



# ASSYRIAN UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE



Member, Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization (UNPO)  
United Nations Forum on Minority Issues  
November 27-28, 2012

**Alen Mirza**  
**Committee on International Organizations**

## **Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities: identifying positive practices and opportunities.**

*Challenges and problems encountered in the practical implementation of the Declaration*

### **Implementing the Positive Obligations of the Declaration in Post-Conflict Reconstruction**

Madam President, distinguished delegates:

The Assyrian Universal Alliance would like to bring attention to the importance of implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Minorities in post-conflict and peace-building situations. Specifically, we ask the Forum to recognize the necessity of applying the positive obligations contained in the Declaration immediately following periods of conflict. In doing so, national governments and United Nations institutions will be better able to offset the human rights violations disproportionately affecting minorities during such times.

The current situation of Assyrians in Iraq is evidence of the need for applying affirmative measures in securing the rights of minorities under the Declaration, promoting genuine equality and ensuring that minorities play an integral role in State-building processes. Iraq's reconstruction following the 2003 war has left Assyrians and other minorities to suffer unevenly, particularly with respect to issues of security and displacement. Assyrians continue to remain underrepresented in government security forces, especially in leadership positions and in regions with significant minority populations. This disparity exists despite constitutional guarantees requiring equitable representation in Iraqi armed forces and security services. Furthermore, while constituting less than 10% of Iraq's prewar population, Assyrians represent upwards of 30% of UNHCR-registered Iraqi refugees. This startling statistic raises serious concerns that Assyrians are losing viability and visibility in the socio-political spectrum within Iraq, and that their populations may not be able to recover from the current state of affairs.

Madam President, both national governments and United Nations agencies with specialized mandates in peace-building and post-conflict recovery maintain an obligation to apply affirmative measures to reverse the detrimental effects described above. Therefore, AUA urges the Forum to adopt the following suggestions to the Independent Expert's Recommendations:

- First, include specific language within paragraph 25 to recognize the human rights challenges unique to minorities during periods of post-conflict reconstruction and urge national governments to swiftly implement their positive obligations contained in the Declaration. These obligation should be implemented throughout all facets of redevelopment. Available means of implementation include the use of effective quotas and allocation of sufficient funds to ensure minorities participate in their state's political, economic, and social reconstruction.



# ASSYRIAN UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE



Member, Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization (UNPO)  
United Nations Forum on Minority Issues  
November 27-28, 2012

---

- And second, amend paragraph 66 to emphasize the importance of United Nations specialized agencies working in post-conflict reconstruction to implement capacity-building initiative ensure institutional strengthening with the specific aim of encouraging minority participation in various aspects of public life.

These recommendations will ensure that the Declaration is effective when the rights of minorities are at the most vulnerable.

Thank you.