



## Are Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Just Pawns on the Geopolitical Chessboard?

On the occasion of the XVII Presidency, UNPO, in collaboration with Bündnis 90/Die Grünen – Bayern and World Uyghur Congress, held a conference on 27 June 2014 at the Bavarian State Parliament in Munich, Germany.

In light of increasingly alarming security and human rights situations facing many UNPO Members, this conference addressed the question of geopolitical complexities, which shape the lives of nations, peoples, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and indigenous peoples, bearing in mind that Uyghurs, Crimean Tatars and Iraqi Turkmen live in geopolitical hotspots, and incidentally face escalating discrimination and oppression.

The conference adopts the following declarations:

1. that the international community, including the United Nations, European Union, OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and the Council of Europe reaffirm their commitment to promoting the human rights of all nations and peoples residing in the People's Republic of China, Crimea and Iraq;
2. that the official Government strategy of the People's Republic of China of finger-pointing and demonizing the entire population of Uyghurs is counter-productive, as it feeds mutual distrust and resentment, intensified by China's recent policy shift, which prioritizes security concerns and violently suppresses and silences peaceful dissent through aggressive clampdowns on protesters, arbitrary arrests and detentions, nation-wide sweeps and raids, and enforced disappearances of critics;
3. that it is of fundamental importance for the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, to start effective dialogue with Uyghur representatives to diffuse rising tensions in East Turkestan, and to reflect on how oppressive and discriminatory policies serve as driving forces behind instability and inter-ethnic clashes;
4. that it strongly urges the Government of China to cease all violations of due process rights, most recently, with public mass sentencing and executions primarily targeting Uyghurs, such as Ilham Tohti and Abduweli Ayup;
5. that the precarious situation facing the Crimean Tatars is no longer only a matter of culture or representation, but of physical security for the people amidst the presence of Russian troops in the peninsula, and that there is an urgent need to internationalize the Crimean Tatar question;
6. that in light of increasing violence and discrimination faced by Crimean Tatars, both Ukraine and Russia have a responsibility to safeguard the protection of minorities under their *de jure* or *de facto* control, while also granting full access to international humanitarian organizations, and ensuring the prosecution of perpetrators of violations;
7. that it calls on Western democracies to be more diligent in their human rights policies, to find a common language and to avoid double-standards; to adopt a firmer policy towards autocratic, undemocratic and totalitarian States;
8. that as conflicts occur, national governments, supported by the international community, must ensure that *all* citizens are adequately protected, and can fully enjoy and exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms also in times of crisis; without effective redress of underlying strife, the risk of bloodshed is inevitable; this is a quest for justice.

