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OPEN DISCUSSION



**BPP**

**Balochistan People's Party**

**Fifth Forum on Minority Issues**

Perspectives from young minority rights advocates on the Declaration  
Ms. Monireh Sulemani, Balochistan People's Party

Thank you Madam Chair,

In order to address the perspective of Baloch youth it is necessary to point out that Balochistan is the largest but poorest and the most underdeveloped region in Iran with one of the highest rates of illiteracy and lack of adequate educational facilities.

In context of institutional disregard of human rights members of ethnical and religious minorities such as Baloch, Kurds, Ahwazi Arabs, Azeri Turks, Turkmen and also Bahais are targeted and discriminated against.

Baloch activism whether social, cultural or political is treated as an overall security threat.

Individuals frequently face arbitrary arrests and are often held incommunicado.

They are vulnerable, as the state does not ensure the protection of minorities through equal legal framework. Punishments are often entirely at the discretion of the presiding judge to the extent that international fair trial principles are entirely neglected.

In October three Baloch youth were executed for being charged with Moharebeh (enmity against God) after only a two-day trial.

At least 10 youth between the ages of 19-27 are facing imminent death sentences.

Among challenges facing Baloch youth is the militarization of Baloch areas combined with increased human right violations and collective punishment of Baloch civilians.

Young Baloch women face multiple forms of discrimination being women, Baloch and Sunni Muslims. A reality coloured by state gender-biased laws and traditional gender expectation.

In order to address the problems that Baloch youth face we recommend the following steps:

- Governments should ensure full access to ethnic minority regions during country visits from special procedures mandate holders. Governments should not use the issue of security as an excuse to close off minority regions.
- Efforts should be initiated to highlight the specific challenges facing minority youth in situation of state-sponsored violence and conflict in the international frameworks dealing with minority youth and conflict.