

Right of reply
Delegation of Azerbaijan
As delivered by Etibar Najafov
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Thank you dear moderator for giving me opportunity to exercise my right of reply.

Representative of Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety purposefully distorted real facts on situation with national minorities, particularly facts on Roma people living in Azerbaijan. Unfortunately he left the room. It shows that he was aware of giving false information.

According to the last census there are only 49 roman people living in Azerbaijan. However, not depending on the number of any national minority all of them enjoy equal rights and freedom. The rights and freedom are protected in the constitution and in many other legal documents. For the first time in post-soviet space Azerbaijan adopted the law titled "Protection of rights and freedom of national minorities living in the Republic of Azerbaijan. State support to development of their language and culture". In previous session I told already on activity of Azerbaijan in protecting minority languages and providing education in languages of national minority. Azerbaijan is one of a few states in the world in which multiculturalism is a state policy. Within the scope of this policy Azerbaijan approaches to protection of persons belonging to national minorities, religious, and linguistic minorities. It means that protection of national minorities, their ethno-cultural values is a priority for the state.

Also representative of Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety touched events taken place in Ganja. Using this opportunity I'd like briefly inform you about the essence of the Ganja events. Bloody events taken place in Ganja on July 3-rd, when the head of the city executive power and his guard were wounded, and on July 10-th, when a group of religious radicals killed two police officers were orchestrated by hostile outside forces. Some unfriendly information agencies tried to present the Ganja events as a fight for religious freedom. However, further investigation revealed their real nature. Namely, it was proven that the events were nothing but terror acts. People who committed this crime were members of radical group. Their aim was to overthrow power. They purposfully came to Ganja from various regions.

The Azerbaijan people, including representatives of ethnic and religious communities strongly condemned this terrorist act.