



Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the floor. My name is Jian Badrakhan from YASA, the Kurdish Centre for Legal Studies & Consultancy. Our Organization advocates the rights of Kurdish People in Syria, which are estimated to be about 3 million.

The Syrian constitution has a special capital about education and cultural principals, starting with Article 21 which states:

“The education and cultural system aims to build an Arabic national socialistic generation..”.

Article 21 clarifies the aim of the educational system in Syria, and as the Kurds are a national minority, the Syrian government has with this, over decades excluded and systematically violated the rights of the Kurds to a proper education.

The first of such barriers can be seen in the following examples:

- 1) It is forbidden to teach a lesson in the mother tongue of the Kurdish language. Teachers are forced to give lessons to pupils in Arabic which nobody understands, thus reflecting a strategy of the government in excluding the Kurds from a prospective education.
- 2) Schools in Kurdish areas are in very poor condition, usually with a substantial lack of chairs, desks and teaching material.
- 3) Teachers in Kurdish areas are not well trained and the authorities always punish bad teachers from the other cities by sending them to Kurdish areas.

My own experience as teacher in the Kurdish area of Syria showed me that less than 5% of the pupil population continue onto secondary school. The next difficulty is that there are very few secondary schools in the Kurdish area and no public university available. To continue secondary school or to study at a university, Kurdish students are forced to move to the city- which is very expensive and very few families can afford. Therefore most of the Kurdish children stop at this stage and start working. Child labour has thus become the norm in the Kurdish society.

Despite these barriers, some students do reach a university level education and along with studying they work to finance their education. The authorities however, exercise blatant control and can expel a Kurdish student from the University for any reason.

YAŞA e.V.

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Statistics available show that from 2003 onwards, the authorities have expelled more than 100 Kurdish students from the universities in Damascus and Aleppo and left them without any perspective to face their destiny.

These 100 students could have been 100 doctors or 100 lawyers, 100 agricultural engineers or 100 teachers or economists, but the Syrian government has re-enforced through Article 21, from the Syrian constitution, that these 100 students are not candidates for the Arabic national socialistic generation.

Thank you very much.

Jian Badrakhan

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