

## Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

### WORKING SESSION 16:

Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including:

Equality of opportunity for women and men, Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, Prevention of violence against women and children

As delivered by Mr. Davit Knyazyan, Head of the OSCE and Conventional Arms Control Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

Ms. Moderator,

Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in political, economic and other spheres is an important area of cooperation between Armenia and the OSCE. The programmatic activities of the OSCE Office in Yerevan incorporated gender mainstreaming. There was a special programme for empowerment of women in Syunik region of Armenia, tailor made to address the needs of women in Armenia. The programme promoted establishment of women resource centres through the support of the OSCE and helped to promote social and economic rights of women on grass-root level, thus creating positive environment also for promoting their political and civil rights. Last year side event here in Warsaw with participation of representatives of women resource centres and OSCE Office in Yerevan together with their colleagues from other field operations and non-governmental organizations demonstrated how successful and result-oriented the programme was. The best practice of women resource centres in Syunik is currently actively applied in other regions of Armenia.

Armenian authorities are promoting empowerment of women in the framework of security sector reform. Engagement and role of women in Armed Forces, Police and law enforcement agencies is constantly growing.

As for empowerment of women throughout conflict cycle, real progress is possible only if we follow inclusive approach and engage all women affected by conflict without any discrimination. Regrettably, the needs of women residing in conflict areas, as the most affected category of population, remain unaddressed by our Organization.

The April 2016 large-scale military offensive against Artsakh by Azerbaijani armed forces is a stark reminder that lack of attention of international community to conflict affected population can lead to serious security threats. The new armed aggression by Azerbaijan was accompanied by atrocities against civilian population in Talish village. Among the civilian victims were Ms. Razmella Vardanyan and Ms. Marousya Khalapyan, who, due to their senior age, could not escape invading Azerbaijani military and were brutally tortured and killed.

OSCE as a security organization with comprehensive security approach and wide toolbox of status-neutral tools is the right place to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms of women residing in conflict areas. We expect the OSCE Secretariat to be more active in this regard. Programmatic activities on women, peace and security, which fail to address human rights of all women affected by conflicts in inclusive manner cannot produce tangible results.

## **Right to Reply**

The statement of Azerbaijani Delegation reaffirmed that Azerbaijan is violating the Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision by discriminating refugees and IDPs on the national and ethnic ground.

We resolutely deny any allegations of Azerbaijan in regard to the tragic death of two civilians along the Line of Contact between Artsakh and Azerbaijan. The incident was result of ceasefire violation by the Azerbaijani armed forces. The Armenian side number of times presented well-documented facts that Azerbaijani armed units are using civilian population as human shield by locating their positions inside or in close vicinity of settlements.

Thus, the real addressee of these allegations should be the Azerbaijani authorities, which reject implementation of agreements, reached in Vienna and St. Petersburg summits on creation of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations and enhancing capacities of the PRCiO Office. These agreements were aimed first and foremost at consolidation of the ceasefire regime and avoiding casualties both among civilians and military. By rejecting to honour its own commitments the leadership of Azerbaijan assumes all responsibility for suffering of civilian population on all sides.

Thank You.