

Violence and Atrocity Crimes Against Minorities



Unfortunately, sectarian violence and atrocity crimes, rooted in discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities, are spreading across the world and specially the Middle East region.

The method of setting geographical borders round countries in early 20th century has caused Middle East to be labeled as a geographical region lacking stability suffering from sectarian violence.

One of the best techniques to deal with instability and ethnic and religious violence is preventing violence to occur. Studying the experiences of other countries, the best practices and successful plans can contribute to the development of useful strategies to deal with violence against minorities in vulnerable regions.

The countries which have managed to control violence against minorities have focused their preventive measures in six major areas including: violation of human rights, armed conflicts, weakness of State structure, motives and incentives, and discrimination against minorities.

Botswana is one of the countries that is successfully managing minority rights.

Despite the existence of violence risk factors in Botswana, including, ethnic division, discrimination, human right violations, and inequality of economic opportunities, the country has managed to create mitigating factors – including, Improving commitment to basic education for the minorities, Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Indigenous Peoples - to ameliorate the effects of the mentioned risk factors as well as giving minorities voices to express their grievances and the protection of freedom of expression in the public service media.

However some other countries such as Myanmar and Pakistan have not been as successful in protection of minority rights.

Despite the UN calls on protection of minority rights, in Myanmar, Muslim minorities are arrested, persecuted, made homeless and killed, their rights are being violated while sufficient attention is not being paid to the issue.



In Pakistan, Shia Muslims are prevented from practicing their religion.

They are imprisoned, penalized and persecuted because of their religious beliefs.

In Iraq and Syria, the situation is more regrettable. For years, different minorities such as the Yezidis, Turkmen, Sunni Muslims, the Shia, Christians, and Kurds used to live in peace in the region. However, lack of attention to the six mentioned risk factors that contribute to outbreak of violence along with negative interventions of some countries and some opportunist non State actors have brought about the heinous consequences we are witnessing.

Considering paragraph 12 of the Draft recommendations which reiterates on the necessity of protection of minority rights by the States, Our Organization calls on all States to comply with international standards of minority rights protection and benefit from the experiences and best practices performed by the vulnerable countries which have managed to prevent atrocity crimes.