



Translation

**UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-ninth Session**

Adoption of UPR Outcome on Azerbaijan

**Statement delivered by Amb. Khalaf Khalafov the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Azerbaijan
September 20, 2018**

**Dear Mr. President,
Dear members and observers of the Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to greet everyone and express my gratitude to the members of the Human Rights Council and to the observer States for their constructive participation in the examination of the third periodic report of our country within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review in May this year.

I would like to express my special gratitude to the delegations of those states that noted Azerbaijan's significant progress in the field of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We highly appreciate the contribution of the Universal Periodic Review to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This mechanism contributes to the further development of national achievements in this field and is an important platform for interaction between states.

During consideration of the National Report by the Working Group, Azerbaijan received 259 recommendations. 179 of them were supported by us. Our position on the remaining recommendations was set out in a supplementary document, which was submitted to the Secretariat.

I would like to note that the information on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to us has already been presented in our third periodic national report, as well as in my statement during the May session, as well as in the supplementary document that we distributed today. Nevertheless, I would like to highlight some of the issues raised in the recommendations in order to provide updated information on them.

It should be especially noted that we have established a working group with the aim of further strengthening the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations of the UN human rights treaty bodies and the UPR at the level of deputy ministers of relevant ministries and departments. It is planned that the working group, acting on a permanent basis, will act as a national mechanism. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will coordinate the work of the working group.

We are confident that this mechanism will create an opportunity for analyzing and assessing the implementation of obligations under international legal instruments and recommendations, accepted within the framework of the UPR and will enrich the legal framework and law enforcement practice in the field of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, as in the previous cycles of the UPR, will continue to submit interim reports on the implementation of the recommendations.

Recognizing the important role of the mandate holders of the special procedures of the HRC, Azerbaijan will continue its cooperation, dialogue and interaction with them. In this regard, I would like to note that the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the 38th session of the HRC noted the Republic of Azerbaijan among the 19 countries actively cooperating with special rapporteurs.

Dear Mr. President,

During consideration of our report, a number of countries highly appreciated the measures taken by the Government of Azerbaijan in the field of combating corruption.

I would like to add that only during the first half of 2018, the Chief Department for Combating Corruption under the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Azerbaijan has sent 115 criminal cases against 184 persons to the courts, as well as relevant compensation for damages has been provided.

In May, we also dwelled in detail on the measures taken in the sphere of development of the Institute of Advocacy in Azerbaijan. I would like to note that according to the results of examinations conducted at the beginning of the year, 300 lawyers were admitted to the Bar of the Advocates. Thus, currently there are 1535 attorneys in Azerbaijan.

It should be underlined that law enforcement agencies of the country are carrying out systematic and preventive measures in the sphere of combating torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. The coordination of the activity of the Ministries of Justice, Internal Affairs and the Attorney General on ensuring full and comprehensive investigation of the facts related to torture and ill-treatment, as well as the involvement of the perpetrators of such crimes has become stronger recently.

The Presidential Pardon Commission decided not to grant pardons and amnesties to persons convicted of torture or other ill-treatment.

At the initiative of the Azerbaijani Government, reports on the results of visits by the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture to our country in various years were published on the Committee's website. Such an initiative of Azerbaijan was highly appreciated by the Committee as an expression of its commitment to transparency and publicity in this field.

Currently, the state authorities of the country are discussing a number of proposals to improve the legislation in the sphere of regulating the issues of registration and receipt of financial resources by non-governmental organizations, developed within the framework of the Action Plan with the Council of Europe. Some of the issues raised in the relevant recommendations have also been reflected in these proposals.

Dear members of the Council,

Exactly three years ago - in September of 2015 at the historic UN summit, the Agenda for Sustainable Development for the period until 2030 was adopted.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, having joined the global initiative, assumed the obligations to fulfill the goals set in the agenda, and in May we provided detailed information on the progress of their implementation. As a result of the comprehensive measures taken, progress was made, in particular, in reducing level of poverty, in protecting health and the environment, in raising the level of education of the population, and in promoting gender equality.

Along with this, thanks to an effective economic strategy implemented through the rational use of internal potential, we managed to maintain the dynamics of economic growth, the level of social development, strengthen macroeconomic stability, improve the investment environment, and accelerate the diversification of the economy.

In the first half of this year, gross domestic product increased by 1.3%, non-oil sector - by 2%, inflation was 3%. In the non-oil industry, which plays a special role in the diversification of the economy, growth was achieved in 8.8%, in agriculture - 7.6%, in information and communication services - 4.9%, in trade - 2.5%. The average monthly salary in comparison with the last year has grown by 4%.

Work on the implementation of measures provided for in state programs that ensure the development of regions, in particular, to improve the infrastructure and quality of social services provided to the population, continues. In the first half of the year, the state investment program has been realized at 47%.

Education is one of the main priorities of our national policy, since a well-educated society is one of the guarantees of successful and sustainable development. The level of literacy in our country is about 100%. It is expected that by 2020 the coverage of preschool education will reach 90%.

The system of compulsory medical insurance continues to be applied. We see its advantages and will gradually develop this direction.

With the support of WHO, a draft National Strategy on Reproductive Health for the period 2019-2025 has been elaborated. Currently, the draft law "On Reproductive Health and Family Planning" is submitted to the country's parliament.

The analysis of the recommendations made suggests that issues of discrimination against women and combating domestic violence are of common interest to the world community. The Government of Azerbaijan will continue to take the necessary measures in this area with a view to improving the monitoring mechanism and strengthening the legal protection of victims. Currently, the project of the "National Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic Violence" is being internally agreed.

Within the context of further promotion of the rights and protection of children, drafts of the Children's Code and the Children's National Strategy are being elaborated. The state program on compulsory medical examination of children for the period 2018-2022 has been adopted.

At the end of May of this year, the country's parliament adopted the law "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities". The law has been elaborated in accordance with the provisions of the UN Convention "On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" and covers the basic principles of state policy in this area, social security issues, habilitation and rehabilitation, employment and other issues related to the protection and promotion of their rights.

Dear colleagues!

It has been 30 years now that the fundamental rights and freedoms of Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia and internally displaced persons from occupied territories of Azerbaijan are violated,

thereby creating a serious challenge to the UN system, including its human rights mechanisms. In this regard, Azerbaijan calls on the UN Human Rights Council, as well as its special mechanisms and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to undertake effective efforts aimed at restoring the violated rights of Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons, as required by the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and the General Assembly.

We continue to work to improve the social situation of refugees and internally displaced persons. I would like to note that in general, more than 8 billion USD has been allocated for social protection of this socially vulnerable group over the past 25 years.

I want to emphasize that 150 houses, a school building, a kindergarten, a medical institution and other social infrastructure were built and put into operation in the village of Jodhug-Marjanli of the Dzhabrail district, freed from the Armenian occupation in April 2016.

Dear Mr. President!

Recommendations presented by Armenia are completely inconsistent with the goals and mechanism of the UPR and try to justify the occupation policy of Armenia, which occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent regions.

Armenia continues to ignore the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the UN General Assembly. Unfortunately, the new leadership of Armenia with its latest statements and actions deliberately undermines the negotiation process, thereby putting the region face to face with new threats. We reiterate that all responsibility for the disruption of the negotiation process, the escalation of tensions in the region, lies entirely with the leadership of Armenia.

We appeal to the Armenian leadership not to repeat the mistakes of its predecessors and to take a more constructive position on the issue of settling the conflict on the basis of unconditional liberation of all the occupied territories of our country, of sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders of states.

In conclusion, I would like to express once again the readiness of the Republic of Azerbaijan for fruitful cooperation within the framework of the UPR and thank our Troika - Slovenia, the United Arab Emirates and Ecuador, and the Secretariat for skillful assistance at the review process.

Thank you for attention.