

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Closing Session

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

Madam Chair,

We would like to extend our gratitude to the ODIHR, OSCE Italian Chairmanship and the Polish authorities for excellent organization of this year's HDIM and warm hospitality. Our thanks go to the introducers for their forward-looking and professional presentations.

The discussions confirmed again that protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is an important cornerstone of peace and security and their violation leads to crises, conflicts and crimes against humanity.

The Delegation of Armenia contributed to almost all working sessions on different topics, including through presenting its best practice and progress in democratic development and protection of human rights. We would like to reiterate our key messages here: First, all people in the whole of the OSCE area deserve to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms regardless their nationality, ethnic origin, religion or status of territory they live in.

Second, any restriction of human rights should be proportionate and in line with international standards. National security or fight against terrorism should not be invoked to justify gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Third, our security Organization is well-placed to address human rights throughout all phases of conflict cycle. We regret that due to position of some participating States we couldn't properly address the topic of human rights in conflict situations. People residing in conflict areas are facing existential threats, including risk of mass atrocities and displacement due to policy of some OSCE participating States. OSCE and its institutions have significant workload in this field in line with their early warning mandate.

The Delegation of Armenia underlined importance of close cooperation with OSCE institutions in implementation of the human dimension commitments. Despite attempts to hamper cooperation between Armenia and the OSCE through closure of the OSCE Office in Yerevan Armenia has continued constructive engagement with the OSCE institutions, including ODIHR and the RFOM.

We welcome active contribution of independent civil society, despite continuous attempts to restrict free participation of NGOs in this important human rights event. The value of HDIM is dialogue between governments of participating States and civil society. We reiterate our strong reservation against any change of modalities of the HDIM, which will restrict participation of NGOs in the meeting for political motivations. This year we witnessed increased attacks against independent NGOs by participating States and their GONGOs trying to silence their voices. We note that this alarming trend is result of pressure by certain participating State to exclude independent NGOs from the HDIM.

HDIM meeting was marked by even more increased activity of government organized NGOs, who tried to whitewash their patrons and divert attention from the dire human right situation in their respective countries. It was even more outrageous to see how the fake civil society was joining representatives of hereditary regimes in attacking independent NGOs. We understand that complete failure to comply with OSCE human dimension commitments and lack of any argument in supporting their policies compel those participating states to undermine and discredit the value of dialogue in HDIM.

There is no alternative to dialogue and evading dialogue by window dressing and hiding behind GONGOs is neither sincere nor helpful.

We hope that discussions at the HDIM and recommendations provided enough food for thought to the Italian Chairmanship to consider possible MC deliverables. As we are marking this year two important anniversaries of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, we sincerely believe that in 2018 participating states will be able to recommit themselves to the protection of human rights and human dignity, as an important part of European security.

Thank You.