



**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Working Session 7: Humanitarian issues
and other commitments
Warsaw, 22 September 2016
As delivered by Fidan Mahmudova
Embassy of Azerbaijan to Poland**

Right of reply

The statement of the Delegation of Armenia has not become an exception from usual speculations and allegations and clearly demonstrates that this country is far from engaging in the constructive search for peace and conflict resolution in the region. It is curious that the representative of Armenia – a country that bares full responsibility for unleashing the war, perpetrating aggression against Azerbaijan, carrying out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale, committing other heinous crimes, including massacres in Khojaly, attempts to lecture here on refugees and IDPs. We would like to bring to the attention that there are more than a million refugees and IDPs in Azerbaijan as a result of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Over the years, the **Government of Azerbaijan with international community has provided significant resources towards the improvement of overall living conditions** for refugees and IDPs. This has resulted, first of all, in better housing conditions and a significant decline in the poverty rate among the IDPs and refugees. In 2007, the last IDP camp in the country (12 camps in total) was eliminated. 90 new modern residential complexes were built for IDPs. 46 thousand families or 230 thousand people were provided with the new housing. IDP families are exempted from all utility fees. In order to address social problems of refugees and IDPs, a total amount of USD 6 billion has been spent in the last 20 years. Our achievements in fostering social, educational, medical and economic sustainability of the displaced persons were noticed and commended by many international partners, for instance by W. Swing, IOM Director General, who visited Azerbaijan in September last year.

Furthermore, the policy and practice of Armenia testifies to its intention to maintain the unacceptable status-quo through various **illegal activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan**. In its attempts to consolidate the unacceptable results of its armed aggression against Azerbaijan, **Armenia has embarked on the settlement of the civil population of Armenian origin**, including Syrian Armenians, in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in a **clear and gross violation of the relevant provisions of the international human rights and humanitarian law** instruments, including those of Geneva Convention IV.

With regards to the statement of the gentleman who introduced himself as coming from Germany, we wish to state that **all the Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs are deprived of their fundamental human rights** including the right to return and live in dignity on their historical and native lands where they were born.

Regarding military operations that took place in April this year- **Armenia targeting civilians** densely residing in the territories adjacent to the frontline area, opened intensive heavy weapons fire at the positions of Azerbaijan's armed forces along the line of contact. The armed forces of

Azerbaijan have taken the necessary counter measures within its internationally recognized borders to ensure the safety of civilian population, to stop the provocations of Armenia and to deter it from further acts of aggression. Azerbaijan has repeatedly brought to the attention of the international community that the primary reason of the continuing conflict and, as a result, of increased tension, is the **unlawful presence of the armed forces of Armenia on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.**

Regarding the “recommendation on the need to ensure free access of specialized international organizations to refugees and displaced persons regardless of their residence and status of the country where they found refuge” – this “recommendation” is absolutely futile and inadmissible, since, as stated above, unlawful presence of the armed forces of Armenia on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and other illegal activities by Armenia on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan are in blatant violation of norms and principles of international law. The Azerbaijani side feels compelled to remind that any unlawful presence of and support by international organizations on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is **flagrant breach of international law** and undermine the negotiation process. Furthermore, actively promoting the illegal separatist regime can by no means be in line with the principles that the OSCE stands for and therefore, diametrically contrary to the very aim of the Organization.