



**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Working Session 14: Tolerance and non-
discrimination II**

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Advancement of women is an important element of maintenance of international peace and security, as well as dialogue and harmony within society. With equal rights, women can be more important agents of changes contributing to comprehensive security in all three dimensions.

Therefore, Azerbaijan remains to be a proponent of a cross-dimensional approach towards addressing gender perspective taking into account economic, political, social and cultural peculiarities of different societies. Azerbaijan has a proud history of enabling women to play a greater role in society: first ever secular school for girls in the Muslim world was established in Baku in the beginning of the XX century; the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was one of the first countries in the world to grant women the right to vote in 1918.

This tradition of equality has been continued since Azerbaijan regained its independence with the rights of women and men enshrined in the National Constitution and with Azerbaijan ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well other relevant national and international legal documents in this field. Protection of the rights of women and increasing participation of women in social and political life of the country - are the main objectives and purposes of the State policy.

Azerbaijan attaches utmost importance to implementation of the landmark United Nations Resolution 1325 and 2242 in all their aspects, in particular those related to ensuring the rule of law in armed conflicts and post-conflict situations, and comprehensively promoting justice and accountability in ways that further equal rights of women and the rights to participation in decision making. During its presidency in the United Nations Security Council in October 2013, Azerbaijan convened an open debate on women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict affected situations.

Azerbaijan, with 297.731 IDP and 156.000 refugee women, attaches particular importance to the issue of protection of women in armed conflicts. As a result of the ongoing aggression of Armenia thousands of women have been forcefully expelled from their homes, hundreds were killed or taken hostage, and the whereabouts of some of them are still unknown. According to the estimates of the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons of Azerbaijan, the fate of close 255 women still remains unknown, as a result of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The protection of women, as well as fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern against women and girls in the context of armed conflicts should be regarded as an important aspect of any comprehensive strategy to resolve conflicts and thus, should be properly addressed within the OSCE.

In light of the above-mentioned, we call on all OSCE participating States, OSCE executive structures to pay close attention to the issue of the protection of the women in the OSCE area, in particular in the context of armed conflicts.