

## Organization for Defending Victims of Violence



### Mother Tongue Education for Iranian Ethnic Groups

**Mr. President,**

Education of mother tongue and native culture is among essential human rights. Iranian ethnic groups and their NGOs have always strived for enhancement of the right to educate their mother language in primary schools and universities. In recent years, Azeri and Kurdi languages and cultures are incorporated in the schools and universities curriculum in the western provinces of the country. The universities of the region offer Azeri and Kurdi literature courses and at the primary school level, Torki<sup>1</sup> and Kurdi<sup>2</sup> school books, along with a book on “local cultures”, are added to the curricula.

However, local culture materials, taught in primary schools of some regions, have received various comments from the local NGOs. Arab minorities have expressed concerns over the considerable difference between the formal Arabic language taught at schools and their colloquial or dialectal Arabic, while members of Kurds and Azeri have offered comments on the contents of the recently published Azeri and Kurdi school books.

**Mr. President,**

Being concerned with the minorities’ right to language and culture, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls on the Iranian government to magnify its efforts to strengthen its language policies in a way that local language learning is available to all ethnicities. As article 15 of the Iranian constitution clearly emphasizes on the right of minorities to learn their languages, and United Nations Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 24, emphasizes that States cannot deny the minorities’ right to language and culture, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is recommended to strengthen its policies and offer inclusive ethnic language education to members of all ethnicities.

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1 . <http://madaniatnews.com/?p=4862>

2 . <http://www.farid14.loxblog.com/post/1>