



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fortieth session

25 February–22 March 2019

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Written statement\* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[9 February 2019]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **Rights of religious minorities in the Russian Federation, Myanmar & the Islamic Republic of Iran**

### **Intervention on the report of Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief**

**Presented to:** 40<sup>th</sup> Session of Human Rights Council

**Presented by:** Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (In a special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations).

**Date:** Feb. 2019

**On:** Item 3. "Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (*HRC resolution 31/16*)

### **Preface**

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) presents this report to clarify the extent of violations against religious minorities in the world, especially those of Myanmar and Russian Muslims, and Baha'is in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This is represented in conjunction with the fortieth session of the Human Rights Council, in order to take strict and serious actions to save those religious minorities. They are in direct violation of all international human rights conventions and measures. Several UN human rights or non-governmental organizations' reports condemning these situations. But, unfortunately, the United Nations and its bodies have not taken firm action on this issue.

- **The tragedy of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar**

Myanmar has several groups believe in Islam; the Rohingya is one of them. Myanmar's successive governments have consistently maintained that Myanmar Muslims are not actually ethnic groups but they are bengaline migrants. They consider those Muslims as a consequence of the colonial era; so, the Myanmar Constitution does not include them in indigenous groups who are entitled to citizenship. Also, the Buddhists expose the Rohingya Muslims to various kinds of torture, and they killing them in horrible ways. they consider the Rohingya Muslims' liquidation is a religious duty in the first place.<sup>1</sup>

The inhumane crimes practiced by the Government of Myanmar against the Rohingya Muslims have shocked the whole world. According to a UN survey, at least 146,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh because of the violence in Myanmar, from 25 August 2017 to 5 September 2017. This flee happened during the first ten days of clashes between police forces and a number of Rohingya Muslims. The total number of Rohingya who fled to Bangladesh estimated to 233 thousands since Oct. 2016. Relief workers have pointed out, new arrivals from the Rohingya include around 16,000 school-age children and more than 5,000 children under the age of five needing vaccinations. In addition, on September 2, 2017, The Myanmar government has announced that more than 2,600 homes of Rohingyas have been burned in northwest Myanmar. This is one of the heaviest wave of violence against the Muslim minority in decades.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> كدير مراد، مسلمو الروهينغا .. جذور المحرقة وأبعاد الاضطهاد، هاف بوست، م منشور على موقع هاف بوست، بتاريخ 17 سبتمبر 2017، ويمكن قراءة المزيد عن المقال من خلال الرابط التالي: <http://cutt.us/SZt6k>

<sup>2</sup> محمود سعوى، بورما.. 10 أرقام تلخص المذابح ضد مسلمى الإقليم.. 146 ألفاً من الروهينجا يفرون لبنجلادش بينهم 21 ألف طفل.. و20 ألفاً عالقون.. ومقتل 400 مسلماً خلال 7 أيام.. وحرق 2600 منزل بولاية راخين.. وغرق 20 شخصاً أثناء هروبهم، م منشور على موقع اليوم السابع، بتاريخ 6 سبتمبر 2017، ويمكن الإطلاع على المقال كاملاً من خلال الرابط التالي: <http://cutt.us/ZA2p9>

- **Harassment of religious minority in the Russian Federation**

Russia is a special case. It not only represses religious freedom since the Soviet era, but it also considers that any religious activity poses a threat to social and political stability. Russian policies toward Muslims ranged from administrative harassment, imprisonment and extrajudicial killings. Since July 2016, when the "Yarovaya Law" came into force, the authorities-imposed fines on more than 100 religious' activists, especially evangelical Christians. These fines were because of either proselytizing without permission or distributing religious publications without adding the name of the religious distributor on the cover. In June 2017, the authorities reported that the Interior Ministry in Dagestan, in southern Russia, no longer placed "followers of non-traditional Islam" on police watch lists. Yet persecution of Salafist Muslims has continued, including arbitrary arrests and harassment.<sup>3</sup>

The followed harassment against religious minority in Russia included, the banning of their websites, their blocking and the inclusion of their publications in the Federal List of Extremist Articles. On 20 April 2017, the Russian Supreme Court ruled that the Central Committee of Jehovah's Witnesses and all its affiliated branches in Russia had been banned from publishing. The court also ruled that the group of 395 local organizations and more than 170,000 followers were considered "extremist". The Jehovah's Witnesses, which continued to show their beliefs, are at risk of criminal prosecution and facing prison terms up to 12 years.<sup>4</sup>

- **Violations committed against Baha'is in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

The Iranian law doesn't recognize the Baha'i community that have more than 300,000 members,<sup>5</sup> and discriminates against them. Since November 2018, at least 79 Baha'is have been arrested.<sup>6</sup> In August and September 2018, the authorities arrested more than 20 Baha'is, in addition to a city council member who said that he supports those detainees.<sup>7</sup> Iranian authorities also prohibit Baha'is from joining governmental universities because of their beliefs. On September 18, 2018, the "Iran Wire News website" published the names of 54 Baha'i students prevented by the authorities from enrolling in universities after having passed the national admission examination for the 2018/2019 academic year. The origin of this blatant discrimination backs to the 1991 system of the Supreme Council for Cultural Revolution (SCIRI). The SCIRI is the body responsible for the development of educational policies, which giving the authorities the right to expel Baha'i students from higher education institutions.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, as a part of the systematic governmental crackdown on the Baha'i community, the Iranian authorities are destroying and distorting religious and holy sites, including graves where Baha'i leaders or ordinary members of the Baha'i community are buried.<sup>9</sup>

- **Recommendations**

In our belief in the important role that civil society organizations play in the use of human rights approaches, mechanisms and tools to promote human rights, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights recommends:

- To bring the perpetrators of genocide against Rohingya Muslims from government officials, groups or individuals to either national, international or joint courts. That's to deter them and to prevent the recurrence of such practices in other regions of the world, in which minorities are subjected to such barbaric practices.

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Watch, World- Report 2018, Russia, Available at: <http://cutt.us/OzOnb>

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, Russian Federation 2017/2017, Available at: <http://cutt.us/Te8qx>

<sup>5</sup> For more information, check this link, please: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2019/01/30/327064>

<sup>6</sup> For more information, check this link, please: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/world-report/2019/country-chapters/325426>

<sup>7</sup> For more information, check this link, please: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2018/10/16/323473>

<sup>8</sup> For more information, check this link, please: <https://iranwire.com/fa/features/27685>

<sup>9</sup> For more information, check this link, please: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2014/05/19/253790>

- To pressure on the Myanmar government to stop the killings, displacements and arrests of Rohingya Muslims, immediately and expeditiously, so as not to worsen the humanitarian situation.
  - To support and enable human rights and relief institutions in order to provide material and moral support. As well, rehabilitating the damaged areas due to the tragic acts of some governments against minorities in their territories.
  - To conduct extensive investigations into the situation of religious minorities in Russia.
  - To exert international pressure on Iran in order to preserve the rights of religious minorities on Iranian territory, especially the Baha'is.
  - To establish a strict and binding international law to protect minorities, whether religious or ethnic, around the world. Also, to activate the role of institutions and non-governmental organizations to bring the voices of these minorities to the world and to identify their problems and to seek serious and practical solutions to solve these problems.
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