

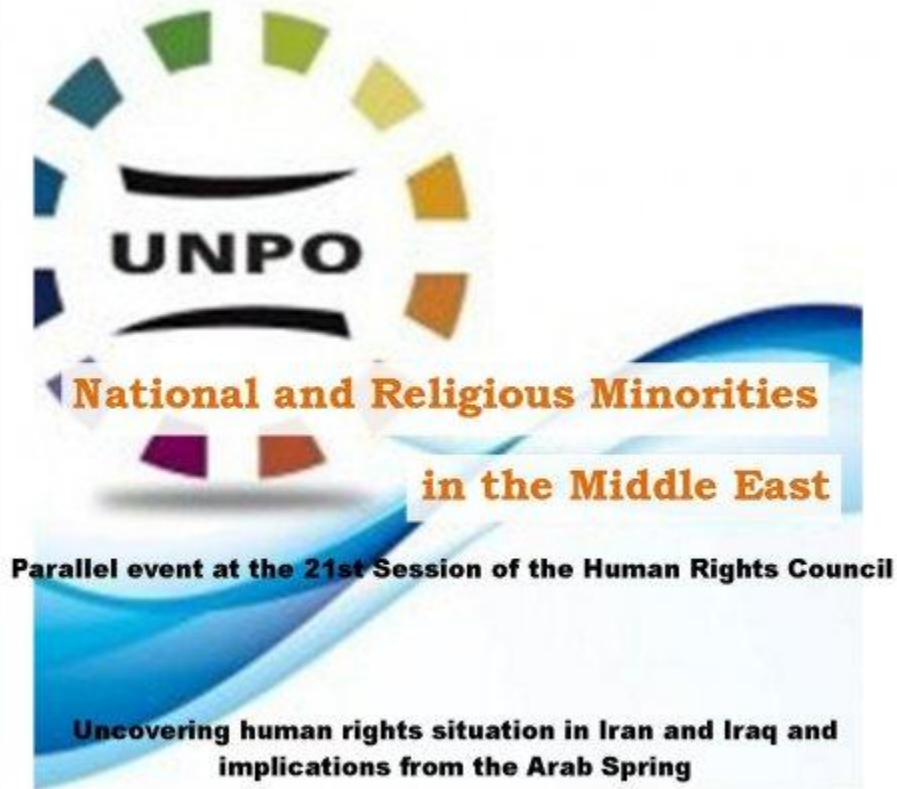
INVITATION: Parallel Event at the 21st Session of the Human Rights Council "National and Religious Minorities in the Middle East"

DATE & TIME:

25 September
14.00-16.00

LOCATION:

Room XXII
Palais des Nations
Geneva



Tuesday, 25th September 2012, 14.00-16.00

Room XXII, Palais des Nations

Geneva, Switzerland

Uncovering human rights situation in Iran and Iraq and implications from the Arab Spring

On behalf of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), you are cordially invited to attend UNPO's parallel event "National and Religious Minorities in the Middle East" taking place at **Palais des Nations – Geneva, on 25th September 2012, 14.00-16.00.**

Through this event, UNPO aims at bringing attention to the human rights situation of religious and national minorities in Iran and Iraq, with two specific case studies on West Balochistan and the Iraqi Turkmen. We aim for the event to reach diplomatic staff members, UN staff members, academics, NGOs alike, and people with an interest in human and minority rights.

Iran's population includes a large number of religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities. These groups are highly diverse, but share common experiences of economic marginalization, political

repression and denial of even the most basic of cultural rights. Baloch people in Iran are deprived of their cultural, social and economic rights leaving them feeling like third class citizens. They face discrimination, particularly with regard to political participation and the job market. The punishment for dissemination of Baloch culture and language is a declared act of treason against the state and assimilation policies carried out by the Persian state mean that the Baloch are rapidly losing their identity. Baloch people face systematic intimidation, harassment arrests, and torture.

Minorities in Iraq include various ethnic and religious groups. The Kurds, Assyrians (also known as Chaldo-Assyrians), and Iraqi Turkmen represent the three largest non-Arab minorities in the country. Since the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the Iraqi Turkmen have been victims of several massacres, such as the Kirkuk Massacre of 1959. Furthermore, under the Baath party, discrimination against the Iraqi Turkmen increased, with several leaders being executed in 1979 as well as the Iraqi Turkmen community being victims of Arabization policies by the state. Despite being recognized in the 1925 constitution as a constitutive entity, the Iraqi Turkmen were later denied this status, they have suffered from various degrees of suppression and assimilation that ranged from political persecution and exile to terror and ethnic cleansing.

This event will highlight some of the most pressing issues currently facing minorities in Iran and Iraq. Confirmed speakers include **Nasser Boladai** (Spokesperson, Balochistan Peoples Party), **Sundus Saqi** (Representative, Iraqi Turkmen Front), **Charles Graves (Secretary General, Interfaith International)**, and **Christoph Wiedmer** (Director, Society for Threatened Peoples). Speakers will present a picture of the state of minority rights in the Middle East region, explore the implications of the Arab Spring and democratic movements on minority rights, as well as discuss successful examples of multinational democracies.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED AND MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE September 21st 2012

REGISTRATION FOR THIS EVENT IS NOW CLOSED

FOR ANY QUERIES PLEASE CONTACT

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