

Dr. Ahmad Shahidov
Head of Azerbaijan Institute for Democracy and Human Rights
www.shahidov.info
+99450 372 87 30

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen!

I am Ahmad Shahidov, represent the Azerbaijan Institute for Democracy and Human Rights.

Today, there are several conflicts in the OSCE region that have long been a threat to humanity. We have to accept one thing that conflicts are death, loss, and tears on both sides. Our main mission is to protect civilians. I will build my today's speech on a concrete example and make a humanist proposal. As a human rights defender, I have been raising this issue on various international platforms for the last 5 years. Unfortunately, no positive result has been achieved. So I want to address the diplomats from 57 countries that are sitting here. If we work together, we can solve this problem.

These are photos of two civilian Azerbaijanis. Dilgam Asgarov and Shahbaz Guliyev are two old civilians. They are from Kalbajar region. This region was occupied by Armenia in 1993 and these people can not return to their homes for 25 years. In July 2014, Dilgam and Shahbaz were taken hostage by Armenian soldiers while they tried to go to Kelbajar to visit their parents' grave and a fake court was held in the so called Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Shahbaz Guliyev was sentenced to 22 years in prison and Dilgam Asgarov to life imprisonment. They are civilians from village. This is a gross violation of the Geneva Conventions.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, I want to make a humanistic proposal today. These persons are the soldiers of the Armenian army. Arsen Bagdasaryan is a member of the Armenian military diversion group and was detained by Azerbaijani soldiers in December 2014, when he wanted to commit an explosion on the front line. This person is Karen Kazaryan, an Armenian intelligence officer. He was detained while trying to sabotage in the Azerbaijani side in July this year.

I want to sound a concrete proposition here based on the principles of humanism. This is my personal initiative and I would like everyone sitting

here to support my proposal. By taking the first step we can create an atmosphere of trust among the conflicting sides. As a human rights defender, I propose to exchange Dilgam Asgarov and Shahbaz Guliyev to Arsen Bagdasaryan and Karen Kazaryan. Finally, I appeal to the representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan and want them to agree on this humanist initiative. I believe that this step will lead to a positive impulse between the conflicting parties.