Recommendations of the Cultural Center of the Caucasus Yazidis

Europe & Central Asia Regional Forum

Minority participation as a procedural and substantive right and process

I'm Oksana Smoeva, I represent the organization Cultural Center of the Caucasus Yazidis, our organization mainly works in the field of protecting the rights and freedoms of the Yazidi community in the countries of the South Caucasus - these countries are Georgia and Armenia.

The countries of the South Caucasus are multinational states that have a desire to create and develop democratic institutions. However, the success of states in supporting the development of ethnic minorities, in particular the Yazidi community, is insignificant. Today we can state that the participation of Yazidis in all areas of the social and political life of Georgia and Armenia remains very limited, they are especially underrepresented in representative municipal bodies, in the field of science, sports and culture. In Georgia, in fact, the Yazidi community was forced to emigrate to neighboring countries and if we formulate it as a percentage, then this is approximately 90% of the Yazidi community.

Despite a lot of obligations and signed international conventions of the UN and the Council of Europe, the Yazidi community of Georgia and Armenia continues to be subjected to veiled and unveiled everyday forms of discrimination. Let's take the most common example, when in Georgia, in the multinational state of the South Caucasus, during submitting a resume to any company or organization, the CV of a representative of national minorities, and in particular a Yazidi, will occupy the last lines of the list of those who want to get a job, in fact, a person does not have a title surname of nation will not be able to get the desired job. Based on this, young representatives of the Yazidi national minority, graduating from higher educational institutions, cannot get a job in their field, which leads to the exclusion of national minorities from the processes of public life in their countries of residence.

In Armenia, the right of the Yazidis to education in their native language is infringed and the socio-economic situation of the Yazidi community is getting worse. In Georgia, the right to study in one's native language has been completely lost. And the violation of such fundamental rights and freedoms only increases over the years. The topic of access to culture by the Yazidi community is also a topic of concern.

We are trying to cover the problems of our community at such serious venues as the UN and the Council of Europe. Our reports on the situation of the rights and freedoms of the Yazidi community are available on the websites of these organizations. Of course, in such a short speech, I cannot cover all those problems that have put our community on the edge of survival and this is not a figure of speech, it is a reality.

We would like that our voice to be heard and I will read our recommendations:

I think we need:

- Make real efforts to create effective anti-discrimination mechanisms in the country that are aimed at counteracting veiled forms of discrimination in the South Caucasus region

-Implement unprecedented international legislation in relation to national minorities at the regional level.

- Eliminate components of domestic policy that actively encourage ethnic and religious xenophobia and intolerance, which is also intensified due to the state's not serious attitude towards various ethnic minorities, in particular towards the Yazidis.