

2007 Human Dimensions Implementation Meeting
Macedonian Human Rights Movement in Greece
Friday 28, September 2007

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Dear Mr. Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We, the Macedonians of Greece strongly believe that the measure of every democratic and civilized country is the protection of human rights.

The Macedonians, who after the partition of Macedonia in 1913 found themselves under the Greek state, cannot exercise their human rights as citizens of Greece having its different Macedonian language, culture and tradition.

From the very beginning the Greek state did its best to violate international conventions protecting the minorities and human rights for non-Greek populations of Greece. The situation worsened in the 30's of the XX century when Ioannis Metaxas gained power and became dictator. Special laws and treatment were imposed on Macedonians to ban the use of the Macedonian language. Beatings, fines and ill treatment and the economic pressure were used on a daily basis. Then the time of "the black colonels" came where the Macedonians were striped the basic human rights. The ban to speak the language, to gather and to sing Macedonian was implemented. Terror and fines were supposed to help in gaining the aim i.e. to have citizens who think and feel in the Greek way.

In the 90's of the XX century the protection of human rights did not look better. After 1991 when the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence the Greek state tried to convince the whole world that the name of Macedonia and the Macedonian heritage was Greek. Once more the ethnic Macedonians were stripped their basic human rights by its own state claiming they were Greeks? As an ethnic minority they were treated as traitors to the Greek state because they showed their different national feelings. Even today people belonging to the Macedonian minority in Greece cannot freely express their Macedonian feelings. If they do, they cannot receive governmental posts; they are labeled "Skopjans" and not Macedonians and have obstructions in many other fields of life.

As an ethnic minority the Macedonians cannot learn their language in schools which is very important to protect and convey the language for the next generations.

The Greek state demands from Albania and Turkey to protect the human rights of the Greek speaking population of these countries but is doing nothing to protect the human rights of its own minorities such as Albanians, Turks, Vlahs and Macedonians.

Dear Mr. Moderator we think that no democratic country should be afraid of possessing the minorities on its territory because these minorities bring diversity and enrich the culture of this country.

Thank you for your attention!