

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

WORKING SESSION 12: Rule of law I, including: Prevention of torture, Exchange of views on the question of abolition of capital punishment, Protection of human rights and fighting terrorism
As delivered by Mr. Davit Knyazyan, Head of the OSCE and Conventional Arms Control Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

Ms. Moderator,

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the topic of prevention of torture and protection of human rights in context of fighting terrorism.

International obligations on prevention of torture should apply throughout all phases of conflict cycle. Commitment of participating States to their obligations should be even stronger in times of crises and conflicts. Regrettably, some OSCE participating States do not allow access of UN specialized bodies and ICRC to conflict areas with the aim to cover gross violations of international humanitarian law and cases of torture and other forms of inhuman degrading treatment.

This is the case particularly with regard to the NK conflict. We have number of times raised the issue of torture and mutilation of the bodies of servicemen of the Artsakh Defence Army and civilians killed during the April 2016 large-scale offensive of Azerbaijan against Artsakh. Comprehensive reports of the NK Ombudsman and other documents, providing well-documented factual material on the atrocities committed against the civilian population of the Talish village and torture of captive servicemen and mutilation of their bodies have been distributed in the OSCE.

The perpetrators of these hate crimes were awarded by the highest leadership of Azerbaijan.

Another pressing issue, we would like to touch is dignified treatment of captive civilians, prisoners of war and human remains. We attach highest importance to full and unrestrained access of the ICRC to places of detention and monitoring of conditions of captives in the context of the conflict. In this regard I would like to recall number of cases of torture and killing of Armenian civilians in Azerbaijani custody, including the cases of Mamikon Khojoyan, Manvel Saribekyan and Karen Petrosyan.

Mr. Moderator,

Coming to the topic of human rights vis a vis anti-terrorism we agree with the distinguished speakers that security situation and fighting terrorism cannot be invoked in justifying the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms particularly freedom of religion and faith which is firmly embedded in the OSCE principles and commitments, starting from Helsinki Final Act.