



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Forum on Minority Issues

Sixth session

26–27 November 2013

## Provisional agenda and annotations

### Note by the Secretariat

#### Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Legal framework and key concepts.
3. Protection of the existence of and prevention of violence against religious minorities.
4. Promotion and protection of the identity of religious minorities.
5. Promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange.
6. Concluding remarks

#### Annotations

##### 1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

###### Venue

1. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 6/15 and 19/23, the sixth session of the Forum on Minority Issues will be held in Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 26 and 27 November 2013.
2. The Forum will have before it the provisional agenda contained in the present document to be considered for adoption. A tentative schedule of work for the session is contained in annex I.

###### Opening meeting

3. The President of the Human Rights Council will deliver the opening statement of the session. Statements will then be made by the United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights, the Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues and the Independent Expert on minority issues.

#### **Documentation**

4. The list of documents for the session is provided in annex II. In addition to normal distribution, official documents for the session will be made available on the Human Rights Council website ([www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Minority/Pages/Session6.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Minority/Pages/Session6.aspx)).

#### **Discussions**

5. Participants will have the opportunity to make brief presentations and comments based on the draft recommendations that they will have before them. After the presentations introducing the topics for discussion at the beginning of each agenda item, there will be an open discussion to which all participants will be invited to contribute, based on a sign-up sheet.

### **2. Legal framework and key concepts**

6. The present session will begin with a brief overview of existing international and regional standards and principles relating to the rights of religious minorities from a minority rights perspective, including the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The applicable standards and principles providing for the right to freedom of religion or belief will be addressed. The discussion will also consider the human rights of religious minorities beyond freedom of religion or belief. Participants will discuss how to ensure that international standards relating to the protection of the rights of religious minorities are reflected in national legislation, policies and practices. The importance of a strong constitutional framework and adoption of anti-discrimination legislation reflecting the content of the Declaration on Minority Rights will be highlighted, as well as the importance of institutional attention to issues relating to religious minorities. With a view to setting the framework for the ensuing discussion, the added value of the minority rights-based approach as well as recent global initiatives relating to the rights and security of religious minorities will be discussed.

### **3. Protection of the existence of and prevention of violence against religious minorities**

7. The present session will aim to identify the measures taken by States and other actors to prevent tensions and acts of aggression or violence against religious minorities, their places of worship and assembly, or their charitable and humanitarian institutions. The discussion will address issues such as training of law enforcement officials and the judiciary. The Forum will further discuss effective measures to eradicate religious hatred, especially when it constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and pay particular attention to the role played by key actors, such as the media and media monitoring bodies, in this regard.

8. While emphasizing conflict prevention, the Forum will also consider the situation of religious minorities in conflict and post-conflict settings, and the role of all actors involved in ensuring protection of religious minorities and accountability for violations of their rights. This session will examine the positive role that religious leaders can play in addressing violations of the rights of religious minorities, preventing further violence and promoting peace and reconciliation.

### **4. Promotion and protection of the identity of religious minorities**

9. The present session will be devoted to effective practices to ensure the protection and promotion of the identity of religious minorities so that they can freely maintain and

develop their religious and cultural practices and traditions. The discussion will look into opportunities to protect religious minorities through the promotion and protection of their culture and language, including by taking measures in the field of education to foster knowledge of the culture and language of religious minorities within a society. This session will also consider the specific challenges that women belonging to religious minorities may face, both within and outside of their religious communities.

**5. Promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange**

10. The present session will discuss the role that key actors, including religious minorities, religious and community leaders and political actors, can play in the promotion and protection of the rights and security of religious minorities, and in promoting tolerance and harmonious relations between faith groups. This session will also address the role that women can play in fostering intercommunity tolerance and dialogue and promoting the rights of religious minorities. The role of young people and youth initiatives will also be considered and young minority actors will be invited to share their positive grass-roots experiences.

11. The session will seek to identify measures for promoting tolerant and inclusive multi-faith societies. Under this agenda item, participants will identify and discuss positive examples of interfaith dialogue and exchange and assess how existing mechanisms, institutions and processes have been established and work in practice. Participants will be invited to present practical examples of such initiatives, the positive impact of such initiatives and remaining challenges, in terms of sustainability.

**6. Concluding remarks**

12. The Chairperson of the Forum and the Independent Expert on minority issues will share their concluding remarks, including forward-looking proposals for next steps, with Forum participants.

## Annexes

### Annex I

#### Schedule of work

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*Tuesday, 26 November 2013*

*10 a.m. – 1 p.m.*

*3 p.m. – 6 p.m.*

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Opening of the Forum on Minority Issues

Protection of the existence of and prevention of violence against religious minorities

- Welcome and opening remarks by the President of the Human Rights Council
- Remarks by the Independent Expert on minority issues
- Remarks by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Remarks by the Chairperson of the Forum on Minority Issues

Legal framework and key concepts

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*Wednesday, 27 November 2013*

*10 a.m. – 1 p.m.*

*3 p.m. – 6 p.m.*

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Promotion and protection of the identity of religious minorities

Promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange

Concluding remarks

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## Annex II

### **Documents before the Forum on Minority Issues at its sixth session**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
A/HRC/FMI/2013/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
A/HRC/FMI/2013/2	Note by the Independent Expert on minority issues, Rita Izsák, on guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities
A/HRC/FMI/2013/3	Draft recommendations on guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities

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