

**Information submitted by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan
with regard to the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its
causes and consequences.**

One of the main reasons severely affecting women's and girl's full enjoyment of human rights in Azerbaijan was the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan as a result of which almost 20 percent of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan was occupied. Total destruction and heavy mine contamination of formerly occupied territories of Azerbaijan, as well as, ethnic cleansing and forceful deportation of more than 650 thousand Azerbaijanis more than half of whom were women and girls from their lands have tremendous humanitarian consequences for the country. All forcefully displaced people in Azerbaijan were temporarily settled in more than 1600 heavily populated settlements in 12 tent camps, villages consisting of railroad cargo-vans, half-constructed buildings and public facilities. The Government has been able to provide almost half of its displaced population with temporary new houses until realization of their right to voluntary, safe and dignified return to native lands. The main burden of hardships encountered in camps and other heavily populated areas were on women.

Besides, hundreds of women and children were taken hostage and killed as a result of the occupation of the internationally recognized sovereign territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan by the Armenian armed forces. At present (information as of July 01, 2021) 3.890 people are registered as missing in the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons and 719 of them are civilians. Among the civilians 71 are minors and 267 are women. It was found that 872 people out of 3890 missing, including 29 children and 98 women were taken hostage. They did not leave their homes and remained in the occupied territories during the occupation of settlements, villages and cities.

Armenia's next aggression attempt against Azerbaijan in September 2020 again severely affected the lives of hundreds of thousands people in Azerbaijan. 84 thousand persons were forced to temporarily leave their places of habitual residence, among them the IDPs who repetitively suffered the tragedy of forced displacement. Though most of these people have returned home with the rapid and effective response from the Government to their recent displacement, several displaced families in Tartar region of Azerbaijan who suffered tremendously from deliberate artillery shelling of civilian objects had to leave for several months in shelters. Moreover as a result of the attacks there were serious casualties among civilians, including women and children: 27 women and 12 children were killed, 101 women and 50 children were wounded. Besides, extensive damage was inflicted on houses and other residential infrastructure, including schools and hospitals.

The main priorities of the Government of Azerbaijan after the liberation of its territories from occupation in 2020 are to clear these territories from mines and other unexploded ordnances, to restore the cities and other settlements totally destroyed during the conflict and create necessary conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified return of IDPs to their native lands. . In the period following the signing of the trilateral statement on cession of

the military activities between Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020, about 200 citizens of Azerbaijan, including women became victims of mine explosions.

Furthermore, we would like to underline that Azerbaijan attaches great importance to activities on violence against women (VAW). Fundamental changes have been made to the national legislation, a legal framework, special mechanisms and coordination have been established with other government agencies in order to eliminate VAW. Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Ensuring Equality of Gender (men and women) in 2006 and the Law on Domestic Violence in 2010 were adopted. The National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence for 2020-2023 was approved.

In 2015, heads of executive authorities of all districts have signed decrees to establish monitoring groups for gender violence and violence against children that are composed of representatives of relevant executive authorities in 77 districts. As a reliable monitoring mechanism for gender violence and violence against children, local monitoring groups perform the coordination of functions in assessing the situation, checking effectiveness of measures undertaken, identifying vulnerable families and providing them relevant support, studying and analyzing violence causes, and in particular, discussing grave violence cases, ensuring the protection of violence victims and providing them with relevant assistance.

In addition, the Rules for organization of the database on domestic violence were approved in 2011. The database is an electronic information system consisting of a collection of information on cases of domestic violence, persons who have applied to state bodies in connection with these cases, investigations conducted and persons prosecuted.

Currently, 11 Child & Family Support Centres run under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs (SCFWCA), 9 Women Resource Centres and 3 Community Resource Hubs operate in the regions that were created together with UNDP.

There is a hotline 860 for receiving and forwarding complaints about domestic violence, and a state shelter for vulnerable groups.

Gender Commissions have been established in municipalities of 15 regions and cities to carry out systematic work on gender issues in municipalities and coordinate activities with the State Commission for Family, Women and Child Affairs in this direction.

In 2021, "Curriculum on Gender Equality in the Civil Service" was designed and published with the support of an international organization.

In 2020-2021, 17-month-long project entitled "Strengthening the capacity of State bodies and local referral mechanisms to provide safety and support to victims of domestic violence in Azerbaijan" was implemented in the country with the support of relevant organisations from Lithuania and Austria.

The National Action Plan for 2022-2025 for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1294 dated

March 6, 2021. The purpose of the National Action Plan is to prevent the impact of conflicts on women and girls, to ensure their effective protection, to promote their equal participation at all stages, including post-conflict recovery, and to ensure the integration of gender perspectives into these processes, as well as ensuring economic security and human rights, including the safe return of IDP women and girls to occupied territories.

The SCFWCA, in cooperation with the UNDP, implement “Early Recovery and Community Resilience for the Most Vulnerable in Fuzuli-Horadiz, Aghjabadi and Tartar regions of Azerbaijan’ project” to improve the well-being of women and girls, as well as identify essential necessities of communities affected by the war. Community Resource Hubs were set up in those three administrative districts within the project. Provision of socioeconomic rehabilitation support (involving, inter alia, business advisory services) with the key focus on women, children and people with disabilities is provided through the Community Resource Hubs. In 2021, 275 people applied to Agjabadi, Tartar, Fizuli Community Resource Hubs for business support, 559 people for legal support and 370 people for psychological support.