

## ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO AZERBAIJAN

### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

- What are the steps the government of Azerbaijan intends to make in order to ratify the to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment that it signed in 2005?
- Has the government of Azerbaijan considered issuing a standing invitation to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council?
- What specific measures are available to protect the rights of children of detainees/prisoners? What arrangements are available to women prisoners accompanied by babies or young children?
- What human rights training is provided to law enforcement and judicial officers, does it include any sensitivity training towards protection of human rights of children, women and persons of minority sexual orientation or gender identity?

### **LATVIA**

- According to the information by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 63 countries from different regions of the world have issued standing invitations to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council. We note with appreciation the pledge of Azerbaijan to extend a standing invitation for all UN special procedure mandate holders as mentioned in the *Aide Memoire* attached to the Note No 259/N dated 12 November 2008 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. Taking into consideration the aforementioned pledge, we would like to ask when the Government of Azerbaijan is planning to issue standing invitation?

### **LIECHTENSTEIN**

- In 2006 the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) expressed concern at the growing number of street children in Azerbaijan, who are also often victims of exploitation, ill-treatment and abuse and at the lack of recovery, medical treatment, social integration or educational programmes for street children. CRC recommended that Azerbaijan undertake a study on the root causes and extent of this phenomenon and that Azerbaijan establish a comprehensive strategy to prevent it and reduce the number of street children. It also recommended that Azerbaijan provide street children with adequate nutrition, clothing, housing and educational opportunities, including vocational and life-skill training, in order to support their development and prevent their exploitation. How does Azerbaijan intend to follow up on these recommendations?

- In 2007 the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) expressed concern at the prevalence of violence against women in Azerbaijan. CEDAW was also concerned that discrimination against women remains widespread in matters relating to marriage and family relations despite legislation guaranteeing equal rights. What measures have been taken to address these concerns?

## **NETHERLANDS**

- The CofE Commissioner recommended that Azerbaijan encourages the work on a draft law to modify the current legislation on defamation to take away the possibility of depriving anyone of his/her liberty on accounts of opinion.

Could the government indicate if this recommendation will be implemented?

- Human rights organisations which are operating in sensitive areas, such as women's rights and LGTB rights, as well as religious groups, are subjected to harassment and sometimes even violence. It appears also to be increasingly difficult for NGOs to get registered.

Could the government of Azerbaijan comment on this?

## **SWEDEN**

- Civil society organisations and UN bodies have expressed concern at the treatment of prisoners, including physical maltreatment, over-crowding and access to education. Could the government elaborate on other measures it is taking with regard to the treatment of prisoners, including with regard to physical maltreatment, over-crowding and access to education, as well as to end impunity for such violations, in accordance with its international obligations?
- The constitution of Azerbaijan guarantees the freedom of expression. Civil society organisations have expressed concern, however, that a number of charges brought by representatives of state bodies against journalists in the past several years (including imprisonment) have been employed to curb critical press coverage. What measures is the government of the Azerbaijan taking to ensure that actions are not taken by agents of public authorities in contradiction of the purpose and principle of the freedom of expression?
- On 30 December, the National TV and Radio Council (NTRC) decided to stop the broadcast of foreign radios stations - Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Voice of America, the BBC and Europa Plus - starting from 1 January 2009. The OSCE
- Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, has criticized Azerbaijan's decision, stating that it constitutes "a serious step backwards for democracy". What measures is the government of Azerbaijan taking to ensure and promote a free media?

- The constitution of Azerbaijan stipulates that groups may peacefully assemble with prior notification of relevant government bodies, however, civil society organisations express concern that the new advanced permission, which is often refused, in particular in the up-coming of the elections of last year, circumscribes this right. What measures is the government undertaking to ensure the right to assemble?

## **UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

- Could you tell us what the civil society in Azerbaijan played in the preparation of your national report and what plans are in place to develop interaction between the government and civil society in Azerbaijan?
- Could you elaborate on the national human rights institute in Azerbaijan and its compliance with the Paris Principles?
- We would be grateful for information on the steps Azerbaijan is taking to ensure pluralism in the media and access to independent information for all citizens of Azerbaijan, particularly those living outside of Baku, following the 1 January ban on foreign broadcasters using FM frequencies?
- Please could you describe any practical measures taken to implement recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights the Child?
- Could you tell us what further reforms are planned to combat corruption and to ensure the independence and integrity of the judiciary in Azerbaijan?
- Please could you provide information on the steps Azerbaijan is taking to protect the right to freedom of opinion and expression following allegations of violent attacks and the unfair use of criminal libel laws against journalists?
- What mechanisms are in place to protect women subjected to domestic or sexual violence and to punish the perpetrators?

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