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

**Joint written statement* submitted by Le Pont, the ANAJA
(L'Eternel a répondu), the Association Bharathi Centre
Culturel Franco-Tamoul, the Association Burkinabé pour la
Survie de l'Enfance, the Association pour les Victimes Du
Monde, the Society for Development and Community
Empowerment, non-governmental organizations 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.

[19 May 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).



Discrimination Against the Kurds in the Islamic Republic of Iran*

Kurdish Community in the Islamic Republic of Iran

- It is estimated that 12 million Kurds live in Iran, between 15 and 17% of the population. They live mainly in the provinces of Western Azerbaijan, Kordestan, Kermanshah and Ilam in the west and southwest of the country, although many have moved to large cities like Tehran. There is also a community of Kurds in North Khorasan province, in northeastern Iran.
- Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, even if a minority is Shiite. Some are Ahl-e Haq (Yarsani), Baha'i, and followers of the Qaderi and Naqshbandi Sufism Schools. The official religion of Iran is Shiite Islam, which is clearly favored by the state.
- Iran's Kurds, most of who are Sunni Muslims, face discrimination because of their religion, even though Sunni Islam is recognized and has a formal legal status in Iran. The use of the Kurdish language in education is often held back.
Other religious groups include Ahl-e Haq (Yarsani), mainly Kurdish, most of whose members live in Kermanshah and in or around major cities. Their faith embodies the Kurdish religious identity. Iranian law does not recognize the Yarsanis and their rituals are prohibited. They are also forbidden to discuss their faith with the media.
- The Kurds in Iran have long been discriminated against. Their social, political and cultural rights have been repressed, as have their economic aspirations. The Kurdish regions have been economically neglected, resulting in entrenched poverty. Forced evictions and the destruction of houses left the Kurds with limited access to adequate housing. Parents are prevented from registering their babies with certain Kurdish names.

Cultural

- Regardless of their religion, Kurds are not allowed to give their children certain names, including boys Soran (the name of the language), Khabat (struggle), Rizgar (Free) and Ala (flag); And for the girls Ajin (equal) and Fermisk (tear). Each registry office has a list of authorized names; a birth certificate is issued only if the family agrees to use an authorized name.
- Iran's international obligations require that the "religious or linguistic minorities" of the country enjoy their own culture and have the right to profess and practice their own religion...

Education

- Iran's Constitution stipulates that Iran's official language and script are Persian, and official documents and textbooks must be in that language. Despite this, the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and media, as well as for the teaching of regional and tribal literature in schools, is permitted in addition to Persian. However, no permanent measures have been introduced in the Iranian educational system to facilitate teaching in minority languages or to teach such languages as a second language - even if these provisions are included in the Iranian Constitution (art. 15¹) And international standards signed and accepted by Iran.

¹ Article 15: Persian is the official and common language and script of the people of Iran. The documents, correspondence, official texts, and schoolbooks must all be in this language and script. However, use of regional and ethnic languages in the press, the mass media, and the teaching of their literature at schools, alongside the Persian language, is freely permitted.

- Kurdish human rights defenders, community activists and journalists face arbitrary arrests and prosecutions. Some have become prisoners of conscience - people imprisoned for the peaceful expression of their conscientious beliefs. Others suffer torture, unjust trials before the revolutionary courts and the death penalty.
- Among other things, the Iranian authorities are required to take measures to eliminate discrimination against minorities in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights - including the right to freely chosen work, adequate housing, Food and water, education, the highest possible level of health and equal participation in cultural life.

Illegal killings by security forces

- The blind killings of Kulbaran (Border Couriers) in 2016 and during the first four months in 2017, described above, marked an extreme failure of the security forces to comply with international standards governing the use of lethal force.

Executions

- The Islamic Republic of Iran ranks first in per capita executions worldwide. According to data received by Amnesty International and other Kurdish and Iranian organizations, in 2015, 969 and in 2016 at least 567 people were executed and the Kurds continue to be the main victims of the Iranian execution machine. In this regard, despite the secrecy surrounding the executions and the refusal of the Government to publish the names and ethnic origin or where the executed detainees are.

Recommendation:

On cooperation with international human rights bodies:

- Facilitate, as a matter of priority, outstanding requests to visit Iran by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion The Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, and intends to invite the independent United Nations expert on minorities to visit Iran, including the Kurds and Other minority regions; And continue dialogue with the Special Rapporteurs on adequate housing and violence against women and work towards the implementation of their recommendations.
- Invite the United Nations Independent Expert on minority issues and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders to assess the situation of human rights defenders Kurds and make recommendations to the Government.

Recommendations:

On the national measure;

- commit all death sentences and order an immediate moratorium on Executions.
- release immediately and unconditionally all prisoners of conscience;
- amend or abolish all laws and practices that discriminate against minority communities, including discriminatory criteria in the field of employment and public service;
- take effective measures to ensure that the Kurds and all other members of minority communities in Iran - men, women and children - enjoy their human rights;
- to promote and protect the rights of human rights defenders;
- publicly condemn torture and other ill-treatment and take immediate steps to eradicate these abuses;
- ensure that all trials meet international standards.

*Centre Zagros pour les Droits de l'Homme, NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.