



**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan**  
**Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**  
**Working Session 13: Rule of Law II**  
Warsaw, 19 September 2017  
**As delivered by Fidan Mahmudova**  
**Embassy of Azerbaijan to Poland**

HDIM.DEL/0661/2017/EN  
25 September 2017

*Right of Reply*

I don't know whether to thank, my Switzerland-based civil society colleague of Azerbaijani origin, or not, for providing this periodic opportunity to use our right of reply and give our own opinion about the real situation on the ground. His statement, as many of his previous irresponsible statements, contain many claims and many accusations. None of them are new. And none of them are true. And none of them could be substantiated by facts or proofs.

One has to be a mental acrobat to be able to transform the reality that is illustrated, for example, by the recent extension of the Contract of Century with a BP-led consortium of transnational companies, into what he referred to as "shadow economy".

We find it highly amusing and ironic that a person whose organization has been implicated in abuse of power and tax evasion – a case which is substantiated by proofs and facts that are also recognized internationally- is speaking here about the shadow economy. The shenanigans of his organization with financial reporting are well known not only to Azerbaijani law-enforcement agencies which duly investigated the case, but also to its international donors who financed their projects.

Also, as a journalist he should not be proud of himself for misrepresenting and distorting the quotes of others. He claimed that President Ilham Aliyev said in his interview (with quotations) "I do away with civil society once and for all". Whereas in the interview, there is not even a hint to this.

In his interview, President Aliyev said, and I have to switch to Russian in order to fully provide the content of the interview. And I quote:

“Мы хотим сотрудничать, но категорически не хотим, когда в наши дела вмешиваются, когда идет тайное финансирование политических партий под видом неправительственных организаций. Когда идут попытки дестабилизации, открытого вмешательства в наши внутренние дела, мы, естественно, принимаем меры для предотвращения такого рода деятельности. Азербайджан — независимое суверенное государство, и мы просим всех это уважать.” (<https://ru.sputnik.az/azerbaijan/20161018/407394850/prezident-aliev-karabah-kompromiss-vozmozhen.html>)

End of quote.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that HDIM is designed to serve as a forum for constructive presence and a positive opportunity for cooperative discussion and participation. We are disappointed that the so-called experts from civil society are once again allowed to misuse this forum and mislead the participants of this meeting with false and distorted information. That is not what this forum has been designed for.