

VOICES FOR PEACE

By: Rabin Chowdhury

Mr. President,

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, but it is always encouraging to repeat good statements. This universal message is given in the very first article of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration also states that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Mr. President,

- Systematic violations of minority rights by the non-state actors in Bangladesh, including marginalisation and discrimination, inequitable land management, socio-economic underdevelopment and an abdication of its responsibility for law, order and security.
- The plight of minorities in Bangladesh and conditions of conflict are known to international actors. But instead of structural conflict prevention, donor interest in the region focuses on short term responses to crises.
- Various peace processes became the regional priority for key Western governments, marginalising the escalating conflicts involving minorities in the region. By excluding minority groups from negotiations, the peace negotiations further motivated groups to resort to conflict.

Mr. President

- Structural conflict prevention: National governments and international and non-government organisations need to acknowledge the link between the prevention of conflict and the promotion and protection of minority rights.
- International and regional early warning systems must have adequate resources, exhibit strong leadership and emphasise rights-focused analysis. The UN should establish early warning analysis mechanisms that include input from experts in operational prevention and human/minority rights, treaty organizations, NGOs and the media.
- Operational prevention: Systematic, coordinated and accountable UN leadership must formally link early warning to early action and be sensitive to the concerns of minorities.
- Peace-making efforts must be rights-based and inclusive of all communities including women. Conflicts must be approached in a holistic manner and include a country/regional approach and all peoples affected.

Mr. President

We urge the government of Bangladesh to take positive steps, legally and socially, to ensure no discrimination to the minority people.

Thank You