



**Permanent Mission  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
to the UN Office and other  
International Organizations**

**GENEVA**

Ref: 0352/12/21/31

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and with reference to the letter dated 13 April 2021, has the honour to transmit herewith the response submitted by the Government of Azerbaijan on promoting, protecting and fulfilling women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in humanitarian situations.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 24 June 2021

Enclosure: 6 pages

Office of the United Nations  
High Commissioner for Human Rights  
GENEVA

***Information of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Promoting, protecting and fulfilling women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights in humanitarian situations***

Both in the world and in the Azerbaijan, COVID-19 pandemic has had a far greater impact on women's lives through exacerbation of previously existing problems. Women are typically the primary caregivers at home and have greater domestic responsibilities, doing as much as two and a half times unpaid care and domestic work as men. The burden of unpaid care work on women has increased due to school closures, the need to look after elderly family members at risk, and other consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Within the framework of the project on combating gender violence in Azerbaijan, the draft "National Action Plan on the Elimination and Combating of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2019-2023" was prepared and submitted to the Government in accordance with the Constitutional Law on Normative Legal Acts, and "National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence for 2020-2023, was approved on 27 November 2020, by the Decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic.

In this regard, in cooperation with the State Committee and the United Nations Population Fund, a new 860 hotline on gender-based violence has been established in Azerbaijan since December 1, 2020. The hotline is designed to provide educational information about gender-based violence and psychosocial counseling for women and girls who have experienced violence.

It should be noted that, the Child and Family Support Centers operating under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs have strengthened their work since the beginning of pandemic. During special quarantine period the Centers provided psychological assistance to the victims of domestic violence. In total, 7000 families from the regions received necessary assistance.

With the financial support of the European Union and in partnership with relevant organizations from Lithuania and Austria, the Committee has launched a Twinning Project entitled "Strengthening the capacity of government bodies and local referral mechanisms to ensure the safety and support of victims of domestic violence in Azerbaijan". The project was launched in September 2020 and will run for 14 months. The overall goal of the project is to strengthen the capacity of government agencies and local governance mechanisms to provide safety and support to victims of domestic violence, organizing cooperation between relevant agencies in this area, conducting special training for social workers, judges, journalists and other stakeholders to raise awareness on issues related to domestic violence, gender equality, violence against women.

The gender assessment was developed within the framework of the "EU 4 Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence program", funded by the European Union and implemented jointly by UN Women and UNFPA. This rapid gender assessment aims to understand the different dimensions of how the pandemic and the measures adopted to tackle it have affected the lives of women and men in Azerbaijan.

- ✓ **The Women's Resource Centers** were established by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and UNDP, with funding and support from USAID. Women Resource Centers help strengthen rural women's entrepreneurial skills and advance their competitiveness in the labor market, empowering them to overcome the many socio-economic challenges faced by women living in rural areas. During this period, over 100 women from remote parts of the country participated in online business development trainings. Successful candidates have already received all the necessary equipment to start their own businesses.
- ✓ **11 Child and Family Support Centers** operating under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs (Zagatala, Gabala, Ismayilli, Goygol, Aghdam, Hajigabul, Saatli, Sabirabad, Zardab) provide assistance to women, children and families at risk, especially low-income, martyr and incomplete families.

*Activities of the Child and Family Support Centers during pandemic:*

- ✓ Launch of "Online Psychological Assistance" project which has already benefited 2300 people including (women, children and older persons). In addition, the State Committee with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the ASAN Volunteers Youth Organization has been implementing the project "Child protection in emergencies" aimed to provide psychosocial support to war-affected families and children in Goranboy, Aghdam and Tartar regions, as well as in Ganja since November 23, 2020. In the framework of this project more than 1,400 war-affected families had been visited and psychosocial assessments has been conducted, also initial psycho-emotional status of 2,400 children has been assessed. Individual and group therapies with at-risk children and mothers had been conducted within the project.
- ✓ Visits to vulnerable families for the assessment of their needs, as well as provision of food, psychological assistance, and medical masks
- ✓ Conducting surveys (441 surveys) to study the situation of families during special COVID-19 quarantine regime in the country,
- ✓ Launch of "From Family to Family" campaign to decrease the impact of the pandemic on social isolation. As part of this campaign, 75 families provided assistance to 594 vulnerable families,

- ✓ Assistance to single and older women, as well as bedridden persons with limited access to leave home
- ✓ Provision of NGOs run crisis centres and shelters with personal protection equipment and necessary medical supplies jointly with international organizations to protect survivors, as well as employees;
- ✓ Access for women and girls to COVID-19 related public health information provided by SCFWCA, Child and Family Support Centres, and Women Resource Centres;
- ✓ Awareness raising campaign to combat gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19 crisis;
- ✓ Awareness raising campaign among families in remote and rural areas through the "Call to Families" (3300 families) and distribution of special informative booklets (around 600 families);
- ✓ Awareness raising sessions for women with disabilities, such as project "Addressing the rights and well-being of women with disabilities" funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and implemented jointly by State Committee, UNDP, UNFPA
- ✓ Online trainings, webinars for families(including women and girls): 1) guidance on how to be protected against the virus; psychological problems in families during the pandemic and ways to address them; 3)how to talk about the pandemic with children; 4)how to manage mental health and education in self-isolation period; 5)legal aid to victims of domestic violence; 6)role of social workers in preventing gender-based violence during the pandemic; 7)psychological rehabilitation of children with special needs in the period of quarantine; 8)gender and reproductive health.

***Activities taken by the State Committee to support girls participation in humanitarian settings***

- ✓ With the support of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, the "Azerbaijan Child Ambassadors Council" was established on 1 June 2020 to develop children's ability to express themselves, increase social activity and improve their leadership skills. The Council carries an important mission in terms of raising the issues to relevant bodies and taking action to address cases of child rights violations. Among the 15 members of the Child Ambassadors Council, special mention should be made of the active participation of girls in the activities of the Council.
- ✓ The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, together with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, were held awareness raising seminars for adolescents with the participation of girls in educational institutions on the promotion of healthy lifestyles (the negative consequences of bad habits, AIDS, reproductive health and family planning); the negative effects of early marriages and marriages between relatives.
- ✓ In order to effectively address the negative consequences of early marriages and marriages between relatives as well as to discuss the Cabinet of Ministers Decree No. 213 of June 23, 2020 on "Regulation on raising awareness of the importance of family and marriage among young people, the negative consequences of early marriage and blood marriages in order to protect and strengthen marriages" was held a videoconference with the participation of relevant government agencies

✓ During 2020, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and the Child and Family Support Centres operating under the Committee held online meetings (webinars) to raise awareness and empower children, especially girls who living in the regions, on the following topics: "Effective organization of leisure time during the quarantine", "Internet safety for children and the ways to ensure it", "Successful choice of profession and career for young people", "Psychological rehabilitation of children with disabilities during quarantine", "Modern education, technology and quality".

✓ "Girls Join the Discussion"- educational online event. During the meetings, schoolgirls met with successful women in science, sports and other fields. The main purpose of the event is to increase the activity of girls in society, and to develop their leadership qualities.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a new mentorship programme for women and girls in Azerbaijan interested to pursue a career in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). The programme was launched with the technical support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The main goal of the programme is to help equip young female professionals and students working or studying in the field of STEM with tools and advice they need to address challenges they face.

It specially should be noted that children without parents, or whose parents do not or cannot protect them, are acknowledged to be at heightened risk of abuse and exploitation. Unfortunately, there are always people who are ready to take advantage of their inexperience, lack of skills. To address these questions, the government established "House of graduates" for the orphanage graduates deprived of parental care at the State Social Security Service under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection in 2015. The institution - a house provided for living for orphanage graduates regardless of their nationality and religious affiliation, language, sex, origin.

The new 146-3 "Hotline" service of the Ministry of Education has been launched in 2020. Due to the announcement of a quarantine regime in connection with the new coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in our country, students who remain at home, as well as all citizens can contact the hotline if they need moral and psychological support. Every contact is provided by school psychologists with telephone counseling and necessary support.

*Best practices:* Broadcasting TV classes on national TV channels, which enables all students to have a continued access to education. All recorded TV programs are also available online on a learning platform of the Ministry of Education

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**9.** Many non-governmental organizations and human rights defenders work to protect women's rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Each year the Council on State Support to Non-Governmental Organization under the auspices of the President of the Republic of

Azerbaijan allocates special grants to non-governmental organizations for the implementation of projects related to the protection of women's and children's rights.

Due to financial support from the state, special support is given to civil society institutions operating in the country for the implementation of essential social projects.

In accordance with the 'Regulations on the Election of the Public Council by Civil Society Institutions', approved by a Cabinet of Ministers Decree of 30 May 2014, elections to the Public Council under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs were held on 19 February 2021 to determine the new composition of the Council, which elected representatives of 11 non-governmental organizations with the involvement of 7 women-led organizations. Council members actively participate in Committee meetings and events and take an active part in the implementation of activities and projects in the field of women's and children's rights.

During the current year 2021 alone, five non-governmental organizations received financial support from the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs to carry out research in the following areas:

- ✓ "Study of social and psychological aspects of human trafficking in the regions, identification and elimination of its causes"
- ✓ "Carrying out and analysis of assessment of drug and psychotropic substance use among minors"
- ✓ Analysis of a "Prevention of Domestic Violence" survey
- ✓ Research and analysis on "Modern Azerbaijani family: socio-cultural aspects".

Involving women's networks, civil society, and women entrepreneurs. SCFWCA, Women Resource Centres, and UNDP helped 340 rural families by providing food packages. Most content of these packages, including ecopackaging itself, was purchased from women entrepreneurs, which also helped them sustain their small businesses.

### ***Raising Awareness through Public Outreach Campaigns***

As part of awareness-raising activities on the initiative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, electronic posters entitled "Parental care - safety of children", "Let's protect children from harmful information for their health and development", "You'll have a daughter!", "Marriage before the age of 18 is a marriage between children" were prepared on the advertisement boards of the Baku Metro and on the monitors of the Baku Transport Agency "Baku Bus".

In addition, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs prepared informational videos on "Early Marriage and its Consequences" and "Join the Fight against Human Trafficking! The videos were broadcast on social networks and in the media.

"Stay at home with your kids" campaign; "Internet safety of children and ways to ensure it", TV programs on family relationships, domestic violence, children's rights, women's rights, etc.