



October 16, 2020

International Dialogue on Migration 2020

Delivered by Mrs. Zoya Stepanyan, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Armenia to UN Office and other International Organisations in Geneva

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Let me start by extending our appreciation to IOM for organising the International Dialogue on Migration and dedicating it to a very pertinent topic of positively rethinking and reshaping an issue of human mobility in era of global pandemic. Indeed, multi-faceted humanitarian crises revealed the weaknesses of social and economic protection systems and clearly demonstrated how lack of respect for human rights can further exacerbate deeply rooted inequality, discrimination and xenophobia towards vulnerable groups, including migrants.

As a large diasporic nation, migration trends affects Armenia too and we are developing national policies by putting human rights based approach at the core and aiming at promotion and facilitation of the positive contribution of migrants to growth and sustainable development. International agencies, including IOM are important partners in this regard.

Mr. Chair,

It is rather deplorable to note that the panelist from Azerbaijan used this platform for spreading lies with the only aim to conceal what is already obvious for the whole international community – the brutal military aggression of Azerbaijan that was launched on September 27th against Nagorno-Karabakh, where 150.000 Armenians are living. Azerbaijan has created humanitarian catastrophe in our region, killing civilians and deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and places of worship. Numerous reports including the one from the Amnesty International confirmed that the residential areas of Nagorno-Karabakh were bombed by cluster munition, which is banned under international humanitarian law. Azerbaijan brought foreign terrorist fighters from Middle East to our region. These facts previously were confirmed by the President of France, the public statements of the Russian security services and among many other trustworthy sources. Armenian side also have large body of evidence- video, audio recordings. People of Nagorno Karabakh are alone in their fight against notorious criminals who committed heinous terrorist acts against peaceful population worldwide are now brought and deployed in our region. Days after Moscow Joint Statement on cessation of fire, Azerbaijan continues to torpedo its implementation. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh face an existential threat from the genocidal intent of authoritarian regime of Azerbaijan, its despotic ally and their terrorist groups who commit atrocities and war crimes.

Coming back to the issue under today's discussion, we believe it's beyond any cynicism for a representative of Azerbaijan to talk about rights of migrants in this fora, when his country is still in the center of the yet another scandal related not only to corruption but also to state-sponsored slavery, trafficking and exploitation against migrant workers from Balkans. The case is in European Court of Human Rights awaiting final decision. Meanwhile the recent publications by international investigative network – Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, contains shocking facts and testimonies of victims about Azeribajani way of dealing with migrants and human rights defenders who risked to voice concerns about gross abuses and intimidations against migrant workers.

Mr. Chair,

People of Nagorno Karabakh are defending today their right to life freely in a democratic society in the land of their ancestors, and they know their cause is just.

I thank you.