

The OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), 2018

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Working session 11: Fundamental freedoms

Including:

- freedom of expression,
- freedom of peaceful assembly and association,
- national human rights institutions and the role of civil society in the protection of human rights,
- freedom of movement

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The right to freedom of movement continues to be a challenge for people living in conflict areas. Even in this purely humanitarian issue, Azerbaijan spares no effort to impede the freedom of movement of people living in Nagorno-Karabakh. This is a clear manifestation of Azerbaijan's total disregard for human rights and fundamental freedoms and continuation of its policy of collective punishment of the civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Moreover, Azerbaijani authorities went further trying to restrict the freedom of movement of foreign citizens visiting Nagorno-Karabakh by declaring them *personae non gratae* and including in a black list of Azerbaijan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This already long list includes parliamentarians, prominent public figures, people of arts and culture, journalists, students and just tourists. The most recent example has been Azerbaijan's denial of entry to member of the German Bundestag, Mr. Albert Weiler, who was to join German Chancellor Angela Merkel on her visit to Baku. He was denied entry to Azerbaijan because of his past travels to Artsakh. As you can see, inaction and lack of adequate response has encouraged Azerbaijan to try to impose its notorious interpretation of human rights also on foreign citizens and high-ranking European politicians.

Azerbaijan's policy of isolating Nagorno-Karabakh not only violates the basic right to freedom of movement, but also undermines efforts to establish peace in the region. Therefore, I would like to recommend taking necessary and adequate measures to eliminate artificial and deliberate barriers for freedom of movement in conflict areas, thus ensuring equal rights for all in the OSCE region.