



27 November 2023

Statement by the Republic of Armenia

International Organization for Migration: 114th Session of the Council

General Debate

Delivered by H.E. Andranik Hovhannisyan, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Armenia to UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva

Madam Chair,
Director General,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We congratulate you, madam Chair, and newly appointed members of the Bureau. We would also like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Director General Ms. Amy Pope for the first appearance at the Council in her new capacity. We wish all the best in her endeavors and would like to assure of our continued support.

Armenia continues to benefit from the cooperation with the IOM. In 2022 due to a major institutional reform the Ministry of Internal Affairs was established in Armenia encompassing Migration and Citizenship Service. The reform consolidated all migration-related structures under a single umbrella. In the course of the last few years Armenia has also largely digitalized migration management.

Since 2020, the Armenian government has implemented a large-scale housing program by providing ‘housing purchase certificates’ for refugees forcibly displaced by Azerbaijan in 1988-1992. According to the last census of the Soviet Union more than 500.000 Armenians were living in Soviet Azerbaijan. Today there are none.

Moreover, Azerbaijan continued its policy of ethnic cleansing against Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and has forcibly displaced 150.000 Armenians from their ancestral homes by the use of military force in 2020 and 2023, as well as by imposing a nine-months-long inhumane blockade against the population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Over two months ago the IOM reported from the ground that “many of those who sought refuge in Armenia undertook arduous journeys, often walking for days and finding shelter in caves or basements, enduring extremely challenging conditions. There were reports of malnutrition, particularly among the elderly and among children.”

On 17 November the International Court of Justice adopted a binding order on Azerbaijan to “ensure that persons who have left Nagorno-Karabakh and who wish to return are able to do so in a safe, unimpeded and expeditious manner”.

The UN human rights expert reported last week from Armenia that he “observed the pain and urgent needs of the displaced population and immense efforts by the authorities to address their basic and urgent needs.”

However, the humanitarian crisis of this magnitude certainly requires a comprehensive international assistance. The Armenia Emergency Refugee Response Plan was launched in October for this purpose bringing together 60 partners, including a number of the UN agencies. We once again appeal and count on the international support in this regard.

I thank you.