

**STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ARMENIA**

**Working session 9: Humanitarian issues and other commitments,
including:**

- Combating trafficking in human beings**
- Refugees and displaced persons**
- Persons at risk of displacement**

Delivered by Ms. Hasmik SIMONYAN, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

Mr. Moderator,

Refugees, Persons at risk of Displacement

Human rights are universal and should be applied to all equally, without any discrimination. There can be no distinction of any kind, including “the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty”. Therefore, limitations imposed on people living in conflict areas, which deprive them from international protection, contradict the spirit and the letter of international human rights law.

For decades the population of Nagorno Karabakh has been subjected to those limitations and constantly facing the risk of extermination. The atrocious assault on their physical security in the early 1990s, the repeated aggression against Nagorno Karabakh in April 2016 caused the pressing urgency of the recognition of the human security and rights of the people of Nagorno Karabakh and the necessity of the humanitarian access of UNHCR and other respective international bodies.

Despite the hardships our country has been experiencing, including its land borders blockade, Armenia has made significant efforts to assist with the mass influx of refugees since the very beginning of the conflict and created all conditions for their integration. In this regard it should be underlined that durable solutions for displaced population such as local integration should not be subjected to political manipulations.

Armenia also demonstrated an international burden-sharing approach towards more than 20.000 persons displaced from Syria seeking protection in Armenia during 2012-2018. In this context it is important to mention that the Comprehensive Strategy on Integration of Forcedly Displaced Persons and Reintegration of Returning Armenian Citizens is currently in the process of elaboration.

Concluding this topic we would like to submit the following recommendations:
To the OSCE and its institutions:

1. to continue strong focus on the human rights of persons residing in conflict areas in their agendas;
2. To facilitate humanitarian access of UNHCR and respective UN Special Procedures to the refugees and displaced persons in conflict zones upholding the principles of universality of human rights and our collective commitment of leaving no one behind.

To the participating states:

- Undertake all necessary measures for local integration of refugees and internally displaced persons and refrain from manipulations of the issue for the purpose of gaining political dividends.

Trafficking

For more than a decade the Armenian Government has been actively fighting human trafficking and exploitation achieving tangible results. We have established a fruitful cooperation with international organizations in this area, including the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

Activities aimed at fighting human trafficking in Armenia are coordinated by the Inter-Ministerial Council on Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation headed by the Deputy Prime Minister. It is noteworthy that the anti-trafficking Council sponsors the official website www.antitrafficking.am and holds annual media award competition for the best reporting on human trafficking.

In order to bring Armenia's legislation in conformity with the requirements of international commitments, the Law on "Identification and Support to Persons Subjected to Trafficking in Human Beings and Exploitation", which regulates procedures for identifying and supporting persons subjected to trafficking or exploitation, including foreigners and stateless persons, providing them with relevant residence status and safe return. The identification of victims and assistance provided to them is not conditioned by their cooperation with the law enforcement. The assistance includes also a lump-sum monetary compensation provided by the State. In 2018, 9 persons were presented for identification, and all of them were identified. The same year at the request of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs 3 victims of trafficking were provided with free medical care and services.

During 2018, 9 criminal cases were initiated on human trafficking or exploitation from which 2 cases were dismissed and 1 case was requalified in line with Article 261 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia. From 6 criminal

cases 5 cases were related to the labour exploitation, 1 of which external (Russia) and 4 internal, and 1 case was related to the sexual exploitation in Turkey.

Thank you.