



Forum: Human Rights Council

Question of: Protecting minorities' rights to live out cultural diversity concerning religion, ethnicity, nationality, and language.

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I. Description of the Issue

Throughout modern history, a significant trend has been recognized regarding the increase of restrictions of cultural diversity. Actions have been taken by states throughout the global political system which restrict or inhibit the expression of religions, ethnicities, nationalities, and languages. Religions such as Islam in the Palestinian territories or Christianity in Qatar are persecuted without end. Minorities have been denied access to states based on nationality, and Ethnicities and Languages are increasingly suppressed e.g., the Kurdish People. The world has begun a bilateral split in relation to the cultural rights of minorities, with many increasing restrictions as a pace not seen in recent history. States key to the globalized trade network such as the People's Republic of China and the United States of America continue to struggle with fair representation of minority voices and actions within their states. Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, states have recognized the importance of intrinsic rights for everyone. Member states must be willing to establish that all populations under their constituency should be afforded equal protections throughout all aspects of their lives.

II. Definition of Key Terms

- NGO – Non-governmental Organizations are parties with specific goals related to improving a certain aspect of the world. When discussing the rights and protections of minorities, non-governmental organizations such as the Minority Rights Group work to support disadvantaged minority groups.



- IGO – Intergovernmental Organizations are groups of state governments who meet with the establishment of a common goal. The prime example of an intergovernmental organization would be the United Nations.
- Laïcité – A word describing the French thought of individual free conscious. This has allegedly been used in recent history to restrict religious freedom in the French Republic.
- Galtung’s Peace Formula – A theory coined by Johan Galtung which states that peace within a state can be viewed as a function of empathy and equity divided by the present conflict and trauma.

III. **Background Information**

Religion has been key to all human societies, highlighting a human need to discover and reason. Throughout history, the development and eventual conglomeration of smaller societies has led minorities to be repressed in order to create a homogenous state. In modern history, states have continued to increase restrictions on minority groups according to the PEW research center, increasing the danger for said groups. States who have presented themselves as bastions of free thought have come under increasing scrutiny over their continued disinterest in mutual respect between religions. As religion and ethnicity have been a core connection between groups, restrictions placed upon it serve as an attempt to control and punish. Control methods and cultural assessments therefore must be counteracted to create stable environments in which minority ethnic groups are willing and able to practice faith in safe environments.

Throughout the historical record, states have fallen towards a hierarchical system, often with minority groups making up a larger, repressed class. As the modern world has developed, almost every nation has a pledge within a founding document promoting the free expression of religion, although many have religious restrictions established in law. The contradiction has been the core issue plaguing the fight for minority religious freedoms. Large religious groups, especially those heavily involved in national politics have often been the loudest voices of religious repression within a state, for example the Russian Orthodox Church after the fall of the Soviet Union. As religious repression has been well established throughout the



historical record, the historical precedent of oppression must be broken in order to better the lives of all peoples.

Nationalities and ethnicities have long been the grounds for conflicts between nations. As colonialism took hold throughout the world, groups were sectioned off by nationality and ethnicity. This forced relocation of groups throughout the world was a large factor in shaping the minorities present globally. As the world has progressed, internally and externally, nations are continuing to restrict citizenry based on foundations of ethnic origin or nationality, in contrast to the United Nations stated objectives.

IV. Major Countries and Organizations Involved

The rights of all are important worldwide, especially discrimination based on already protected factors. As minorities often make up a substantial portion of the labor force, states with considerable impact on the global market and international political landscape are especially important as possible leaders in change.

The United States of America

As a major world actor in both the political and economic spheres, the United States has been an integral part of the globalization process. In contrast though, the state has historically repressed its southern neighbors in order to create a state of hegemony over the western hemisphere. Not only has the United States of America significantly repressed its external neighbors on grounds of religion, nationality, ethnicity, and language, it continues to also adeptly structure its public and private systems to repress minorities within the state.

The People's Republic of China

Throughout the past century, the People's Republic of China has emerged as a key aspect of the global market. As data becomes more available though, the national attempt to establish the Han ethnicity as the sole ethnicity of the Chinese people and remove all others tells of a dangerous future. The actor in question has been found to be intruding and oppressing other smaller neighbors in an attempt to further this goal.



Russian Federation

The Russian Federation has more recently been broadcasting their intent to eliminate the nationality which is Ukrainian through their aggression into their neighbor. The blatant disregard for the United Nations Charter is a clear sign of disregard for the rights of minorities.

French Republic

Recently, the French Republic has faced both internal and external backlash over its so-called defense of Laïcité. According to others, it is an expression of islamophobia and religious intolerance. A complaint has been made to this body regarding a 2020 proposal to restrict religious expression of younger peoples even further, as well as to the European Commission.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The UK has long been established worldwide and continues to suffer the increasing xenophobia seen throughout the world today. The United Kingdom has reportedly not been responsive to the protection of minorities' rights concerning healthcare and education access, not experiencing discrimination regarding race, and immigration difficulties.

V. Current Events

The promotion of peace within states will slow, eventually stagnating if a lack of empathy and equity to minority groups is not prioritized. A disregard for minorities also promotes ethnic trauma, presenting through Galtung's peace formula along with an absence of empathy and equity.

As modern society progresses, the globe as a whole has made a conscious choice to marginalize minority voices through restrictions on the basis of religion. States such as the People's Republic of China have been investigated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, finding "serious human rights violations" against "predominantly Muslim communities". Even though societal hostilities in relation to religion have recently been declining, the persecution and villainization of minority religious groups has been continued as a pervasive issue everywhere. Governments throughout the globe have



statistically continued to attempt to control cultural minorities through religious means, often disrupting their freedom of expression in the process.

Above is a visual representation of data compiled by the PEW Research Center highlighting the usage of differing religion-repressing techniques in different geographic regions and worldwide.

Minority nationalities and ethnicities have continually been marginalized when not able to provide ample self-defense. As Galtung defines peace, groups must have empathy for each other as well as equity between them, as well as a lack of violence and trauma. For cases such as the Kurdish peoples, the severe lack of equity and empathy between them and their respective majorities cause long standing conflicts and separatist movements. The longstanding fight for a Kurdish state has also led to a long history of conflict and trauma, lessening peace as a whole. This case study is a prime example of the consequences if minorities' freedoms are not protected.

The languages of different ethnic groups have been restricted around the world in recent history. From states removing funding from the instruction of native languages to the systematic removal of native language learning, an intrinsic communication tool is being denied to some of the most vulnerable groups. Linguistic freedoms have been protected throughout many past actions but continue to be some of the most vulnerable aspects of everyday life. States are implored to find cohesive and meticulous solutions which provide assistance for the struggle which is retaining a language.

VI. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Actions from the United Nations:

- The decision to establish an independent international commission of inquiry on Russia's aggression in Ukraine.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination



VII. Possible Solutions

There are many possible methods which could be used to attempt to encourage the establishment and fastening of minorities' rights. Prospective introductions to solutions are listed below, please work to deepen them further.

- A reiteration of member states' commitment to the rights of minorities' self-expression
- Establishment of an independent commission as a subsidiary of the Human Rights Council with the express goal to provide reviews to states which have been requested by the Human Rights Council.
- Utilize the assistance of Non-governmental Organizations to lobby for greater protections of minorities.

VIII. How to Prepare as a Delegate

The Human Rights Council is a wonderful experience in which old and new delegates are able to work together to form new and engaging solutions. As a delegate you will have the chance to prepare unique solutions from your delegation's perspective which shape the resolution to your benefit. Delegates are expected to research their positions extensively, presenting their findings in position papers. These are made up of a quick analysis of one's own country, followed by an exhibition of the state's interests and perceptions of the issue at hand. Delegates must submit 2-3 position papers but be prepared for opening speeches and debate on all issues. Position papers are to be submitted to both chairs of the Human Rights Council no later than the 10th of September 2023. Delegates are encouraged to work together to delve into the wealth of information present regarding each issue and their state. Well produced position papers submitted on time are a factor in the awards process. Participants in MUNoH 2023 are also reminded to show respect to their fellow delegates and staff, with the reminder of possible repercussions if deemed necessary.



IX. UN Resolutions

As there have been past actions regarding this issue, below is a list of resolutions regarding this. Be aware this list is not exhaustive.

- General Assembly Resolution 47/135 – Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
 - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-rights-persons-belonging-national-or-ethnic>
- General Assembly Resolution 36/55 – Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief
 - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-all-forms-intolerance-and-discrimination>
- General Assembly Resolution 2106 – International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
 - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
 - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

X. Useful Links

Delegates can find useful links to websites of interest which could assist their research further.

- The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
 - https://www.ohchr.org/en/ohchr_homepage
- Promise of Declaration on Protecting Minority Rights Still Not Fulfilled, Speakers Tell High-Level Meeting Marking Adoption's Thirtieth Anniversary



- <https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12448.doc.htm>
- Chronology of United Nations Milestones for Human Rights and Development
 - <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/chronology-un-milestones-human-rights-and-development>
- Freedom House – Global Freedom Index
 - This is a map of Freedom House’s criteria and grading of each country. Click on one of interest and scroll through the criteria to find helpful information.
 - <https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fhw&year=2023>
- Minority Rights Group
 - This is one of the largest Non-governmental Organizations concerning minorities’ rights.
 - <https://minorityrights.org/new/>

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