

32nd Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

(22-26 May 2023)

Agenda-item 3: General debate

Madam Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to deliver this statement on behalf of H.E. Ambassador Rovshan Sadigbayli, the Permanent representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the International Organizations in Vienna.

Madam Chair,

I would like to congratulate you on your election to lead the 32nd session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. I also extend our gratitude to the UNODC Secretariat for their efforts in organizing this significant event.

Maintaining peace, security, and sustainable development in our societies relies on the crucial elements of crime prevention and criminal justice. The activities of criminals and criminal organizations pose threats to peace and stability, undermining our endeavors to promote human rights and sustainable development. In the face of an increasingly complex security landscape, states are confronted with a rising number of transnational threats, terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, separatism, massive and indiscriminate deployment of landmines, cybercrime, organized crime, human trafficking, and illicit trafficking in goods.

Criminal activities have grown more intricate as perpetrators exploit new and emerging technologies for their malicious purposes. Transnational organized criminal groups demonstrate remarkable agility and coordination, surpassing the efforts of states to combat international organized crime. Moreover, these criminal groups continuously enhance their methods and techniques, rendering their crimes increasingly sophisticated.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of transnational threats, Azerbaijan emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to address these multifaceted challenges. We place great importance on regional and international collaboration in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Azerbaijan actively participates in multilateral initiatives and is eager to contribute to the exchange of information and expertise to foster collective efforts against crimes.

In recent years, Azerbaijan has made significant progress in strengthening its national legal framework and enhancing law enforcement mechanisms to combat various forms of crime. We have implemented comprehensive measures to address corruption, organized crime, drug trafficking, cybercrime, and more. Our commitment to further improving legislative and institutional capacities remains steadfast in order to effectively prevent and combat crime.

Madam Chair,

As it is well known, Azerbaijan restored its previously infringed sovereign and territorial integrity as a result of the 44-day Patriotic War in the autumn of 2020. Azerbaijan liberated all the occupied territories including Karabakh Economic Region of Azerbaijan. Liberation of occupied territories allowed to shed light on the full picture of the atrocities, war crimes, crimes against humanity and other illegal activities committed in these territories during almost three decades of occupation. Such crimes included recruitment of foreign terrorist fighter and mercenaries, massive destruction and appropriation of civilian property, forced displacement, massive and indiscriminate deployment of mines, changing the charter of the occupied territories, illegal resettlement and exploitation of natural resources, destruction, pillage and removal of cultural heritage – all these and many other heinous acts have been ruthlessly committed by one particular UN member State against another one since the early 1990s and until the end of the conflict in 2020. The policy of occupation created a conducive environment for transnational organized criminal groups in the region which engaged and played a decisive role in funding enabling and facilitating aforementioned occupation and crimes.

Madam Chair,

It is crucial for all member states to strengthen cooperation in preventing and combating criminal offenses against cultural property. Azerbaijan is deeply concerned about the ongoing loss, destruction, theft, pillage, illicit movement, misappropriation, vandalism, and damage inflicted upon cultural property. Additionally, returning proceeds of crime or property to their rightful owners in accordance with international law obligations should be a priority.

The financing of terrorism, transnational organized crime, and criminal groups is a grave concern that requires resolute action. Preventing and suppressing the financing of these crimes is of utmost importance, and it is crucial to criminalize the intentional provision or collection of funds, including through non-profit organizations, by nationals or within territories.

In conclusion, Azerbaijan reaffirms its commitment to the objectives and principles of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. We are fully committed to fighting all forms of crime and undertaking necessary measures to fulfill this commitment. We emphasize the importance of crime prevention and the development of appropriate criminal justice systems.

Thank you.