



**Statement
delivered by Amb. Vaqif Sadiqov, Permanent Representative of the Republic
of Azerbaijan to the UN Office and other International Organizations in
Geneva
at the second Virtual ExCom briefing on UNHCR's response to the
COVID-19 pandemic**

Geneva, 3 June 2020

Dear High Commissioner,

First of all, let me express my gratitude to you, as well as to the senior management of UNHCR for today's very important and informative briefing.

In our view, UNHCR is handling its job successfully and in particular currently during the period of global pandemic. My Government applauds UNHCR and its staff both here in Geneva and in the field for their efforts and their work that they continue to deliver in the time of great challenges.

Today UNHCR guidelines are much more important and many countries are currently following them. I do not recall any other UN Agency whose recommendations are being followed in such meticulous way. Even the Security Council resolutions are not implemented in such a way. Since UNHCR is often dealing with issues of life and death, many governments, as well as IDP communities realize the importance of this work and follow the recommendations of the UNHCR.

COVID-19 has aggravated overall situation around the globe, particularly in the areas where UNHCR is operating. However, as the High Commissioner has rightly mentioned, the UNHCR's work has not started yesterday. It has been delivering its humanitarian work already for many years. That is the main reason why we should not pretend that COVID-19 has drastically changed many things. It has only aggravated the already existing situation, but has not altered the substance of the work carried out by UNHCR.

In the light of the current pandemic, governments are also contributing to this common fight against the virus by delivering their assistance to the most needed parts of the world.

The Government of Azerbaijan has already provided humanitarian assistance to a number of affected countries and communities. Substantial humanitarian aid has been delivered to about 30 countries around the globe during the last two months both individually and in our present capacity of NAM Chair. Azerbaijan has also delivered financial support to WHO throughout its fight against coronavirus.

It is worth mentioning that on 4 May, an online Summit of NAM countries took place by the initiative of the President of Azerbaijan. As a logical follow-up to that Summit, the NAM countries are now working over the issue of convening a special session of the UN General Assembly on Covid-19. Currently the relevant work is being done in New York together with the UN Secretariat. Undoubtedly, the WHO for understandable reasons will be one of the major players in this session. However, since the UNHCR is dealing with a very vulnerable segment of people affected by Covid-19, the voice of this Agency would also be very important during the special session of the UNGA.

Of particular importance are the situations in the conflict areas, and UNHCR has a lot of experience in dealing with this kind of situations. At the same time, it is very important to take into account that the history of operations of UNHCR and many other humanitarian agencies knows a lot of examples when this noble job had been abused by certain players in order to get their own narrow-minded political benefits. Hence, it is very important to realize these facts and to remind those players that international law and international humanitarian law is in force, that nobody has abolished UN Charter yet. The important link and cooperation between UN Member States and UN humanitarian family led by UNHCR is a very important basis for the success of this work.

In conclusion, let me reassure all of you in continuing commitment of Azerbaijan to the fight against global pandemic and its support to humanitarian agenda designed to assist the mostly hit population worldwide.

Thank you.

