

INVITED SPEAKERS

10TH SESSION OF THE FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES

Chairperson

Tarik KURDI (Republic of the Sudan)



Mr. Tarik Kurdi is a retired UNHCR international civil servant; he had been engaged in international cooperation for over 30 years mainly with the United Nations. He distinguished himself in a variety of Headquarters and Field functions encompassing refugee assistance, protection, emergency management, donor relations and humanitarian and political affairs. He most recently served as the UNHCR Country Representative in Syria, in Iraq and as the Senior Resource Manager in the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, as well as the Deputy Director of the Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa at headquarters. Mr. Kurdi brings considerable skills in diplomacy, external relations and a range of skills in leadership and in conceptual and analytical thinking. He possesses excellent skills in strategy and donor relations. He started his UN career in 1981, and held various leadership positions in more than 10 UNHCR offices around the world including in Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, as well as a number of senior assignments at Headquarters in Geneva, such as the Division of Human Resources Management, the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa



Keynote Speakers

Saskia Schellekens (Netherlands) on behalf of The UN Envoy on Youth



Ms. Saskia Schellekens is the Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. In that capacity she provides strategic guidance and policy advice in support of the Envoy's mandate to strengthen the UN's programmes on youth at all levels. Ms. Schellekens in particular leads, directs and coordinates the efforts of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to ensure youth perspectives and priorities are duly reflected in the outcomes of UN intergovernmental processes and their follow up and review, including the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Prior to joining the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Schellekens worked at UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, over 11 years in a number of positions, and previously held various positions in development cooperation in her native country the Netherlands. Ms. Schellekens holds a Master of Science in Advanced Development Studies from the Radboud University in Nijmegen and a Master of Arts in Organizational Anthropology from the Free University, Amsterdam, both in the Netherlands.

Amb. Lamberto Zannier (Italy)



Ambassador Lamberto Zannier took up the mandate of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities on 19 July 2017, succeeding Ambassador Astrid Thors of Finland. Prior his appointment, Amb. Zannier was OSCE Secretary General from 1 July 2011 until 30 June 2017. He joined the Italian Foreign Ministry as a career diplomat in 1978. From June 2008 to June 2011 he was UN Special Representative for Kosovo and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). From 2006 to 2008 he was responsible for EU Foreign policy issues within the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2002 to 2006, he was the Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE, focused on political-military issues, as well as crisis management, and responsible for managing the OSCE's field operations. He previously held a number of senior positions within the Italian diplomacy and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). He has authored several publications on security, conflict prevention and crisis management issues. He is currently President of the Centre for International Negotiation and Mediation of the University of Gorizia, Italy. He was awarded the distinction of Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Star for services to the Republic of Austria and Grand Officer in the Order of Orange Nassau by the Government of the Netherlands.



Item 2: Empowering Minority youth with inclusive education

Nouha Grine (Tunisia)



Nouha Grine is a Tunisian human rights defender, focusing on the rights of Amazigh people. She is the President of *Amazigh Culture Club*, and the General secretary of the association: *Tamaguit for Amazigh rights, liberties and culture*. She works at the Ministry of Youth affairs and Sport, in charge of youth programmes and events. She organized a number of events with Tunisian youth to sensitize them about the Amazigh culture, and the importance of mother tongue. She uses culture as a way to reach out to young people of both Amazigh and other ethnicity. Nouha Grine is also involved at the national level in the development of anti-discrimination laws and policies.

Wooki Kim (Japan)



Wooki Park-Kim is a Korean minority rights activist born and raised in Japan. She works as a secretariat of *Human Rights Association for Korean Residents in Japan* (HURAK), an NGO which defends the right of ethnic Korean minorities. She advocates for Korean students attending Korean schools, who are the fourth or fifth generation of Korean residents in Japan, and supports their struggle that seeks to protect their right to learn their own language, culture and history in their schools. She is also a lecturer of Gender Studies at Korea University in Tokyo and a singer who delivers a message of importance of respecting human rights of all through jazz songs.

Elzbieta Kuzborska (Poland)



Dr Elżbieta Kuzborska is an expert on national minorities, a human rights lecturer and author who also was Senior Minorities Fellow at the Office of UN High Commission for Human Rights in Geneva in 2014. As a legal advisor, she has cooperated, amongst other organisations, with the European Foundation of Human Rights where she provided legal training for members of minorities. She was a lecturer at the University of Białystok in Vilnius – the sole foreign university in Lithuania where the teaching is conducted in the mother tongue of the Polish minority. As a Board Member of the *Association of Polish Academics in Lithuania* she has organized projects and conferences aiming at supporting and promoting young people of minority background. In her activities she promotes mother tongue education and encourages young people to take advantage of all the opportunities provided by educational systems.



Item 3: Participation of minority youth to public life

Anina Ciuciu (France)



Anina Ciuciu is a French and Romanian young student-lawyer of Rromani origin. In 2013, she published « I'm Roma and I remain » (City Edition), in which she tells her story, that of a Rromani child living in contemporary Europe full of hate, police brutality and discrimination, who succeed to escape from the poverty of slums to enter to the Sorbonne University. Her book has been translated in Romanian and Italian and had a great success and important impact in the media and public space. She became a model role and spokesperson. She became shortly an honorific councillor of Romanian Prime Minister. She is member of the board of the NGO "La Voix des Rroms", godmother of "ASET 93" (working for the schooling of children living in precarious conditions) and co-founded in Paris the "May 16th Movement". She was in September 2017 the first person of Rromani origin running for national representation election (Senate) in French history.

Jessica Reeves (United States of America)



Jessica Reeves is the operational manager of *Voto Latino*, an organization, which mission is to bring new and diverse voices into the political process by engaging youth, media, technology and celebrities to promote positive change. She has used media partnerships to develop wide-impact civic engagement programs, including the inaugural National Voter Registration Day held September 25, 2012. Jessica previously worked in General and Hispanic Market advertising where she helped launch award-winning digital and social media marketing campaigns for major brands. She earned a BA in Psychology and Communications from Boston College and a MA in Latin American studies from Georgetown University.

Mina Thabet (Egypt)



Mina Thabet is a program manager of minorities and vulnerable groups program at the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF). In 2011, aged 21, he cofounded Maspero Youth Union (MYU), the most prominent youth movement in Egypt that promoted the rights of Coptic Christians during the post-Mubarak era. In 2012, he cofounded the Egyptian Coalition for Minorities (ECM), leading a group of minority rights activists to campaign for their communities' best interests. In addition, ECM played a pioneer role in promoting the protection of minority rights in Egypt's current constitution by leading a series of events in 2012 and 2013 that called for constitutional safeguards for minorities. One of his most significant



contributions to promote multi-religious coexistence, was organizing a “minorities’ Iftar”; an annual event held at the Egyptian Jewish synagogue during Ramadan, where people from different minorities shared a Ramadan meal, under the roof of a Jewish synagogue, the smallest religious minority in Egypt. In 2016 – he was detained for more than a month; the authorities suggested his research on minorities was a threat to national security.

Henrik Villadsen (Denmark)



Mr. Henrik Villadsen has been Director of the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities since December 2014. He holds a master’s degree in law with a specialization in human rights under armed conflicts and has been a qualified barrister with the Danish Ministry of Justice since 1997. As a commissioned officer in the Danish Armed Forces, Mr. Villadsen served with the European Union Monitoring Mission to the Former Yugoslavia in 1993–1994 and has, since 1997, served with various intergovernmental organizations, such as the OSCE, the United Nations and the European Union in Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, mostly working on issues related to the countries’ minorities and the rule of law. Prior to re-joining the OSCE, he served as the European Union’s General Legal Counsel and Head of Legal Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, working with the European Union integration process and the restructuring of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s legal system.

Item 4: Minority Youth and the Media in the digital age

Marina Shupac (Moldova)



Marina Shupac is 26-years old activist coming from Bulgarian national and Russian linguistic minority of the Republic of Moldova. She was an OHCHR Minority Fellow in Geneva in 2015 before joining the OHCHR in Moldova as a fellow and then as a consultant. She contributed to creation of *Youth Group of Interethnic Solidarity* – a platform, which uses social media to unite minority youth activists from different ethno-linguistic and religious communities for common actions. Together they are pioneering with minority oriented initiatives like Minority Youth Forum and Minority Rights Summer School which have been organized in Moldova for the first time. She also works as Human Rights Journalist at leading Moldovan online media Newsmaker where she uses multimedia tools to raise awareness on country’s diversity. She holds licentiate degree in journalism and MA in Human Rights and Democratization. She was also part of European Parliament Sakharov Fellowship in Human Rights in 2016.



Jonathan Jackson (United States of America)



Jonathan Jackson is a co-founder and head of corporate brand at *Blavity*, a media startup and digital community that creates written, video, and social content for Black millennials. “Founded in July 2014, *Blavity* has quickly grown to become one of the fastest growing digital media outlets on the web, reaching more than 7M millennials a month.” In 2016, *Blavity* launched two conferences: EmpowerHer, a conference in New York for black women, and Afrotech, a San Francisco summit for black people in technology. Other founders of *Blavity*: Morgan DeBaun (Founder and CEO), Aaron Samuels (Co-founder and COO), and Jeff Nelson (Co-founder and CTO). In 2016, two of the *Blavity* founders, DeBaun and Samuels, were named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 list of “young people transforming the future of America”

Anju (India)



Anju is leading a collective of young Dalit women leaders at the *All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Marc (AIDMAM)*. Her role involves providing critical and practical support to Dalit women leaders in order to strengthen advocacy and campaigns towards hope, healing and justice. In particular, she has led several workshops for survivors of sexual violence and social media trainings for young activists across North India. Anju has also been a key driving force behind AIDMAM’s Dalit Women Self-Respect Marches that have been taking place since late 2014, in India and the United States. Marches in India register high impact, especially in the lives of young Dalit women, who are mobilized to be part of community meetings, survivor support groups, legal interactions, and engagement with authorities from the local government.

Rita Izsak-Ndiaye (Hungary)



Ms. Rita Izsák-Ndiaye is the former UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues. At 30 years old, was one of the youngest expert to be appointed to such a position. She held the mandate until July 2017 and was elected to become a member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Rita Izsák-Ndiaye will serve for a term of four years starting on 20 January 2018. She holds a Masters in Law diploma from the Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Budapest, Hungary. Inspired by her own experiences of prejudice and discrimination - her father's family was forcibly moved under post-war population transfers from Czechoslovakia (present day Slovakia) to Hungary due to their Hungarian ethnicity in 1947 and her mother is of Romani origin - she has been working on human and minority rights since her university years.



Item 5: Minority youth as agent of change for peace and stability

Nfor Hanson Nchanji (Cameroon)



Nfor Hanson Nchanji is a Human rights journalist from Cameroon. He currently is the Editor-In-Chief of the Douala-based *Equinoxe Television* and Founder of *Cameroon News Agency*, an online news platform created in April 2016 to throw more lights on the Anglophone crisis and other news value events.

He was the first journalist to be sent on mission in the North West region in the midst of tension. His work reporting and fact gathering gradually encouraged him to serve his people and support the Anglophone youths to stand for their rights. He led advocacy initiatives at the National Communication Council, to demand the respect of Anglophones and to plea for an end to hate speech by dominant Francophone media. Additionally, he held sensitization meetings with youths including media talks, workshops and social media exchanges on how to live in peace with dominant French speaking Cameroonians.

Wai Wai Nu (Myanmar)



Wai Wai Nu is a young Rohingya activist and director of the *Women's Peace Network*– a platform aiming to build peace and mutual understanding between Myanmar's different ethnicities, and to advocate for the rights of marginalized women in Myanmar. She founded the organization in 2012 after her release from prison, where she spent 7 years as a political prisoner. Wai Wai Nu is also the co-founder of *Justice for Women*, a network of women lawyers providing legal aid to Burmese women. She is doing important work in promoting tolerance in western Myanmar and the engagement of women and youth to end human rights abuses. She was awarded numerous rewards, and was most recently listed as one of the Next Generation Leader in the world by Time Magazine in March 2017.



Francia Marquez (Colombia)



Francia Marquez is a human rights activist and leader of the Afrodescendant community of La Toma in Suárez Municipality, Cauca Department. She has been the spokesperson for the "Marcha de los Turbantes", a women's movement that has publicly denounced the environment contaminations caused by illegal mining in their community land and that claims for African Descendants territory rights, started in 2014. Francia Marquez has been invited to the "Young Women, Peace & Security", a side event to the UN Security Council in October 2015. The event highlighted the positive role of young people in peace and development. She was involved in the peace process with the FARC as she was among a group of victims invited by the government to Havana, in 2016. She won the national Human Rights Award in 2015. She is currently studying law and focusing her research on institutional racism in Colombia.

John Packer (Canada)



John Packer is an Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa. Before taking up his position at the University of Ottawa in 2014, Professor Packer was the Constitutions Expert for the UN's Standby Team of Mediation Experts advising in numerous peace processes and political transitions around the world focusing on conflict prevention and resolution, diversity management, constitutional and legal reform, and the protection of human rights including minorities. In a 30-year career, Professor Packer has contributed to processes in over fifty countries and has advised numerous inter-governmental organizations, governments, communities and other actors. From 1995 to 2004, he was Senior Legal Adviser and then the first Director of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in The Hague. From 1987 to 1995, he worked for the ILO, UNHCR and then the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights mainly investigating serious violations of human rights in Iraq, Afghanistan and Myanmar.