



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

26 June 2024

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Azerbaijan by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 44<sup>th</sup> session in November 2023. As the final outcome report on the review of Azerbaijan was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 55<sup>th</sup> session, I have taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/az-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volker Türk

His Excellency  
Mr. Jeyhun Aziz oglu Bayramov  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan



## **Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review**

The ongoing commitment of Azerbaijan to engage with international human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies, special procedures and the UPR, is welcome. Positive note is also taken of Azerbaijan's support for those recommendations related to fighting corruption; strengthening the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman); enhancing the independence of the judiciary; and protecting economic, social and cultural rights, and the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, minorities and migrant workers and internally displaced persons.

OHCHR welcomes Azerbaijan's reaffirmed determination to guarantee to ethnic Armenian residents of the Karabakh Region all their rights and freedoms in line with its Constitution and relevant international human rights instruments.

Azerbaijan noted recommendations ranging from protecting human rights defenders, lawyers, and journalists, including their rights to freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, to addressing human rights issues resulting from the conflict in Karabakh Region, including provision of training on Azerbaijan's international obligations under international humanitarian law, which remains of concern.

The lack of progress in combatting discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ+ persons also remains of concern. It is urged that Azerbaijan adopt the necessary measures to combat acts of violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ persons and intensify measures to ensure the investigation and punishment of such acts.

Azerbaijan is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the National Assembly, the judiciary, the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman), local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG-related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The Government is further encouraged to strengthen the Working Group for coordination, implementation, reporting and follow-up on human rights issues established by Presidential Order of 20 September 2018, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).



Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report in about two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Azerbaijan may wish to continue with the practice of submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2026, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR  
26 June 2024