

European Rights Observatory

Madame Chair, distinguished representatives, I speak today about one of the most urgent and overlooked human rights concerns: the situation of the Ahwazi Arab women. Although the Ahwazi Arabs are the demographic majority in their homeland, generations of political marginalization, demographic engineering, and institutional exclusion have forced them into a minority in practice. For Ahwazi women, this is a reality that is lived daily. They experience dual oppression. As Arabs, they face systematic cultural, political and economic exclusion. As women, they confront discriminatory laws in marriage, custody, inheritance, movement, work, and education. Their exclusion from public decision-making undermines their equality, security, and dignity. Their resilience however sustains their community, preserving language, culture, and collective memory. Yet, this leadership is met with harassment, detention, or criminalization, especially for those who teach Arabic or engage in cultural work. The Ahwazi case shows that discrimination is not members, it is about denied rights, recognition, and participation. In line with the Forum's mandate, I respectfully recommend a UN monitoring mechanism on Ahwazi women, safe, non-punitive participation in public life, reform of discriminatory laws and policies, economic inclusion, education, and social protections, protection of cultural rights, including mother tongue education, targeted programs for women and youth, recognition of the Ahwazi people's right to meaningful cultural and political self-determination, including preserving language, managing cultural affairs, and participating fully in decisions that affect their lives. Sustainable peace requires dignity. The dignity of Ahwaz is inseparable from the dignity of its women. They continue to lead and to hope. The international community must listen and act. [cut off by Chair].