



Oral statement at the 34th regular session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3:

Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

March 06, 2017

Mr. President,

VIVAT International welcomes the commitment and the efforts of the government of Bosnia and Hercegovina regarding the implementation, promotion and protection of human rights, especially the right to freedom of religion or belief. This right is a fundamental right to which every human being is entitled, and is strongly asserted in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This right is also guaranteed in the Constitution of Bosnia and Hercegovina.

The last war from 1992 to 1995 resulted in many casualties and caused suffering for many children, women and men who were persecuted and killed because of the national or religious group to which they belonged. We acknowledge that since the end of the war, the Bosnian authorities have made a great effort in regard to the process of reconciliation, as well as in the gradual building of prosperity and happiness, in all of which religious freedom has played a vital role.

However, we are deeply concerned with information that is coming out of Bosnia and Hercegovina, especially in recent times. The increasing number of violations of human rights in many places, such as in Banja Luka and in Glamoč, should not go without a response from the Council. We have received a report of a case, in which a State employee has allegedly been discriminated against due to the fact that she is a member of a religious community. Despite the case being taken to court, as well as being brought before the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Hercegovina in 2014, it is still pending.

Therefore, we recommend that the government of Bosnia and Hercegovina:

1. Ensure that the policy on equal treatment is being applied to all members of any religious community in the State.
2. Uphold transparency in the justice system, particularly in regards to cases of alleged discrimination based on religion.

Thank you, Mr. President.