



**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan  
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Working Session 12: Fundamental  
Freedoms I (freedom of religion)  
Warsaw, 27 September 2016  
As delivered by Rafi Gurbanov  
State Committee on Religious Associations  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

***Right of reply***

With regards to the intervention of the police interventions, we would like to highlight that such cases occur only and only when there are violations of law, and under any circumstances should it be interpreted as violation of freedom of religion or religious discrimination. In line with law, each offence bears legal responsibility.

On discrimination against dominant religions and closing mosques: the mentioned mosques are temporarily closed for reconstruction according to the Action Plan on Year of Multiculturalism, we also should underline that Azerbaijan is a country where 96% of the population are Muslims. Today number of registered religious associations of Muslims is 692.

Regarding registration: the issues emerged during registration process is related to the religious communities itself. The official decision on registration denial by SCRA send with comments and reasons to the religious associations. The statistical information on registered religious communities regularly updated on our official website.

About fines on distribution of religious literature: all the registered religious literatures are freely distributed in our country without any obstacles. For instance, only from April 2015 to September 2016 four hundred thousand Jehovah witnesses religious literature have been registered in the Committee.

With regard to the intervention by the Armenian delegate we wish to state that Saint Gregory the Illuminator's Armenian Apostolic church located in downtown Baku is being preserved and I invite the Armenian delegate to look up the updated and recent pictures of the Church in the internet shot and published by international media outlets.