



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATION

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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yashar Aliyev
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan
to the United Nations**

at an open debate of the United Nations Security Council on the topic “Trafficking in persons in conflict situations”, in connection with the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security”

20 December 2016

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Spanish presidency for convening this open ministerial debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations, in connection with the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security”, and for submitting a concept note on the topic.

Azerbaijan is strongly committed to combatting trafficking in persons and other related criminal offences. We share the concern over the scale and number of challenges, which has recently deteriorated due to increased violence, terrorist activities and humanitarian crises.

Azerbaijan is a party to the relevant international and regional instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Council of Europe Convention on the Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

In implementing its international obligations, Azerbaijan has adopted a comprehensive legal framework for effective action against human trafficking and has developed a national action plan aimed at defining key responsibilities of the competent State organs and strengthening and facilitating their coordination. Furthermore, the inter-agency task force led by the national coordinator and the specialized police unit within the Ministry of Internal Affairs have been created, and the national system for identification of and support to trafficking victims has been established.

In recent years, the need for more international attention and redoubled efforts towards combatting trafficking in persons has significantly increased.

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States committed to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate and end modern slavery and human trafficking.

In its presidential statement of 16 December 2015, the Security Council particularly noted that trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity.

We are concerned that civilian populations are often viewed by armed groups as a resource of commodity to be trafficked (report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/949) and the concept note (S/2016/1031)).

As the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children noted in his latest report, conflicts are prolonged by actors who take advantage of situations of lawlessness to reap personal gain through lucrative activities such as trafficking (A/HRC/32/41, A/71/303).

The international legal framework in combatting human trafficking is based on the rules operating within the relevant branches of international law that ensure the protection in all situations, including armed conflicts.

Success in fighting criminal activities during conflicts, including human trafficking, require, first and foremost, strong commitment to binding obligations, as well as resolve to put an end to unlawful situations and to ensure that dispute settlement and conflict resolution do not serve to their prolongation and sustenance and are based on respect for and strict compliance with international law.

It is also essential to address conflict-related violations and abuses of human rights through all available means. Strengthening both international and national justice responses are critically important to ensure accountability for human trafficking in armed conflict.

Thank you.