

Democracy Defenders for Azerbaidjan

Speaking as a representative from the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran.

Linguistic, ethnic, cultural, religious, political, and social diversities are not respected and tolerated within the Iranian system, enormous efforts and resources have been invested to teach and act for an idealistic unity that is supposed to be guaranteed under unquestionable sovereignty of one language, one race, one religion, and one state. Pluralistic ideas and thoughts are seen as disrupting unity and against national security. Polarized understanding and interpretation of the world as black and white, right and wrong, has strongly dominated Iranian social, religious, and political philosophies. Diversity and equality of languages, cultures, identities, and ethnic groups are therefore denied in various forms to help assimilate and make all natural differences in one big unity pot. This approach has been pursued through formal education in schools and universities, and by the government. The beneficiaries of such educational system constitute the youth who may not necessarily be encouraged to form peaceful communities, solve problems with dialogue, seek solutions using reconciliations, learn to forgive, seek commonalities and plan for a stronger (?) minority. This is because our youth simply have not learned or encouraged to embrace such essential foundations for democracy, peace and sustainable security and development. Our youths are not empowered or allowed to take leadership and initiatives in peace-building efforts. Thank you.