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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.

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



Minority Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey & Qatar

Presented to: 40th 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)

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About: Item 3, the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Minority Issues

Preface

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) presents this report which monitors and analyzes the situation of minority rights in some countries. The UN Declaration on Minorities of 1992, in its first article, refers to minorities on the basis of national, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity, and the existence of those minorities should be protected. In addition, provisions are contained in human rights treaties prohibiting discrimination on different grounds related to minorities.

This report uses a methodology focused on the international conventions criminalized discrimination against minorities. It based on collecting and classified available information on the human rights situation of minorities in several countries, such as Qatar, Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In addition to communication with a number of local activists, actors and stakeholders in these countries, to prepare this report.

First: Violations committed against the Ghufran tribe in Qatar

Maat Foundation observed the continued racist practices carried out by the Qatari authorities against Al-Ghufran family. Al-Ghufran family is a branch of Al-Maher tribe in Qatar, which most of them were expelled and stripped of Qatari nationality, deprived from their right to work and to benefit from the state aids.

Al-Ghaffran family members say that the reasons for their persecution by the Qatari authorities back to 1996. This year, Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the father of Sheikh Tamim, the current emir of Qatar, seized power after his coup against his father. A number of sons of the Al-Ghaffran family supported the father to restore the power, but in vain. So, the Qatari authorities accused some members of the tribe, of planning to overthrow the new government, and consider them as a threat to Qatari national security.¹

Based on this accusation, the Qatari Interior Ministry issued a decision in 2004, which stipulates that 6,000 citizens of the Ghufran family would be stripped of their nationality. The decision include all members of the tribe not only the participants in the attempt, without any exceptions, neither to the elderly, widows nor children. Most of them restored their nationality in 2006, because of the pressure of the international organizations and bodies. However, Around 200 persons are still stateless and can't work legally in Qatar.

The family of Ghufran explained the harm they had suffered as a result of the arbitrary deprivation of their nationality and the unfair procedures that followed this decision. They faced detention, torture and forced deportation, confiscation of property and disability to returning to their homes. Also, Qatar threat the Residents of the Ghufran to withdraw their nationality, to prevent them from any contact with the media or human rights organizations.

The campaign of discrimination, injustice and systematic repression against the Ghufran family continue. In September 2017, the Qatari authorities revoked the citizenship of their grandfather, Taleb bin Lahoum bin Shraim al-Marri, with 55 others, including children and women from his family. Because the Talib's refusal to follow Qatari orders on criticizing

¹ For more information, check this link, please: <http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-43346118>

Saudi Arabia.² Which constitutes a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which prohibits the revocation of citizenship for any citizen because of political differences.

The Qatari government's decision came without any legal reasons or justifications, nor was it based on any fair or clear judicial judgments or trials. Qatar's actions against the Ghufran family only resulted in their displacement and denial of their basic rights and freedoms in the areas of health, education, housing, work. All of that contravenes the international conventions and treaties ratified by Qatar, as well as the recommendations and undertakings it received during the Universal periodic review on the protection of minorities and non-discrimination against them.

Second: Violations committed against Kurds in Turkey

Since the 1980 coup, Turkey has been living with enforced disappearance and gross violations against human rights, including killings, disappearances and torture. These violations are committed against civilians in the Kurdish-dominated south-eastern region of Anatolia due to the continued clashes between the state and the PKK. Indeed, it also continued under the current government, which does not recognize Kurdish nationalism and call them the Turks of the mountains, as well fighting the use of the Kurdish language.³

The current government committed a series of hostile practices and abuses against Kurdish citizens. Following the failed coup attempt in July 2016, the Turkish authorities imposed a state of emergency. It also issued several decrees that included procedures undermined human rights guarantees against Turkish citizens in general and Kurds in particular. The Turkish government continued to suppress parliamentarians and members of municipalities supporting pro-Kurdish parties. However, the Democratic People's Party which is pro-Kurdish party, won 67 seats in parliament during the June 2018 elections. The widespread use of terrorism charges against Kurdish citizens continued. According to the Turkish Ministry of Justice, the number of prisoners or convicted of terrorist crimes with allegedly PKK links was 10.286 persons, until June 2018. In addition to the frequently detention and arrest of Journalists who working for Pro-Kurdish media, which caused a suspension of any coverage of violations committed by the authorities in the south-east of the country. In March 2018, the police raided the "free democracy" newspaper which supports the Kurds, and arrested the newspaper journalists and printing staff, and transfer its assets to the state.⁴

In 2017, the United Nations announced that Turkish security forces had committed "serious violations" in their operations against the Kurds since the end of the cease-fire in the summer of 2015. The number of displaced estimated between 355 thousand and 500 thousand people, and destroyed about 1800 houses during these Processes.⁵

It is noteworthy that Abdullah Öcalan, one of the founders of the PKK, has been serving life imprisonment near Istanbul since his arrest in 1999. In February 2019, about 250 prisoners held a hunger strike throughout Turkey, in support for MP "Laila Goffen", the member of the pro-Kurdish Democratic People's Party. she has began a hunger strike in her prison since November 2018, demanding the allowance for Ocalan to meet with his defense and family members on a regular basis.⁶

Even Kurds who live outside turkey are not safe from repression and killings by Turkish authority. The Turkish army continue its violations on the Turkish-Syrian borders in which Kurds live. In October 2018, the Turkish army shelled some villages in Kobani city with medium weapons, which destroyed 5 houses and injured more than ten citizens. some residents displaced to neighboring villages because of the deliberate shelling of civilians, as

² For more information, check this link, please: <https://bit.ly/2WG8qPK>

³ For more information, check this link, please: <https://bit.ly/2t5jdFp>

⁴ For more information, check this link, please: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/world-report/2019/country-chapters/325732>

⁵ For more information, check this link, please: <https://bit.ly/2GmLjUH>

⁶ For more information, check this link, please: <https://bit.ly/2HOi1AI>

well. During the month of January 2018, the Turkish army bombed the village of "Tel Fender" in the countryside of Western "Tell Abyad", and due to that a young girl from the village "Sara Refaat Mustafa", 11 years old, was killed by sniper from Turkish army.⁷

Third: Violations committed against Minority in Iran

In recent months, Iranian authorities have stepped up abuses against minorities. The Iranian law doesn't recognize the Baha'i community that have more than 300,000 members,⁸ and discriminates against them. Since November 2018, at least 79 Baha'is have been arrested.⁹ In August and September 2018, the authorities arrested more than 20 Baha'is, in addition to a city council member who said that he provided support to those detainees.¹⁰

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.¹¹

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.¹²

Recommendations

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights recommends the international bodies and governments, should:

- The parties and international bodies should pressure on the authorities and governments of Qatar, Turkey and Iran to stop their violations against minorities and to open an international investigation of these violations.
- The need to stop the racial discrimination and flagrant violations of human rights practiced by the Qatari government against members of the tribes belonging to the state, especially the family.
- Restoring the rights of the Ghofran family members, including the restoration of Qatari nationality that withdrawn, and to take the necessary legal actions against persons involved in the torture and humiliation of members of the tribe.
- The Turkish government should stop targeting Kurds both inside and outside, and release Kurdish activist Abdullah Ocalan, who has been in prison since 1999.

The major countries should impose further sanctions on the Iranian government to stop acts of discrimination, exclusion and other human rights violations committed by the Iranian authorities against minorities, especially the Baha'is.

⁷ For more information, check this link, please: <https://bit.ly/2Bjr3zT>

⁸ For more information, check this link, please: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2019/01/30/327064>

⁹ For more information, check this link, please: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/world-report/2019/country-chapters/325426>

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

¹¹ For more information, check this link, please: <https://iranwire.com/fa/features/27685>

¹² For more information, check this link, please: <https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2014/05/19/253790>