Tuesday 13 March
Room XXI, Palais des Nations
12:00 – 13:30

RIGHTS DENIED IN IRAN
Iran’s religious and ethnic minorities between marginalisation, neglect and persecution

Shirin EBADI, Iranian Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Chairwoman of the Centre for Supporters of Human Rights
Ahmed SHAHEED, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, former UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran (video message)
Diane ALAI, Representative of the Bahá’í International Community at the UN
Taimoor ALIASSI, Association of Human Rights in Kurdistan of Iran - Geneva
Nasser BOLADAI, Spokesperson of Balochistan Peoples’ Party
Roya BOROUMAND, Executive Director of Abdorrahman Boroumand Center
Moderator: Miriam PUTTICK, Minority Rights Group / Ceasefire Centre

Despite some limited gestures of conciliation since the election of President Hassan Rouhani in 2013, Iran’s ethnic and religious minorities are frequently subjected to hate speech and police intimidation, and routinely denied fundamental rights and opportunities.

Religious minorities recognized by Iran’s Constitution - Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians - nonetheless face a range of legal discrimination, while unrecognized religious minorities, including Bahá’ís, Sabean-Mandaeans and Zoroastrians, are left with no guaranteed protections. Regions populated by Arabs, Kurds, Azeri Turk and Baloch are underdeveloped and sidelined, with higher poverty levels and poorer health. These inequalities have fostered profound discontent and resentment, contributing, in part, to the emergence of nationwide protests at the end of 2017.

This panel discussion will be an opportunity to reflect on the current situation of ethnic and religious minorities in Iran, which constitute approximately half of the Iranian population (close to half of the population according to certain estimates). It will examine an overview of the many human rights challenges minorities face, will explore the motivations behind the attitudes of the Iranian authorities, and will discuss how these have contributed to a number of recent grassroots movements which are being severely repressed.

For further information, please contact Mr. Glenn Payot (glenn.payot@mrgmail.org ; +41 78 881 52 91)

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