

Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
31st session of the Human Rights Council
General debate

Agenda item 4

15 March 2016

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan would like once again to draw your attention to the plight of more than 1 million Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons who have been ethnically cleansed by the Armenian regime from their historical lands in Armenia followed by the military occupation by this country of 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories. All of their fundamental human rights have been violated by Armenia almost 29 years ago which establishes a bold challenge to the UN human rights system despite numerous relevant SC and GA Resolutions.

Armenia continues to violate a fragile cease-fire by attacking Azerbaijani civilians and settlements along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and the Line of Contact around the occupied territories. Azerbaijani civilians living in close vicinity to the LoC continue to suffer from these shootings on a daily basis. As a result of this, in addition to 1 million refugees and IDPs, another 188,000 civilians were obliged to flee their places of permanent residence and move to safe areas for a temporary accommodation, thus becoming actually new brand of IDPs. The UN, OSCE, CoE, EU have been informed by Azerbaijani authorities on the aggravating situation around these people.

Furthermore, with the aim of rewriting the history of the occupied Azerbaijani lands, Armenian government has been carrying out a policy of intentional destruction of Azerbaijani cultural and Islamic heritage in the occupied territories in Azerbaijan, as well as in Armenia cleansed from its native Azerbaijani population.

Additionally, in violation of the relevant documents of the World Tourism Organization, Armenian authorities exploit tourism as a tool for its annexationist policies in an attempt to legitimize its occupation. On a number of occasions, international tourism fairs and events were used by Armenia to mislead the general public by promoting the occupied territories of Azerbaijan as a “tourist destination”. Not only these actions put in danger the safety of international travelers visiting the area of the on-going armed conflict, but also put them into violation of Azerbaijani legislation prohibiting such visits without explicit consent of Azerbaijani authorities.

A new phenomenon in the history of the conflict are recent cases of illegal transfers of settlers of Armenian origin from Armenia and abroad into the occupied Azerbaijani lands with the aim to consolidate the results of occupation through preventing the return of Azerbaijani population to their homes after the resolution of the conflict and thus artificially changing the demography in the occupied territories. These facts have been well documented by the OSCE missions in the occupied territories. It is worth mentioning, that in some cases these illegal transfers have been carried out using financial funds which certain foreign countries and international organizations

provided to Armenian authorities following their requests to international donors to help to accommodate settlers of Armenia origin fleeing some conflict areas in the Middle East.

Azerbaijan urges the distinguished High Commissioner and Special Procedures mandate holders to keep issues of large-scale human rights violations in Azerbaijan under their consideration.

Mr. President,

In **Norway and Ireland**, we are deeply concerned with situation of intolerance and discrimination against non-citizens, as well as ill-treatment, harassment, incitement to violence and hate speech towards minorities, and anti-Semitic and Islamophobic manifestations

In **Ireland** we are also concerned about the lack of prompt, independent, thorough and effective investigations of the cases of abuse, mistreatment or neglect of women and children in the Magdalene laundries, children's institutions, and mother and baby homes; as well as about the non-recognition of Travellers as an ethnic minority.

In this regard, we urge Ireland and Norway to implement the recommendations of human rights treaty bodies and special procedures concerning the human rights violations.

Thank you.