

Fourteenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues

2 and 3 December 2021

Programme of Work

THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER

10:00-10:30 (local time in Geneva) Item 1: Opening of the Forum

- [1.](#) Opening song in a minority language, Ms. Nora Gharyéni, Amazigh singer, composer and guitarist
- [2.](#) Statement by the President of the Human Rights Council, H.E. Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan
- [3.](#) Statement by the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Mr. Fernand de Varennes
- [4.](#) Remarks by the Chair of the Forum, Ms. Victoria Donda

10:30-10:50 (local time in Geneva) Item 1.1: High-Level segment

- [5.](#) Remarks by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Ms. Alice Nderitu
- [6.](#) Remarks by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H.E. Ms. Nassima Baghli
- [7.](#) Remarks by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) High Commissioner on National Minorities, H.E. Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov

10:50-12:00 (local time in Geneva) Item 2: Root causes of contemporary conflicts involving minorities

Inspired by and building upon the report presented more than 10 years ago by the first Independent Expert on minority issues, on minority rights and conflict revention (A/HRC/16/45), and more recent developments, such as *Pathways to Peace*, the Forum will, at the present session,

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reflect on identifying and addressing the root causes of conflicts involving minorities. It will consider how early awareness of root causes involving State policies and practices that disadvantage or exclude minorities can also be the most effective means to prevent conflicts. Participants will focus on how to monitor risk factors. Lastly, the Forum will explore the role of States, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and minorities in tackling at an early stage the root causes that may be in breach of human rights obligations, such as the right to equality and the prohibition of discrimination.

- **Mr. John Packer**, Director, Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa
- **Ms. Rita Manchanda**, Independent Consultant, South Asia Forum for Human Rights
- **Mr. Conchúr Ó Muadaigh**, Advocacy manager, Conradh na Gaeilge

Interactive Dialogue

12:00-15:00 Lunch break

15:00-17:00 (local time in Geneva) Item 3: Legal and institutional framework: the human rights of minorities and conflict prevention

At the present session, the Forum will identify and discuss key factors that can help international and regional human rights law to be used as a powerful tool to prevent violent conflicts. Participants will examine how referring to and utilizing the body of standards and jurisprudence concerning the protection of minorities under international law can prevent escalation into conflict. The Forum will develop a common understanding of the role of the protection of the human rights of

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minorities in preventing conflicts, and discuss legal, institutional and policy challenges to address long-standing grievances that may lead to tensions and possible conflicts, as outlined in *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*.

- **Mr. Mohammad Shahabuddin**, Chair in International Law & Human Rights, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham
- **Ms. Amina Amharech**, President of the association Acal El Hajeb, founding member of the Amazigh community network AZUL
- **Mr. Arno Kompatscher**, Governor, Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol, Italy

Interactive Dialogue

FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER

10:00-12:00 (local time in Geneva) Item 4: Focusing on the rights of minorities and effective early prevention of conflicts

Forum participants will reflect on how dedicated and specialized mechanisms with appropriate mandates can concentrate on the minority dimension of conflicts by identifying situations where there is systematic denial of the rights of minorities. They will examine the existence of early conflict prevention mechanisms at various levels, including at the international, regional, subregional, national and local levels.

Discussions will also touch upon the need to focus on minorities and pool the outputs of the early warning systems of United Nations agencies, funds, programmes and agencies, and of other intergovernmental organizations. Participants will consider what makes such mechanisms a compelling tool for effectively preventing costly and protracted conflicts involving minorities.

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Participants will pay special attention to the importance of including a gender perspective in early effective conflict prevention, and will rely on the recommendations made by the Forum at its fourth session with regard to guaranteeing the rights of minority women and girls (see A/HRC/19/71), who may be particularly vulnerable in conflict and post-conflict situations.

- **Ms. Aya Mana**a, Palestinian human rights defender and activist from Israel
- **Mr. Kwadwo Appiagyei-Atua**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Ghana
- **Ms. Maria Eugenia Carbone**, Director of the Latin American Program and Technical Secretariat of the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention, Auschwitz Institute

Interactive Dialogue

12:00-15:00 Lunch break

15:00-16:45 (local time in Geneva) Item 5: Towards a lasting peace: positive initiatives to better protect the rights of minorities to prevent conflicts

The session will focus on practical solutions designed to prevent violent conflicts involving minorities. Participants will discuss the role of United Nations agencies, national human rights institutions, civil society and other stakeholders. In order to further clarify positive initiatives to prevent conflicts, participants will consider the Beirut Declaration on Faith for

Rights and its 18 commitments. More specifically, participants will reflect on the commitment by faith-based and civil society actors to exchange

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on practices in areas of mediation, early detection of communal tensions and remedial techniques.

Participants will also debate the role of minority youth and women as valuable innovators and agents of change, whose contributions should be seen as an essential part of preventing conflicts and building peaceful communities, as recommended by the Forum at its tenth session (see A/HRC/37/73). Participants will also reflect on the benefits of minority youth and minority women ownership and leadership in conflict prevention processes.

- **Ms. Farah Mihar**, Lecturer, College of Social Sciences and International Studies, University of Exeter
- **Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris**, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York
- **Ms. Mireille Kamitatu Olungakana**, Peace and Development Advisor, United Nations Cameroon

Interactive Dialogue

16:45-17:00 (local time in Geneva) Item 6: Concluding remarks

Concluding remarks by **Mr. Fernand de Varennes**, Special Rapporteur on minority issues

Concluding remarks by **Ms. Victoria Donda**, Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues

Session closes