



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF UZBEKISTAN TO THE OSCE

Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the 1296th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council (December 17, 2020)

Mr. Chair,

Last week the Government of Uzbekistan as part of the next stage of the humanitarian operation «Mehr-3» (Kindness) repatriated from the conflict zones of Syria a total number of 98 of our compatriots, namely 25 women and 73 children. Moreover, 14 children are orphans who have lost both parents.

The humanitarian operation was carried out in full compliance with the fundamental international documents in the field of human rights protection, as well as under the norms and principles of international humanitarian law. The importance of helping women and children who are associated with foreign terrorist fighters and may be victims of terrorism is reaffirmed by UN Security Council Resolution 2396.

These people, lost on their way in life, ended up in a difficult situation in other countries. For years they were forced to live in difficult conditions, deprived not only of social protection but also of basic living conditions.

In this regard, the Government of Uzbekistan will provide all the Uzbek compatriots who have returned to their homeland with comprehensive assistance for rehabilitation and reintegration, access to medical care and psychosocial support, educational and other social programs. The discharged compatriots will also be provided with the necessary conditions for a return to a normal peaceful life, including through the provision of adequate housing and employment.

Mr. Chair,

I would recall that under the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in 2019, within the framework of the two special humanitarian operations "Mehr" (Kindness), 220 citizens - women and children - were returned to our country from Syria and Iraq. It is particularly encouraging that women and children who have returned from «hot spots» found their place in our society with the full assistance of the state and public organizations.

In general, Uzbekistan is constantly working on the return of our compatriots from the countries of the Middle East, who are being held in camps on the territory of ongoing hostilities there.

As a result of the consistent policy implemented over the last years in Uzbekistan to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Government of Uzbekistan pays special attention not only to the citizens living in our country but also to those in difficult life situations in other countries. All measures are being taken to protect their interests, honor, and dignity.

I thank you.