

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Working session 6: Tolerance and non-discrimination I  
September 13, 2018

As delivered by

Mr. Vahe Gevorgyan, Deputy Head of the Delegation, Permanent Delegation of Armenia to the OSCE

Ms. Moderator,

Armenia sees certain merits in adopting needs based and specified approach to protect the basic rights of members of religious groups, in particular the right to be free from discrimination and violence.

It should be stressed that the members of these groups face different challenges in different parts of the OSCE and beyond.

Armenia is particularly concerned with the existential threats that Christians and Yazidis face today in the OSCE neighbouring regions but also in certain OSCE participating states. Hate crimes and mass atrocities that target Christians and Yazidis their cultural heritage and property have been continuously marked by identity motivated bias and intent.

Though on certain occasions genocidal violence have been perpetrated by the well known terrorist entities however state responsibility remains crucial in preventing religious based discrimination and violence.

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary which we will mark this year clearly identifies religious groups as protected community under the international law. Thus, the state parties to the convention hold an international obligation to prevent genocide against religious groups.

Last November Armenia hosted a joint Conference OSCE Chairmanship/ODIHR Conference on Preventing and Countering Hate Crimes against Christians and Members of other Religious Groups - Perspectives from the OSCE and beyond. We are pleased that this Conference provided excellent platform to discuss ways of addressing hate crimes against Christians and come up with important recommendations.

In conclusion, let me offer to two recommendations:

**We recommend to participating states to empower religious groups who were subject of mass atrocities to use their right to the truth aimed at rehabilitation and reconciliation.**

**We recommend ODIHR to follow up with the Yerevan Conference on Preventing and Countering Hate Crimes against Christians and Members of other Religious Groups and its recommendations.**

Thank you.