The Republic of Azerbaijan,
The Ministry of Internal Affairs,
The Main Department On Struggle Against Human Trafficking,

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The operational condition in the relevant field were controlled by measures taken jointly with relevant government agencies, civil society institutions and international partners in the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as persons at risk were protected from these crimes, and THB victims were covered by physical, psychological and social rehabilitation measures. I would like to take attention to the measures enforced in 2019 by Azerbaijan Government in this direction.

Last year, Azerbaijan ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Violence, as well as mechanisms of cooperation in combating against THB have been identified in the Protocol against Trafficking in Women and Children with the relevant authorities of the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republics of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

With the amendments to the Law on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Law on Youth Policy, psychological rehabilitation and psychological correction were included in the social services provided to THB victims, and young people who were victims of human trafficking were included in the risk group.

The government has taken a number of important decisions to increase the amount of one time paid subsidy (from 400 manat to 700 manat) intended for victims of THB during the reintegration period. Obligations of training institutions for training drivers for domestic and international passenger and cargo transportation regarding topics related to human trafficking has been defined.

Awareness-raising activities were continued and new methods and means of public information were preferred, such as the introduction of e-learning modules, seminars and campaigns on social networks.

Seminars on combating human trafficking and forced labor were organized by the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Education in secondary, vocational and higher education institutions in 55 cities and regions of the country in 2019. Law enforcement officers, representatives of local executive authorities, transport, education, social protection, employment centers, civil society, the media, health workers and entrepreneurs have been involved to these events.

With the support of the special police agency, an awareness campaign was held in Baku and campaign videos, more than 100,000 propaganda materials in different languages, as well as special programs on TV and radio channels and video portals were prepared and broadcasted.

In order to prevent women and juveniles from becoming victims of human trafficking, meetings were organized with prisoners at the relevant facilities of the Penitentiary Service, and they were provided with necessary information on the protection of their rights and freedoms.

Within the framework of a joint project of the State Migration Service and the International Organization for Migration, seminars on the rules of staying and residence in the country, methods of protection from human trafficking and forced labor were held with the participation of more than 1,800 foreigners and stateless persons.
The awareness events were closely attended by the Ministries of Labor and Social Protection, Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, city and district executive authorities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs awarded 18 public associations that have made a significant contribution to the organization of propaganda work, including the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations, civil society institutions and the Mass Media.

At the same time, the Council of State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan allocated 209,000 manats (about 123,000 US dollars) to 20 relevant projects submitted by non-governmental organizations, of which 105,000 manats (about 62,000 US dollars) was used to finance three shelters and five rehabilitation centers only in 2019. Trainings on human trafficking also were organized in special educational institutions, as well as health, social protection and secondary education workers were involved in trainings and roundtables on rehabilitation, medical and psychological assistance to victims of human trafficking.

During the reporting year, 4 facts were identified by operative-search measures carried out to prevent forced labor. The investigation revealed that 5 out of 6 victims were exploited in the construction industry in the Russian Federation, and 1 minor was subjected to forced begging in Azerbaijan. Each fact was investigated and the perpetrators were brought to court responsibility.

Inspections carried out by the Labor Relations Monitoring Center of the State Agency for Services to Citizens and Social Innovations revealed that 351 people worked at 120 construction sites without labor or service (civil) contracts. Materials collected about 4 employers were sent to the Prosecutor General's Office, and administrative fines totaling 454,000 manats (about 268,000 US dollars) were imposed in total regarding other 39.

As a result of social reforms implemented under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, compared to 2018, the number of employment contracts concluded last year increased by 153,000 across the country, including 100,000 to the private sector - along with the elimination of informal employment, it has also been an important factor in prevention of forced labour crimes.

The "DOST" centers of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population monitored addresses of 78 adopted, guardianship and custody children and provided each of them with the necessary social assistance.

As a result of carried out operational-search measures in 2019, 36 crimes were registered on 186 human trafficking, as well as 4 forced labor, also Illegal acts relating to travel or identity documents with a purpose of human trafficking, and 4 criminal groups consisted of 10 people were rendered harmless. Also 19 persons or 54.3% were detained among 35 wanted persons. The investigation of 27 criminal cases on human trafficking and forced labor was completed, 27 accused persons (22 women, 5 men) were prosecuted, and taking into consideration prosecuted persons from previous years in total 42 human traffickers were convicted.

Among the 91 identified victims of human trafficking (85 women and 5 men and one child, 89 of them were Azerbaijan nationals and 1 was Uzbekistan and 1 was Tajikistan nationals), with a purpose of exploitation 54 were trafficked to the Republic of Turkey, 16 to State of Qatar, 8 to the Islamic Republic of Iran, 5 to Russian Federation and 2 to the United Arab Emirates and 3 were exploited within the country. 78 of them were placed in the shelter of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and each of them was provided with medical, psychological and legal assistance in cooperation
with the Assistance Center of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and non-
governmental organizations.

As a result, 14 victims were provided with jobs, 45 were sent to vocational
courses, 58 were returned to their families and each was paid a one time subsidy
according to the relevant decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of
Azerbaijan.

The children of the victims were also kept in the spotlight, 22 children were
directed to the pre-school education program, 15 were provided with alimony, and 18
were assisted in obtaining the necessary documents.

In general, in 2005-2019, when the fight against human trafficking in the
Republic of Azerbaijan was carried out at the legal level, due to the strong political
will of the state, institutional reforms were carried out in accordance with
international practice, necessary organizational and practical measures were taken.

Civil society representatives and the media have made extensive use of public
awareness of the dangers of human trafficking, and the government has supported
non-governmental organizations that have taken the initiative in this area.

Over the past 15 years, 570 people have been prosecuted for 1,514 cases of
human trafficking and forced labor, and 976 victims have been identified.

Necessary measures in this direction are being systematically continued in
accordance with the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, decrees and orders of the
President, and the international obligations of our country.