

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw September 24, 2019 Working Session 12
Tolerance and non-discrimination: – Rights of persons belonging to National Minorities
Statement by Ms. Lilit Grigoryan, Head of the OSCE and Conventional Arms Control Division,
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Mr. Moderator,

Protection of National Minorities is one of the priorities of the Government of Armenia.

I would like particularly to bring to the attention of the speaker who referred to Yazidi minority issues in Armenia, that the Government of Armenia is convinced that political, social, cultural and economic participation is key to empowering national minorities and encouraging their genuine and inclusive integration into society. In line with this approach, four seats in the National Assembly of Armenia have been permanently assigned to four major national minorities - Yazidis, Russians, Assyrians and Kurds.

We believe that cooperation and streamlining of the activities and efforts of various organizations on issues related to national minorities would be beneficial both in terms of results and resources.

Armenia currently is preparing its next periodic report on implementation of CoE Framework Convention on Protection of National Minorities. And we are pleased to note that the progress achieved by Armenia in its efforts to improve the access to minority language education in schools, such as Assyrian, Kurdish and Yezidi, has been recognized in the Council of Europe and commended.

Unfortunately, we continue to witness the rise of inflammatory language in the political discourse targeting ethnic groups. Special attention should be paid to hate speech, intolerance, xenophobia, racial and ethnic profiling, glorification of hate crimes, especially led and encouraged by political leaders, as they serve as clear early warning signs of potential atrocity crimes.

One additional remark regarding National Minorities in Azerbaijan. Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities released a report this February expressing particular concern on Azerbaijan's persistent hostile narrative against Armenia which constitutes hate speech against Armenians as an ethnic group.

We would like to recommend ODHIR better utilize its early warning mandate to react and report on cases of state led hostile narratives targeting ethnic groups.

Thank you.

