

Yasa - Kurdish Centre for Studies and Legal Consultancy

Thank you, Madam. Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. President, first I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of Yasa about the Kurdish minority in Syria. Our organization Yasa is a Kurdish center for legal studies and consultancy. We advocate for the rights of the estimated 3 million Kurds in Syria. Ladies and gentlemen, minorities around the world suffer from a huge lack of international communication and understanding of their specific problems and issues, not only because of political oppression, but also because of the digital divide. Simple questions like who are the Kurds, where do they live, why are they treated differently in their homelands, and what are their needs? These questions cannot be answered fairly and appropriately at the international level. An example is the suffering story of Kurds in Syria, like the cases that took place in 1962: suddenly more than 150,000 Kurds became stateless in their own homeland. These people and their descendants, the so-called "Maktoum", which is an Arabic word for "unknown", lost their basic civil rights within the Syrian society, including rights to education, participation and co-determination, but also the right to have access to internet and digital media. The Maktoums were also excluded by law from the acquisition of the Syrian citizenship. Why has this suffering story not been communicated at the international level? More than 50 years later, there are still Maktoums in Syria, Kurdish Yaths, that still suffer the same problems like their parents. They are stateless, their language and culture are still prohibited, not only on the level of education, but also in the classic media. These people are excluded from holding public office fairly. They don't have equal rights like the Arabic majority in Syria. We would like to suggest... [CUT OFF BY CHAIR]