

in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described above and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory- without distinction as to race, creed or colour".

This convoluted formulation amounts intentionally to a disqualification of "minority" as being a "people" and to the exclusion of minorities from the potential protective shield of international law.

The same policy bias exists in other international instruments related to the protection of human rights, in which rights pertinent to the protection of minorities are always defined as "the rights of persons belonging to a minority". This exclusion of collective or communal rights reflects the views and interests of the inter-state system which produced the current corpus of international law and practice, especially the values espoused by mono-ethnic states.

Moreover, to some extent, the protection of human rights by the international community is subject to the limitation imposed by the "doctrine" of non-intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. The international community has defined high standards in the human rights area, but has systematically failed to implement them in a credible way. Consequently, it is not surprising to see cases where an existing state, unable to accommodate minority interests and aspirations, has to face a violent secessionist movement and chooses to deal with the issue in a manner inimical to existing standards of human rights.

The severity of this judgement needs, however, to be nuanced in light of humanitarian interventions which have taken place in northern Iraq to protect the Kurds, as well as the more "interventionist stance" that the international community appears to be taking in Yugoslavia and Somalia. Even though the principle of non-intervention is being slowly eroded, mostly with respect to humanitarian assistance, we are probably far from the day when current realities can be reflected and codified in international law.

ETHNICIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

Over time, the diversification of the ethnic composition of states, and especially the pattern of internal conflicts between a majority population and a minority, will put greater and greater demands on mono-ethnic states. The reluctance or incapability of existing states to satisfy minority demands, and recourse to coercive measures or repression to preserve the integrity of the state, might increase the tensions already abundantly in evidence in inter-state relations.