

Human Rights Council, Forum on Minority Issues

Side-event 1 December 2017

14:00-15:00, Room XXVII, Palais des Nations

First Panel

National Assimilation Policies: a Violation of Minority Youths' Rights

Tenth session – 30 November

Minority Youth: Towards Diverse and Inclusive Societies

Thank you very much miss Kaufman for your introduction, ladies and gentleman; my name is Qusay Doraghi I am an Ahwazi young person who fled from my beloved homeland Al-Ahwaz not so long ago , today I'm very honored to speak on behalf of Ahwazi-Arab youth minority group in Iran.

Residing mainly in the southwest of Iran, the Ahwazi -Arabs are one of Iran's most disadvantaged and persecuted ethnic groups, the population are estimated to be 5-7 million.

Iran always was and is a multinational country and different nations used to live together without major problems in regard to their identities. But with inception of Iran as a modern state, the centric, nation-state oriented-way of governing lead to force assimilation policies.

These policies have started with iron fist since 90 years ago. Despite all methods followed by successive Iranian governments to change the identity of 2/3 of the country. still now, different nations in Iran asking their rights of self-determination.

Ahwazi-Arabs in Iran suffer from denial of their identity, among other socio-economic crises.

Unfortunately, when Iranian government was engaged in building an Iranian identity instead of using inclusive approach, they used the concept of other, the Aryan theory and so on for defining the Iranian identity. So Iranian meant who is not Arab or Turk, despite the fact that over millions of Arabs and Turks are indigenous inhabitants of Iran.

Iran is very diverse country where Kurds live in Kurdistan, Baloch in Baluchistan, Lor in Lorestan, and so on - only Arabs province was changed. The province name has been changed from Arabistan after 600 years to the Persian name of Khuzestan – this was done to deny their Arab identity as well as part of ethnic cleansing and forceful assimilation.

Here in the UN, states aggregated on the necessity of sustainable development and in 2015 UNISCO

has announced that sustainable development is possible when mother tongue be use in education and development projects.

Iran like other extreme centric system follows of Iran policies. Iran which has one color one flag, one religion, one nation and one language denying the identity of other minorities.

The administer of education in 2012 hajbabaie said that 70 % of students in Iran starting schools when Persian is not their mother tongue.

Arabic and all languages such as Kurdish, Turkish and Baluchi are banned therefore denying them their linguistic rights.

This monolingual approach prevents minorities the same opportunity in education and job.

This beside discrimination policies toward minorities lead to high rate of illiteracy and unemployment in minority regions.

for example Among Ahwazis, the illiteracy rate is 4 times the national average. And unemployment is 6 times the national average!

We should be in surprise to see such a country like Iran with huge natural resources such as gas, oil touristic potential, good weather, agriculture and young population, ranking as a third world country. The answer is simple the majority of the population are not fully citizen, they are denied their right to develop themselves and be a power to develop their regions or countries.

Minorities in Iran are not full citizens and if they ask for their minimum cultural and linguistic rights will face persecution. When iranian government torture them and even change them under sentences like fighting God and profit.

There are few organizations who accept to reflect our case and be our voice in international communities.

We suffer within Iran and outside Iran we do not have ears to destine to us. Even organizations who claim to work on human right in iran when it comes to minorities they do their best to avoid covering the violations. Sometimes even adapt Iranian government accusation such as secessionist to legitimize their cold feet in supporting minorities.

at the end I would like to thank UNPO and all dedicated staffs and interns to accept to work with us, communities and minorities that other organizations won't accept to work with.