



Item 2: Recognizing the full contribution of minorities to the economic, social, cultural, political and institutional fabric of society

Delivered by: Dolkun Isa, President of the Uyghur Center for Democracy and Human Rights (UZDM)

Thank you, Chair. I am Dolkun Isa, from Uyghur Center for Democracy and Human Rights

When we speak about recognizing the contributions of unrepresented community, we often highlight what they give to society. But today, we must also highlight what many contribute despite structural obstacles designed to limit their participation.

Across the world, Uyghur diaspora communities have rebuilt the cultural and civic spaces that were erased or restricted in our homeland. Through cultural centres, language schools, artistic initiatives, democratic organising, and community institutions, we preserve our heritage while enriching the cultural and civic life of the societies we live in.

The Chinese government has been not only trying to turn Uyghurs into minorities, but also committing genocide in our homeland, our people have been systematically **deprived** of their cultural, political, and economic rights. Cultural figures, religious leaders, and scholars — including Professor Ilham Tohti, Dr. Rahila Dawut, Tashpolat Tiyp, Dr. Gulshen Abbas, including my own brothers Yakun Isa and Hushtar Isa — are serving long sentences for activities that anywhere else would be recognised as essential contributions to society.

Linguistic rights, a foundation of cultural identity, have come under severe pressure. The Uyghur language has been removed from schools, restricted in public life, and treated as an obstacle to “development.” This does not only affect education; it undermines the transmission of memory, history, and identity.

To truly recognise our contribution, states must ensure conditions where cultural and linguistic expression are protected, civic participation is respected, and unrepresented voices can contribute without fear, discrimination, or political pressure, including at this Forum.

Thank you.