

UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues

Conflict Prevention through the protection of the human rights of minorities

Call for Submissions by 6 December 2021

In accordance with his mandate pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 34/6, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Dr Fernand de Varennes, will present a thematic report at the 49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, which will provide a detailed analysis and highlight the issue of “**Conflict prevention through the protection of the human rights of minorities**”.

Building on the work carried out by other UN, international and regional organisations, the Special Rapporteur will address the relationship between the prevention of violent conflicts through the protection of the human rights of minorities, in order to achieve stable and just societies, which are central to the implementation of the principles of equal human rights and dignity for all contained in human rights treaties and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The report will also contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular with regard to ensuring that all human beings are able to fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment, and the commitment to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence, leaving no-one behind.

Context

The interrelationship between conflicts, the rights of minorities, and the promotion of inclusiveness and stability constitutes one of the thematic priorities of the Special Rapporteur.

Conflict prevention and the protection of the human rights of minorities is a topical and urgent issue. As the groundbreaking 2018 UN and World Bank joint study on ‘Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict’ points out, the main drivers of instability globally are group-based grievances around exclusion and injustice. To be more precise, the root causes of most of today’s violent conflicts all usually intimately linked to breaches of the human rights of minority communities.

In previous reports, the mandate has addressed the human rights of minorities in situations of humanitarian crises brought about by natural or man-made hazards (see [A/71/254](#)) as well as the role of the protection of minority rights in promoting stability and conflict prevention (see [A/HRC/16/45](#)). Among other points, these reports stressed that among the essential elements of a strategy to prevent conflicts involving minorities are respect for minority rights, particularly with regard to equality in access to economic and social opportunities; effective participation of minorities in decision-making; dialogue between minorities and majorities within societies; and the constructive development of practices and institutional arrangements to accommodate diversity within society.

Despite increasing understanding of the interlinkages between conflict prevention and the protection of the human rights of minorities, new conflicts involving minorities continue to emerge in many different parts of the world. Recent reports suggest that they are increasing, and that there is too little attention from international, national and other actors to the minority contexts and grievances, and denial of their human rights, which are amongst the top early warning signs of impending violence. The Special Rapporteur is of the view that a fresh look

at these issues is necessary to give a new impetus to a human rights system when it comes effective early warning mechanisms for most of the world's intrastate conflicts, through the protection of minorities.

The present thematic report will address these issues and help to identify the means by which the Special Rapporteur can more effectively contribute to i) developing the stakeholders' capacity to identify the root causes of conflicts; ii) strengthening legal and institutional framework so it provides a more effective early warning tool to help prevent violent conflicts; iii) enhancing or creating early effective conflict prevention mechanisms and iv) developing of means to advance the protection of the human rights of minorities and prevention of conflicts involving them.

The report will also look into the role of minority youth and women as valuable innovators and agents of change, whose contributions should be seen as an essential part of recognising and protecting the human rights of minorities, preventing conflicts and building peaceful communities, as outlined in the recommendations of the Forum on Minority Issues at its tenth session "Minority youth: towards inclusive and diverse societies" (A/HRC/37/73).

The report will also highlight promising practices, including the effective involvement of minorities in conflict prevention and provide suggestions and recommendations addressed to all relevant stakeholders at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Call for submissions

In accordance with the established practice of thematic mandate-holders, the Special Rapporteur welcomes inputs by States, UN agencies, regional and international organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society and minority organizations, scholars and research institutions, and others who may wish to submit for this purpose. Such submissions may include, for instance, recommendations, evidence and case studies. The following questions are intended to guide submissions:

1. Please provide examples of tools and early warning mechanisms, which monitor risk factors leading to conflicts involving minorities.
2. Please provide any relevant data and case studies revealing root causes of some contemporary conflicts involving minorities.
3. Please provide examples of capacity-building programs assisting the States and intergovernmental organizations to identify the root causes of conflicts involving minorities.
4. Please provide examples of existing policies, legal and institutional frameworks, as well any other positive initiatives targeted at ensuring peaceful coexistence in order to safeguard the recognition and protection of the human rights of minorities. Please specify how minority women and youth are involved in these examples.
5. How can the international and regional conflict prevention tools and mechanisms further strengthen the recognition and protection of the rights of minorities?
6. Please describe how persons belonging to minorities and their representative organizations, including minority women and youth, are involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the conflict prevention programmes.
7. Please provide any other relevant information.

Submissions and inputs on the above-mentioned areas can be submitted in English, French or Spanish and addressed to the Special Rapporteur by email to ohchr-minorityissues@un.org **by 6 December 2021**.

Submissions and inputs will be considered public records unless expressed otherwise.