

ASIAN-EURASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM

CRP8 # 21

18 Dec 2003

NGO Section/DESA

Ref : Your letter of 17 December 2003

Dear Madam,

With reference to your above dated letter, I submit the clarifications herewith ;

Total number of members and their distribution is as this

a) Executive Council	11 (including office bearers)
b) General Assembly	34
Total	<u>45</u>

These figures were confirmed in our letter of January 3, 2003 sent to your office in response to your letter No. 28724 of 17 December 2002.

2. In our account statement submitted in response to the above cited letter of the NGO section, we stated that the funding for the organization came from three sources : (a) sale of membership forms (b) yearly contributions by the members (c) donations by philanthropic organizations. We cannot accept funding from governments in accordance with our statutes.

3. Our accredited delegate to the 59th Session of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva had made an intervention under item 5 of the Provisional Agenda. He had endorsed and supported the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur for standardizing the legal definition of mercenaries and urging the member states to commit themselves to the International Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries. He had strictly adhered to the guidelines provided in the Annotated Provisional Agenda on this item and stated the impediments in the way of enjoying the fruits of the right of self-determination in an atmosphere of peace. There was absolutely no political slant or motivation in the intervention. It was an academic discussion.

4. Our NGO has been holding periodical seminars/symposia/briefings essentially on the theme of protection and promotion of human rights for all. During the May session of the NGO Committee, to which our representative was advised to attend, we distributed some material of this sort among the distinguished members. Our case was deferred in that session because the Honourable members wanted time to go through that material. In the first week of December we mailed

more literature pertaining to our activities to the addresses of the Honourable members.

In regard to the briefing session on 'How to accommodate the rights of religious minorities in South Asia', we have to submit that we are in close contact with the UN Human Rights Commission's Working Group on Minorities, which is the core group dealing with various aspects of minority issues. We regularly attend its annual meetings in Geneva and adopt its recommendations and suggestions as guidelines for formulating our perceptions and policy of addressing the issues of religious minorities. We also take into account the reports and recommendations of the Secretary-General's special Rapporteur on Religious Minorities with whom we interact during the sessions of the Commission and the Sub-Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

5. *Asian-Eurasian Commentary* is our organization's monthly journal. Copies of October and November issues were mailed to the Honourable members in the first week of December. However, I have with me a few copies of its November issue and I enclose these as desired.

I hope this explanation will satisfy the Honourable members of the Committee.

Sincerely,



Kashinath Pandita  
General Secretary,  
Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum