

FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES

9th session “Minorities in situations of humanitarian crises”
24-25 November 2016

Palais des Nations Room XX

List of invited panelists

Chairperson



Mario Yutzis
Argentina

Mario Yutzis is a retired Professor at the Buenos Aires ISEDET University Institute, where he was the chair of Philosophical Anthropology, Hermeneutics and Latin American Reality. He has served on the UN Committee for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination from 1984 until 2008, as President and as a member. Mario Yutzis is currently the Vice-Chairman of the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism.

Item 2: Legal Framework and key concepts



Geoff Gilbert
UK

Geoff Gilbert is a Professor of Law in the School of Law and Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex. He has been Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Refugee Law* since 2002. In 2014, he was appointed as a consultant for UNHCR with Anna Magdalena Rüsçh on ‘Rule of Law: Engagement for Solutions,’ and is part of the Solutions Alliance Thematic Group on Rule of Law. In 2016, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung invited him to present papers in Manila and Canberra on refugee solutions in the region. He has carried out human rights training on behalf of the Council of Europe and UNHCR in the Russian Federation, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Kosovo.



Sandra Krähenmann
Switzerland

Sandra Krähenmann is a Research Fellow at the Geneva Academy. Her research focuses on the theory and practice of international law that applies in armed conflict and other situations of violence, including terrorism, and the intersection between transitional justice and peacebuilding in international law. Previously, she worked in the law of armed conflict section at the Swiss Ministry of Defence, and collaborated on a number of projects with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ). She holds a PhD in International Law from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. Her doctoral thesis examined the doctrine of positive obligations in human rights treaties.



Christine Knudsen

Christine Knudsen is the Director of the Sphere Project, a voluntary initiative that brings a wide range of humanitarian agencies together around a common aim - to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance and the accountability of humanitarian actors to their constituents, donors and affected populations. The Sphere Handbook “Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response,” provides guidance to humanitarian actors to improve the quality of humanitarian aid. Ms Knudsen has 17 years of experience working for UN humanitarian agencies, including UNICEF and OCHA.



Felipe González
Chile

Felipe González is Professor of International Law and Constitutional Law at Diego Portales University, in Santiago, Chile, where he also directs a Masters in International Human Rights Law. He was the President of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (2010-2011), a Commissioner, and the Rapporteur on Migrants at that institution (2008-2015). Under the latter capacity, he supervised the preparation of reports on the situation of migrants, refugees, and other persons in situations of mobility in the United States, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, including sections regarding the issue in general human rights reports for Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela. He was formerly Legal Officer for Latin America with Global Rights in Washington, D.C., and later Representative in Latin America for that organization, conducting programs in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Paraguay.

Item 3: Protecting minority rights as a means of preventing or mitigating the impact of humanitarian crises on minorities



Volker Türk
Austria

Volker Türk is UNHCR’s Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, having previously served as the Director of the Division of International Protection from September 2009 to February 2015. He previously occupied various positions in many parts of the world, including in Malaysia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kuwait, and was Chief of the Protection Policy and Legal Advice Section at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva. Prior to his time with UNHCR, Volker Türk worked as University Assistant at the Institute of International Law at the University of Vienna (Austria), where he finished his doctoral thesis on UNHCR and its mandate (published in 1992).



Ojot Ojulu
Ethiopia

Ojot Ojulu is an Advocacy Officer at the Lutheran World Federation. He previously worked for the African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) based in Durban and for many local organizations in Ethiopia, in the Gambella region. In 2006, he was one of OHCHR’s Minority fellows representing the Anywa community. He holds a PhD in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford, research topic “Minority and Indigenous communities’ rights to land under ethnic federalism in Ethiopia: Case study of the Gambella regional state”.



Maria Luisa Silva
Spain

Maria Luisa Silva is the Director of the UNDP Office in Geneva. She has over 25 years of experience in UNDP and the UN system, most recently as UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative in Peru (2014-2015). During her career, she held a number of field and headquarter positions for UNDP, she also held position with UNEP and OHCHR. Prior to joining the United Nations, she was a consultant on European Affairs with Deloitte at their Brussels office, and she also taught International Law at the University of Seville (Spain).



Erlendy Cuero Bravo
Colombia

Erlendy Cuero is the Vice-President of the National Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians AFRODES, an organization that provides guidance, support, counseling, training and mediation to defend the rights and cultural identity of the Afro-Colombian population in displacement situations. Ms. Cuero is also the Regional Community Coordinator of Community Service Program for Afro-Colombian Victims of Violence and Torture-ACOPLE.

Item 4 Protecting Minority Rights during crises:



Michele Klein-Solomon
USA

Michele Klein Solomon is Senior Migration Policy Adviser to the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Geneva. Since November 2014, she also serves as the Director of the Secretariat of the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative, based at IOM. She has a longstanding experience at IOM and regularly provides advice and guidance to governments in all regions of the world as well as to regional, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations on a wide range of migration policy matters.



Chaloka Beyani
Zambia

Chaloka Beyani has taught International Law and Human Rights at the Universities of Zambia (1984-1988), Oxford (1992-1995), and the London School of Economics, where he is currently a senior lecturer in International Law. He has worked and published extensively in the fields of human rights, international humanitarian law, humanitarian assistance, migration, refugees and displaced persons. From 2010 until 2016, Dr. Beyani was the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons.



Laura Ronkainen
Finland

Laura Ronkainen is the Field Support Manager of the Joint IDP Profiling Services, a global hub for profiling in displacement situations. She works closely with government, humanitarian, and development counterparts to support the design and implementation of collaborative profiling exercises that inform strategies and programmatic responses to forced displacement. She has worked in Myanmar, Mali, Central African Republic, Afghanistan, Colombia, Kosovo, and Somalia. She focuses on enhancing collaboration with local actors – local authorities, national statistical offices, municipalities, national civil society – to strengthen capacity and sustainable response in displacement situations.



Farah Mihlar
Sri Lanka

Farah Mihlar is a Sri Lankan human rights expert and academic with experience working for leading international NGOs such as Minority Rights Group International and International Crisis Group. During her career at MRG, Farah has conducted research and published on minority rights issues in Israel, Kenya, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. She has conducted field research and implemented projects in Sri Lanka during a humanitarian crisis, in the immediate aftermath of the country's armed conflict, in 2009. She started her career as a journalist and has reported on the country's ethnic conflict for over a decade. She recently completed a PhD on politicization of Islam in Sri Lanka.

Item 5: Recovering from a crisis: including minorities in durable solutions



Cecilia Jimenez-Damary
Philippines

Cecilia Jimenez-Damary is a human rights lawyer specialised in forced displacement and migration. Ms. Jimenez-Damary has over two decades of experience in NGO human rights advocacy for the Asia-Pacific region, and also has teaching experience as an adjunct professor of international human rights and humanitarian law. Ms. Jimenez-Damary was appointed United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons by the Human Rights Council in September 2016 and assumed the mandate on 1 November 2016.



Andrew Wyllie
USA

Andrew Wyllie has nearly 18 years of experience in the humanitarian field covering conflict-related crises and natural disasters. Mr. Wyllie leads the Programme Support Branch in OCHA Geneva. The branch facilitates and supports the development of policies, procedures, tools and technical guidance for the humanitarian community on the key elements of the humanitarian programme cycle. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Wyllie served as the Chief of OCHA's Civil-Military Coordination Section. He has also served as the Head of the OCHA Country Office in Haiti, and as the Acting Head of OCHA country offices in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Before joining OCHA in 2006, Mr. Wyllie spent seven years managing US Government support for humanitarian operations at the Department of State, and has also served with the UNHCR in Mauritania.



Erivan Mahdi Haji
Iraq

Erivan Mahdi is a human rights activist working to protect the rights of the Yazidi community in northern Iraq. She is a founding member of two organizations providing humanitarian support for the displaced people that are seeking refuge in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Since the 2014 attacks of ISIS, she has worked with displaced people to defend their rights at both local and international levels, especially the Yazidi women and girls who survived the slavery, sexual abuses and/or human trafficking crimes for being captives with ISIS. Ms. Mahdi Haji is currently a minority fellow at OHCHR and is studying languages at University of Duhok (school of languages – English translation) as well as working as Volunteer Project Manager at Khanke IDP Camp with International Volunteers Organization.



H.E. Dieudonné Cardinal Nzapalainga
Central African Republic

His Eminence Dieudonné Cardinal Nzapalainga is the Archbishop of Bangui, newly appointed Cardinal, and President of Caritas Central African Republic. In his country torn by inter-communal violence, he works with Caritas to support the people whose fundamental rights have been abused. Together with his Muslim and Evangelical counterparts, he is one of the initiators of the Caritas-backed Interfaith Peace Platform, which received in 2015 the Sergio Vieira de Mello prize. The platform aims at ending conflict in the Central African Republic by persuading Muslims, Catholics and Protestants to avoid further violence.

