

UNHCR ExCom76

6-10 October 2025 – Geneva, Switzerland

General debate, agenda item 3

Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

First of all, I would like to thank the High Commissioner on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan for his thorough report clearly reflecting the global challenges and also current financial crisis that United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the entire international community is facing in order to respond to urgent humanitarian needs and large-scale displacement as a result of wars, conflicts, human rights violations and persecution. I am sure that the results of this session will be helpful for joint efforts to improve the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons. Unfortunately, despite our efforts, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons in the world is increasing and at present, the figure has exceeded 123 million according to the latest information. We must add regretfully that the number of military conflicts, which are the main cause of displacement, is also increasing. Therefore, in order to reduce the number of internally displaced persons, it is required to get significant progress in eliminating its main reasons, the said conflict and violence, also disregard for the fundamental provisions of international humanitarian law. In the meantime, it is important to mobilize resources in order to meet urgent humanitarian needs, to support host countries, to protect people from risks and to help to the refugees and other displaced persons in finding of sustainable solutions.

The liberation of our lands from occupation created conditions for return of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons to their

former residential places. During the period of occupation, Azerbaijani cities and villages, all infrastructure facilities were completely destroyed, national and cultural heritage was destroyed, natural resources were looted, significant damage was caused to the economy. At present, Azerbaijan takes all necessary measures in order to provide the safe and worthy life of the population who will return to these territories. The first State Program on the Great Return adopted by our government is being implemented for the fourth year.

It should also be noted that Azerbaijan implemented the necessary measures to improve the social protection and living conditions of persons of this category during the period of aggravation of the conflict. Provision of their food, medical care and social and household needs created great difficulties, our government has mobilized its opportunities to the maximum extent and also, had received assistance from international organizations, including UNHCR. The assistance of international organizations was important especially in the 1990s in regard to survival of refugees and internally displaced persons. But Azerbaijan undertook the main burden and today continues this work decently.

During the period of preparation for the Great Return, the absolute majority of internally displaced persons, who participated in social surveys conducted by the State Committee for Refugees and IDPs, declared their desire to return to their former permanent living places. Multiple actions have been defined for return of the internally displaced persons in the first State Program on the "Great Return": these measures include the construction of new residential places, the restoration of cities and villages, infrastructure, as well as adaptation of the population to new living condition and their reintegration

to economic activities, in order to increase the employment opportunities. According to the program, the process of returning the internally displaced persons to their lands has started and already more than 50 thousand internally displaced persons have been settled in the territories liberated from occupation.

But one of the main reasons impeding the return is the problem of land mines. Since the end of the Second Karabakh war on November 2020 till today, about 400 people became victims of land mines. This does not allow to carry out a large-scale reconstruction process.

At present, the provision of all internally displaced persons with decent housing conditions and employment is the priority and therefore, the main attention is paid to the implementation of housing projects. Since 2022, when the Great Return started, up today, resettlement of internally displaced persons in 6 liberated cities and 15 villages of 9 regions have been implemented. The returning population is provided with houses and apartments that meet modern requirements. The houses and apartments that are given to internally displaced persons are building or restoring at the expense of state funds. In accordance with current legislation, the returning internally displaced persons will use social protection measures determined by the state for them for a period of three years, also receiving a monthly allowance. The preparation of the second State Program on the “Great return” covering 2027-2030 years, has already started according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The program will indicate the effective measures for the settlement of the liberated territories.

It can be said with certainty that Azerbaijan is creating a comprehensive, new and modern model of return of internally displaced persons to their former residential places and this model can be used in other countries too.

On 8 August 2025, the Joint Declaration on the establishment of peace and interstate relations between two states by the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia was signed within the framework of the Summit of the leaders of Azerbaijan, the United States of America and Armenia. The acceptance of the declaration is confirmation of the long-standing peace agenda of Azerbaijan. The results arising from Azerbaijan-Armenia normalization process have historical importance. We hope that, after this, refugees and displacement problem will disappear forever in the region and the people in the region will live in peace and prosperity.

Despite the long-standing and large-scale problem of internal displacement, Azerbaijan also takes significant steps in the direction of accepting asylum seekers from third countries, strengthening the social protection of persons who have received refugee status and their integration into society, improvement of the asylum system, prevention of illegal migration as a transit country between Asia and Europe and contributes to international efforts in this area. We believe that, it is possible to achieve a just solution to problems as a result of combined international efforts only by observing accepted international obligations, providing of mutual respect and taking responsible steps towards future generations and Azerbaijan intends to play its role in this global process.