



UN Human Rights Council

Intersessional high-level panel discussion on the incompatibility between democracy and racism

Statement

delivered by Ms. Marziyya Vakilova-Mardaliyeva, Second secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva

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Thank you, Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the convening of this timely intersessional high-level panel discussion, the central issue of which could have never been so topical as today.

The question of the incompatibility between democracy and racism has been frequently considered by UN human rights mechanisms, reaffirming that acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are incompatible with democracy and the rule of law and do not constitute legitimate expressions of opinion. Unfortunately, we still witness how individuals belonging to vulnerable groups, such as migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and persons belonging to religious minorities, continue to be among the main victims of violence and attacks perpetrated or incited by extremist political parties, movements and groups. States have a key role to play in promoting tolerance for the effective prevention and elimination of such acts.

As a world recognized center for history-long traditions of multiculturalism and tolerance we are proud that for many centuries several tens of different national minorities and religions have peacefully co-existed in Azerbaijan. Unlike Armenia, which has implemented a policy of total ethnic cleansing of both its own territory and the occupied territories of Azerbaijan of all non-Armenians, and thus, succeeded in creating a uniquely mono-ethnic culture in those areas, Azerbaijan has preserved its ethnic and cultural diversity to the present day.

Believing in crucial role of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in promoting tolerance and combating racism, Azerbaijan has launched Baku Process in 2008, the role of which has been stressed by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as a platform for promoting dialogue among cultures.

This year from 2nd and 3rd May Baku will host the 5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in the framework of the Baku Process under the theme “Building dialogue into action against discrimination, inequality and violent conflict” to forge a common roadmap for mobilizing intercultural dialogue to achieve more inclusive and sustainable societies.

I thank you.