

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 52nd SESSION

### Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues

23 March 2023

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Fernand De Varennes, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority issues**, highlighted the 13 regional forums on minorities for Africa and the Middle East, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia which have ensured greater accessibility for minorities and greater opportunities to consider their specificities. These forums have also been key to providing much-needed clarification for a working definition of the concept of a minority. Mr. De Varennes remarked that the protection of minority rights has not improved over the years, and it is further deteriorating: millions of minorities are denied citizenship and education, participate in public life, and are targets of hate speech. He denounced the outright inaction and negligence in the protection of minority rights. He also deplored there has not been significant institutional development at the United Nations to advance the protection of minorities concerning other marginalized groups. The main recommendations of Mr. De Varennes and the report focus on taking concrete steps to protect minorities and their identity such as developing a legally binding instrument, the consolidation of regional forums, and voluntary funds for minorities at the United Nations.

#### Interactive dialogue

39 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. The majority of the countries commended the work of the Special Rapporteur and expressed their support for the mandate. Most countries shared the SR's recommendation of supporting a draft treaty on the protection of the rights of minorities and moving forward to fill the existing gaps in the protection of the substantive rights of minorities in the UN system. Most states condemned the rise in hate speech and hate crimes against minorities and urged for these not to go unpunished. Most countries also referred to their national policies and legislation which aim to protect the rights of minorities.

The **OIC** condemned the rise of hate speech against Muslims and right-wing ideologies in **Europe**. The **OIC** deplored the violations of the rights of the **Uyghur in Xinjiang**, of Muslim minorities in **India**, the rise of Islamophobia in Western societies, and the burning of the Quran. The **OIC and Bangladesh** denounced **Myanmar's** human rights of the **Rohingya**. **China** condemned selective mandates that target the sovereignty of the country and highlights the protection of minority rights in **Xinjiang and Tibet**. **China** condemned the U.S. for violating the rights of all minorities in the country. **Cuba** denounced the violation of minority rights by developed countries and colonizing powers. **India** rejected the reference to violations of human rights in India and expresses that the country guarantees minority rights under its Constitution. **Venezuela** denounced the rise of extremist movements and political parties with neo-Nazi and extreme right-wing ideologies. Venezuela expressed its concern about politicized mandates that promote unverified information about **Tibet and Xinjiang**. The **Russian Federation** condemned the double standards of the OHCHR in addressing the violations of minority rights in the **Baltic countries, the EU, and Ukraine**.

**The EU and Ukraine** condemned the illegal and unprovoked war of aggression waged by **Russia against Ukraine**, including Russia's instrumentalization of issues related to the protection of minorities. The **U.S.** denounced the violations of minority rights in **China**. **Afghanistan** denounced the Taliban's oppressive regime against minorities, including women and children. **Azerbaijan** condemned Armenia for violating minority rights. **Armenia** condemned Azerbaijan for blocking the Lachin Corridor which is affecting the rights of minorities.

**Most NGOs** commend the work of the SR and the mandate. They recognized the need to address the gaps in minority rights protection in the UN system and the urgent need to adopt a new legally binding instrument. Most NGOs condemned the rise of hate speech in social media and the restriction of the

rights of religious minorities. One NGO highlighted the need to advocate for families and parents of children who belong to minorities. Another NGO highlighted the need to protect **Jewish communities**. Another NGO remarked on the violations of ethnic minorities of **Iran in non-Persian areas**. One NGO denounced **China** for perpetrating human rights violations against minorities in **Tibet and Xinjiang**.

Two NGOs referred to **China** as a state that protects the rights of minorities in **Tibet and Xinjiang**. One NGO condemned the **U.S.** for the violation of minority rights and the promotion of white supremacy.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (39 country delegations):

*European Union, Tunisia, Colombia, Paraguay, China, Slovenia, United States, Russian Federation, Cameroon, Iraq, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Nepal, Armenia, Egypt, Austria, India, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Italy, Holy See, Georgia, Afghanistan, Australia, Croatia, Mexico, Azerbaijan, Romania, Bangladesh, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Hungary, Cyprus, Cuba, Ireland, Ukraine, Serbia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Brazil, Rwanda.*

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (13):

*Minority Rights Group, China Association for Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture (CAPDTC), World Jewish Congress, China Ethnic Minorities' Association for External Exchanges, ADALAH - Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Shaanxi Patriotic Volunteer Association, International Organization for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education (OIDEI) (Joint Statement), Humanists International, Centre Zagros pour les Droits de l'Homme, The Organization for Poverty Alleviation and Development, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan (Joint Statement), Association pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des revendications démocratiques/culturelles du peuple Azerbaïdjanais-Iran - « ARC », China Society for Human Rights Studies (CSHRS).*

To watch the full meeting refer to [UN Web TV](#).