



633 Third Avenue, Suite 3210, New York, NY, 10017, Tel: (212) 371-2559, 371-2832 (ext. 101); Fax: (212) 371-2784, (646) 738-6143

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yashar Aliyev
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations at the side event on
“The Role of Religious Communities in Upholding and Implementing the Genocide Convention”
28 November 2023**

Thank you distinguished High Representative, Under-Secretary-General Mr. Moratinos,

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was adopted in response to widespread atrocities and civilian suffering in the Second World War. Genocide has been regarded as an international crime since then and the Genocide Convention was a critical step in that process.

Over the years, normative frameworks, international and domestic jurisprudence and institutional activities have significantly developed. However, efforts to ensure a peaceful, just and prosperous world have not always been consistent and successful.

Civilians have continued to pay the highest price in the wake of armed conflict, along with hate propaganda targeting communities or individuals on ethnic or religious grounds, fueling identity-based intolerance, destabilizing societies and undermining peaceful coexistence.

As dishonest manipulations around legal concepts and norms continue, sometimes even under the cover of the genocide prevention agenda, it is important to recall that the Genocide Convention is a legal instrument and must be regarded and implemented in accordance with its object and purpose, and not misused as a tool for slanderous accusations and advancing fabricated historical narratives.

In this context, as many speakers have noted, religious leaders can play an important role in countering drivers of radicalization and negative narratives, encouraging and promoting respect for religious and cultural diversity, fostering dialogue and preventing conflicts and atrocity crimes.

Azerbaijan welcomed the launching by the Secretary-General in 2019 of the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, as well as initiated and hosted a series of high-level global events to encourage dialogue and mutual understanding.

Among them are the Summits of World Religious Leaders, held in Baku in 2010 and 2019, the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, which has been convened since 2011 within the Baku Process, and the Meeting of Religious Leaders of Turkic States, held in Baku and Shusha last October, to mention just a few.

Continued international support for successful initiatives is essential for building relationships, overcoming stereotypes and misconceptions and implementing development frameworks and policies.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate we will continue our efforts towards enhancing dialogue, promoting multiculturalism and inclusivity and advancing the prevention agenda.

Thank you.

Further Intervention:

I categorically reject provocative accusations by the Armenian representative.

It is Armenia that occupied for 30 years almost 20% of the territory of my country, expelling first, more than 250,000 Azerbaijanis from their native homes in Armenia itself and then more than 700,000 Azerbaijanis from occupied territories, transforming them into displaced persons.

In the context of this event, it is Armenia that destroyed 64 mosques out of 67 in the formerly occupied territories. Armenia razed to the ground 9 cities, more than 800 villages and other cultural and social enterprises.

In 2020 Azerbaijan liberated its territories from Armenia's occupation and this September restored completely its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Karabakh has been, is and always will be Azerbaijan.