



General Assembly

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Human Rights Council
Forum on Minority Issues
Seventh session
25–26 November 2014

Provisional agenda and annotations thereto

Note by the Secretariat

Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Legal framework and key concepts.
3. Understanding the root causes of violence and atrocity crimes.
4. Improving prevention of violence and atrocity crimes.
5. After violence breaks out — essential measures for resolution, protection and security.
6. Avoiding renewed violence — building the peace and managing diversity.
7. Concluding remarks.

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Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Venue

1. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 6/15 and 19/23, the seventh session of the Forum on Minority Issues will be held in Geneva in Room XX of the Palais des Nations on 25 and 26 November 2014.
2. The Forum will have before it the provisional agenda contained in the present document to consider for adoption. A tentative schedule of work for the session is contained in annex I.

Opening meeting

3. The President of the Human Rights Council will deliver an opening statement. Statements will then be made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues.

Documentation

4. A list of documents for the session is provided in annex II. In addition to normal distribution, official documents for the session will be made available on the Human Rights Council website (www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Minority/Pages/Session7.aspx).

Discussions

5. Participants will have the opportunity to make brief presentations and comments based on the draft recommendations that they will have before them. After the presentations introducing the topics for discussion at the beginning of each agenda item, there will be an open discussion to which all participants will be invited to contribute, based on a sign-up sheet.

2. Legal framework and key concepts

6. The seventh session will provide an overview of existing international and regional standards and principles relevant to the protection of persons belonging to minorities from violence and atrocity crimes against them. The discussion will focus on the promotion and full realization of the provisions set forth in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and other relevant international standards, including the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Participants will discuss how to ensure that international standards relevant to the protection of minorities from violence are reflected in national legislation, policies and practices. The Human Rights Up Front approach and the principle of the responsibility to protect will be considered and the obligations of various national, regional and international actors under the three pillars of the principle as articulated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome as contained in General Assembly resolution 60/1. Session participants will discuss the international, regional and national mechanisms involved in the implementation of the principle. The importance of a strong legal framework and ensuring institutional attention is given to issues relating to minorities will be considered.

3. Understanding the root causes of violence and atrocity crimes

7. Session participants will identify key factors that create and maintain minority groups' vulnerability and exposure to violence and atrocity crimes. Special focus will be on how gross and persistent discrimination and inequalities vis-à-vis social, political economic and cultural rights increase the vulnerability of poor, marginalized minorities to violence and atrocity crimes. Participants will be encouraged to share specific scenarios where persistent challenges and human rights violations expose minorities to frequent the threat of violence and where systematic discriminatory practices and patterns of abuse make them vulnerable to violence and atrocity crimes.

8. Participants will discuss effective tools and strategies to improve the understanding of the status of and challenges to minorities, existing tension and threats and what lies behind them as key elements in preventing hate-motivated attacks. In that context, participants will focus on understanding the contexts and environments in which minorities may be rendered vulnerable to violence. They will be encouraged to share their experiences and positive practices and methodologies, including in the areas of identifying threats, data collection and analysis to map the size and status of minority groups within a State.

4. Improving prevention of violence and atrocity crimes

9. Session participants will address how different stakeholders, including national Governments, civil society, minority groups and regional and international actors, can play an effective role in helping to prevent violence and atrocity crimes against minorities. The roles and activities of such stakeholders will be addressed through the experiences of participants. Participants may discuss the importance of good and inclusive governance in violence prevention and initiatives to ensure the effective participation of minorities in legislative, administrative and decision-making bodies. The role of legislation, for example prohibiting incitement to racial or religious violence, may be considered. Participants will identify and address challenges relating to policing and security as factors directly linked to the exposure of minorities to violence and atrocity crimes, as well as inclusive and proactive approaches to law enforcement and protection strategies.

10. While reviewing existing indicators, risk assessment methodologies and early warning mechanisms, participants will identify existing gaps and possible measures to improve existing approaches, channels of communication and information exchange at national, regional and international levels to act effectively to prevent violence at an early stage. In that context, the session will discuss the role of all stakeholders, including local and national leaders (community, political and religious) and the media, in preventing violence.

5. After violence breaks out — essential measures for resolution, protection and security

11. Session participants will consider the particular challenges of responding to violence that has broken out and specific measures for immediate operational security responses in order to quickly halt violence at the national level. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on the role of all stakeholders in finding and implementing rapid, tailored response measures to protect minorities under attack, including the role of minorities and national human rights institutions in maintaining inter-ethnic and interreligious dialogue. Practical examples will be discussed of the participation of minorities in such areas as dialogue, mediation and negotiation and the role of community, political and religious leaders once conflict has begun. Under this agenda item, participants will discuss specific humanitarian concerns affecting minorities and the role and activities of humanitarian actors vis-à-vis specific minority groups' security concerns and protection needs.

12. While the primary responsibility to protect populations from violence and atrocity crimes lies with national authorities and law enforcement bodies, under this agenda item, participants will discuss the role of neighbouring States, and regional and international bodies under the principle of the responsibility to protect and its legal corollary obligations, including when a State is the perpetrator of or implicated in violence and atrocity crimes. The role of United Nations mechanisms in bringing concerns and information on ongoing massive violation of minority rights to the attention of the United Nations decision-making bodies will be discussed.

6. Avoiding renewed violence — building the peace and managing diversity

13. Session participants will consider the role and importance of implementing minority rights in post-violence and post-conflict situations as a precondition for building and ensuring a stable and lasting peace. Participants will consider specific post-violence reconciliation measures, including measures to ensure accountability and tackle impunity for violent crimes against minorities. Under this agenda item, participants will discuss the role and responsibilities of all stakeholders in promoting the inclusion of minority rights and needs in any peace and reconciliation initiatives, including in transitional justice mechanisms, as key elements to empower minorities affected by violence and atrocity crimes and rebuild confidence and trust.

7. Concluding remarks

14. The Forum participants will identify existing ways to engage assistance from regional bodies and the international community that are aimed at promoting and coordinating peacebuilding and violence prevention efforts where the Government's capacity is inadequate to address post-violence response. They will consider what additional actions and assistance, including technical assistance in the field of minority issues, may be possible.

15. The Chairperson of the Forum and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues will share their concluding remarks, including forward-looking proposals for steps to take, with the Forum participants.

Annexes

Annex I

Schedule of work

Tuesday, 25 November 2014

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Opening of the Forum on Minority Issues

- Welcome and opening remarks by the President of the Human Rights Council
- Remarks by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues
- Remarks by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Remarks by the Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues

3 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Understanding the root causes of violence and atrocity crimes

Improving prevention of violence and atrocity crimes

Legal framework and key concepts

Wednesday, 26 November 2014

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

After violence breaks out — essential measures for resolution, protection and security

3 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Avoiding renewed violence — building the peace and managing diversity

Concluding remarks

Annex II

Documents before the Forum on Minority Issues at its seventh session

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
A/HRC/FMI/2014/1	Provisional agenda and annotations thereto; note by the Secretariat
A/HRC/FMI/2014/2	Note by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsák, on preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities
A/HRC/FMI/2014/3	Draft recommendations on preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities
