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PC.DEL/1584/22
24 October 2022

ENGLISH only



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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**in response to the address by Mr. Valiant Richey,
OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator
for Combating Trafficking in Human beings
as delivered by the Delegation of Armenia
at the 1394th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

13 October 2022

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia welcomes Mr. Valiant Richey, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his report.

The ongoing major security crisis in Europe, combined with deep mistrust among OSCE participating States, will inevitably lead to a further decline in cooperation in combating various aspects of transnational organised crimes, including the fight against human trafficking.

In addition, violent conflicts, general uncertainty, and growing misuse of technology further exacerbate the situation and reduce opportunities for concerted efforts, expanding the range of threats and challenges associated with human trafficking. The old methods as well as the aims of traffickers are supplemented by new ones.

We fully agree that demand is one of the main and principal drivers of human trafficking, and it should also be addressed as part of a comprehensive fight against trafficking in human beings. We also concur with your approach that more work needs to be done with groups and persons vulnerable to trafficking.

In this context, let me once again draw your attention to another important aspect of human trafficking that continues to be overlooked. This concerns in particular the nexus between trafficking in human beings and enforced disappearances, during armed conflicts on general and in relation to prisoners of war in particular, which, against the backdrop of recent events, is of particular relevance and urgency.

Equally, the use of similar methods by traffickers to recruit people for forced labour or other types of exploitation, including “mercenarism” and proxy wars, should be thoroughly scrutinised. These correlations were identified as a result of witness accounts who found themselves in such a situation in the context of a recent armed conflict.

Therefore, we reiterate our call to the OSCE and its relevant Executive Structures to address these issues comprehensively and in close cooperation with other relevant actors and international organisations, including non-governmental and civil society organisations.

In closing, let me express my Delegation’s readiness to work closely with you, Mr. Co-ordinator, on the above-mentioned issues and assure you of Armenia’s continued support in carrying out your mandated activities.

I thank you.