



**UN Human Rights Council
Forty-seventh Session**

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights to education

Statement

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

June 24, 2021

Madame President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her report and share the views on the importance of ensuring respect for diversity and the cultural rights of everyone in education. As a proud multi-cultural society Azerbaijan has put in place an effective policy to provide education in minority languages. There are over 340 schools in Russian language and 10 in Georgian in Azerbaijan. Other national minorities also have opportunities to study in their mother language, such as Hebrew, Lezgin, Talysh, Avar, Sakhur, Udi, etc.

The education system of Azerbaijan also includes subjects of “Introduction to Multiculturalism” and “Model of multiculturalism in Azerbaijan” which are taught at schools and vocational education institutions, as well as the Azerbaijani multiculturalism departments have been established in several universities.

Moreover, the State Program for the Development of Inclusive Education in Azerbaijan for 2018-2024 in order was approved to provide inclusive and quality education for children with disabilities.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

We express serious concern about the racist and discriminative aspects and practices of planting seeds of hatred into the hearts of children in the school curriculum. In this regard, we seriously condemn that the textbooks in Armenia, promotes racism and intolerance, including hatred against Azerbaijanis, as well as the training and use of Armenian children

in armed hostilities. Xenophobia Azerbaijanophobia, Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism are on the rise in the Armenian society. We seriously deplore the recent desecration of the Holocaust Memorial and Mahatma Gandhi Statue in Yerevan which is a result of brainwashing of Armenian youth by their education system.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

We also believe that due attention should be given to the effects of armed conflicts on the right to education and implementation of SDG 4. Extensive damage was inflicted on schools and kindergartens during another act of military aggression against Azerbaijan launched by Armenia during September-November 2020, as a result of deliberate indiscriminate attacks, including night attacks by Armenian military against the densely populated residential areas in Azerbaijan situated far beyond the active military scene, which has seriously affected access to education for the Azerbaijani children. As a result of these attacks with the use of ballistic missiles and banned cluster munitions in the course of 44-day-long military hostilities, more than 100 civilians, including 12 children were killed and 50 wounded. 181 minors lost one parent and 7 lost both of them. More than 18,000 Azerbaijani families have been forced to leave their homes.

All above-mentioned facts have been well documented by the international media and NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The representatives of UNICEF and ICRC in Azerbaijan have also witnessed the effects of indiscriminate attacks by Armenia on educational facilities during on-site visits.

Moreover, Armenia which used to present itself as one of the "advocates" of the Safe Schools Declaration, intentionally used school and kindergarten buildings for military purposes.

In general, during 30 years of occupation of Azerbaijani territories, Armenia has destroyed tens of thousands of public and private property, including more than 600 schools and kindergartens in the territories of Azerbaijan. At the same time, the liberation of Azerbaijani territories has revealed the scale of massive and indiscriminate contamination of civilian objects, including schools, with anti-personnel mines.

Madame President,

In conclusion, we believe that education is a critical tool for promoting tolerance, cultural diversity and respect for others.

I thank you.