts are absolutely crucial and I would like to address this in the context of the challenges experienced by religious minorities. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has consistently documented recurring cases of faith-based tensions and the increased vulnerability of minority women and girls to forced conversions. While we welcome the efforts made by the state of Pakistan to address this, it is pertinent to note that without the full involvement of minorities in these efforts, the social drivers of these tensions continue to persist. Beyond state efforts, Madame Chair, we must also reflect upon a broader challenge within the international human rights system. Top-down models of human rights protection alone cannot address deeply rooted community-based issues. In region where tribal justice systems and informal community-based mechanisms continue to shape social order, international human rights strategies can become disconnected from the local realities they seek to transform. Therefore, I respectfully offer two recommendations to the United Nations. First, encourage more bottom-up, community-inclusive peacebuilding initiatives, including collaborative platforms, where state institutions, local communities, and diverse faith groups can jointly address tensions. Second, establish an independent national mechanism to monitor progress in minority inclusion and follow up on community-based peacebuilding initiatives. Ultimately, meaningful peacebuilding requires practical and locally grounded human strategies, and particularly we must ensure that minority women and girls are treated not merely as victims, but uplifted as leaders, protectors of their communities, and drivers of peace, dignity, and lasting change. Thank you very much.