

Dr. Ahmad Shahidov**Azerbaijan Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (AIDHR)****www.aidhr.org****office@aidhr.org****+99450 372 87 30**

TOLERANCE AND NON-TOLERANCE

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Today we discuss fundamental freedoms which are milestone for human rights. I think rights to freedom of conscience, religion and beliefs are important for peace and prosperity in the world. If we don't respect others opinions it's senseless to talk about democracy and human rights.

Unfortunately, we could not preserve these values on place. As you remember the protest of a group of NGO representatives while the discussion on freedom of assembly was held on September 23. In fact, this disrespectful action directed not only to me but to all here. On that day, I was talking about freedom assembly in Anemia and noted that it's inadmissible (unacceptable) to present Nagornoy Kharabakh as an independent country. Those who made protest to my speech did this in a very bad way.

Following a day of statements I made, pro- Armenian government web site Panorama.am published an article. In this article I was described as armeniaphob and enemy of this nation. I want to ask, isn't that intolerance? Is that typical for the democratic society to call someone as an enemy due to his speech? Let me bring this article to the Armenian representative's attention. I

came such a conclusion that all these protests, campaigns are organized by you as you also attend the meeting.

I think intolerance exists not only in Azerbaijan but in the USA, one of the most democratic countries in the world. Addressing to the USA representative, I want to mention killing of 18 years young unarmed boy by police on August 9, 2014. Isn't that intolerance?

After the crime, hundreds of people took streets. Those journalists, activists who criticized USA government were imprisoned. Let me mention Wesley Lowery and Ryan Reilly, reporters of Washington Post and Huffington Post, Getty news agency's photographer Scott Olson, Ansgar Graw, Correspondent of Germany Die Welt news agency, Frank Hermann, correspondent of Stuttgarter Zeitung newspaper, BILD newspaper reporter Lukas Hermsmeier, Anadolu Agency's correspondent Bilgin Sasmaz and others.

About 20 journalists were imprisoned since that incident happened in the USA on August 9. Isn't that too much for the democratic country like USA? We, human rights advocates make reference to the USA experiences while talking about human rights in our countries. By means of this we criticize governmental bodies of our countries.

When I am back to Baku, I will be said, these crimes happen in the USA too, why you do not mention them? How should I respond to this? We have to think about it.

I want also address to the Azerbaijani delegation here. Before my departure to this gathering, I received disappointing news from Baku. I want share this news with participants of the meeting. One of the leading journalist who devoted 30 years of his life to media, Editor in Chief of newspaper "New

Musavat” Rauf Arifoglu is facing the danger of imprisonment. Anar Mammadov, leading businessman in Azerbaijan took court action against Editor in Chief and demands his imprisonment.

Re-imprisonment of a Rauf Arifoglu who spent some part of his life in jail, closing the newspaper run by him will do nothing for Azerbaijani’s image. I urge Azerbaijani delegation, Businessman Anar Mammadov to restrain from making claims towards the media Capitan.

I assure you that it’s not in Azerbaijani favor.