**Paragraph 1:**

Despite being a newly independent state the Republic of Azerbaijan is known as a country taking significant steps towards ensuring the protection of human rights, including those of migrants. Azerbaijan is a party to the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, as well as the Convention on Legal status of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families of the State Parties of the Commonwealth of Independent States, besides other relevant international instruments.

Taking into account the important role of international cooperation in migration management, the Republic of Azerbaijan has actively participated in the adoption of the New-York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, as well as acceded to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact for Refugees.

Under part three of Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the state guarantees equality of rights and freedoms to everyone, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, language, sex, origin, property status, occupation, beliefs or affiliation with political parties, trade union organizations or other public associations. Restrictions of rights and freedoms on the ground of race, ethnicity, religion, language, sex, origin, beliefs, or political or social affiliation are prohibited.

In the course of the past years, a number of amendments and additions have been made to existing legislation to protect the rights of migrants who are in a vulnerable situation.

According to the amendments of 24 June 2016 made to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, persons with refugee status residing in the territory of Azerbaijan continuously during 5 years became entitled to apply for citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

For the organisation of the provision and protection of the rights and lawful interests of foreigners (or stateless persons) under the age of 18, who arrived in the country unaccompanied or became unaccompanied after arrival, and wishes to obtain refugee status, relevant amendments were introduced to the “Rule of reviewing application on granting “Refugee” status” with Decree No. 1257 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated February 23, 2017. Pursuant to these amendments, unaccompanied children in the country are treated equally as children who have lost their parents or are deprived of parental care, and their social protection is ensured by the state, and their rights and benefits are protected in accordance with the law. Moreover, with the instruction of the Cabinet of Ministers a Working Group was established to ensure the effective national referral mechanism in the area of child care for improving care for unaccompanied and separated children. The Working Group is headed by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs and includes representatives of the State Migration Service, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and the Executive Power of Baku City.

In order to improve the realization of the rights of refugees, as well as protecting their lawful interests, the “Rule of reviewing application on granting “Refugee” status” was amended for the second time in 18 May 2017. According to these amendments, State Migration Service when granting a refugee ID also registered their place of residence. Refugees without place of residence are registered by the address of the specially-designated centers of the State Migration Service until finding a place of residence.

In order to provide information to the State and local self-governing bodies and constantly update information on foreigners who were granted refugee status or persons without citizenship settling down on the territory of the country, gathering information on the scope and directions of migration, the Law on “State registration of the people of the Republic of Azerbaijan” was modified in 28 December 2018. In accordance with these amendments the information on foreigners and stateless persons that are granted refugee status in the Republic of Azerbaijan was included in the State Register of Population.

According to the amendments introduced in 7 December 2018 to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the Status of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons" and "On the Rights of the Child", foreigners and stateless persons granted refugee status in the territory of the country, got the opportunity to study at all stages of education in the Republic of Azerbaijan in accordance with the legislation.

“Travel document” giving right to travel outside the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been developed and presented to the persons who obtained refugee status, as well as their family members since January, 2020.

Refugees *(including persons under UNHCR protection)* are included in the category of persons who have been involved in the compulsory health insurance in accordance with amendments to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Medical Insurance".

In addition to the aforementioned, foreigners or stateless persons who were granted refugee status or applied for refugee status in the Republic of Azerbaijan in accordance with legislation of the country, can voluntarily be placed at the detention centers for migrants of the State Migration Service in accordance with the procedure established by the Migration Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan, until being employed or acquiring place of residence, or for a period not exceeding three months. Additionally, obtaining work permit for carrying out paid labour activity in the territory of the country for the aforementioned persons is not required.

In accordance with Article 5, part 1 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On status of refugees and internally displaced persons (persons displaced within the country)” persons that have illegally arrived in Azerbaijan, but applied to the relevant governmental body as soon as possible shall, based on the grounded decision of that body, be exempted from responsibility provided by the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Moreover, a refugee is in no way sent or forcibly returned to the country, where there is a threat to their life and freedom due to reasons (race, nationality, faith, membership of a particular social group or political opinion) enshrined in 1st part of Article 1 of the this law.

In order to facilitate the naturalization of stateless persons residing in the country, amendments were made in February 2018 to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan”. According to these changes, in cases provided by international treaties to which the Republic of Azerbaijan is a party, the absence of citizenship of any state, as well as the fact of permanent residence of a person, who arrived in the Republic of Azerbaijan before January 1, 2006 on the basis of a passport of a citizen of the former USSR or other document, who has no citizenship and valid identification documents, are to be established by court. This provision is not applicable to persons who have voluntarily renounced their citizenship from the country where they belonged.

With the amendments made to the Migration Code in 24 July 2019, grounds have been established to grant permits for temporary residence in the territory of the Azerbaijan for foreigners and stateless persons who are considered victims of human trafficking. Besides, according to the Migration Code, foreigners and stateless persons who are considered victims of human trafficking or assisting criminal prosecution are not required to obtain work permits for paid labor activity.

In 2016, a Working Group, consisting of representatives of the relevant central executive authorities, was established to find prompt solutions to reintegration into the society of persons readmitted in line with the bilateral readmission agreements.

Various projects are being implemented jointly with international organizations to reintegrate persons readmitted within the framework of the implementation of relevant readmission agreements. In order to support effective reintegration of the readmitted citizens of Azerbaijan into society and to solve their problems, implementation of the project “Reintegration Support to Azerbaijani Returnees (RESTART)” was launched in January 2019 jointly with International Centre for Migration Policy Development. The project aims at working out reintegration guidelines, fostering in cooperation with civil society organizations, experience in providing reintegration support to returning citizens belonging to vulnerable categories, as well as providing support to citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan returning from EU Member States.

According to the Agreement signed between International Organization for Migration and State Migration Service, since December 18, 2017 the Pilot Project on “Support to the Voluntary Return of Migrants from Azerbaijan” is implemented. The project aims at creating favorable condition for successful return of persons willing to voluntarily return to their countries of origin and whose application on asylum was rejected, as well as vulnerable migrants.

**Paragraph 2:**

State Migration Service does not have experience in identification procedure of missing migrants.

Besides, according to Article 2 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On obtaining information” access to information in the territory of Azerbaijan is free. Everyone has the right to apply to the owner of information directly or via his/her representative, to choose type of information and ways to obtain them. Furthermore, according to Article 74.5 of the national Migration Code, if foreigners or stateless persons are detained or arrested in a way defined with laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, they should immediately be informed of the reasons of such actions and their rights.

According to Article 10 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on “Courts and judges”, right to judicial protection of the rights and liberties of foreign citizens and stateless persons residing in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan envisaged by the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and other laws, as well as lawful interests of legal persons from all kinds of infringements and violations is ensured at all stages of court proceedings. No one can be deprived of the right to judicial protection. The right to protection of the suspected, as well as accused person by the means envisaged in the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the right to use assistance of defender from the moment he/she is detained, arrested, accused of committing a crime is guaranteed. In accordance with Part 2 of Article 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan legal assistance is provided by the state free of charge in cases envisaged by the law.

Moreover, relevant information about foreigners and stateless persons who placed in detention centers for illegal migrants is immediately reported to the diplomatic representatives of the country of their citizenship in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**Paragraph 3:**

The aims of the Global Pact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration have been taken into account in the draft of the “National Strategy on Migration of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, which was prepared by the State Migration Service in 2019, covers next five years and is expected to be confirmed soon.