**CTED conducts follow-up assessment visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan**

United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee

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The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), acting on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, conducted a visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan from 23 to 25 July 2018. This was in follow-up to the Committee’s initial visit of October 2009, and focused on progress made by Azerbaijan in implementing the Committee’s 2009 visit recommendations, as well as on measures introduced to implement Security Council resolutions 1624 (2005), 2178 (2014), 2396 (2017), and other relevant Council resolutions.

Representatives of several national ministries and agencies took part in the three-day discussions, reflecting multiple aspects of Azerbaijan’s approach to counter-terrorism.

In recent years, authorities have dismantled several terrorist groups with clear and immediate plans to commit terrorist attacks in Azerbaijan, some of which had links to Al-Qaida, Emarat Kavkaz, or ISIL (Da’esh). The authorities consider that the geostrategic location of Azerbaijan contributes to the elevated threat in the country, as well as an increased risk of the use of Azerbaijan for transit of terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). According to the representative of the State Security Service, Mr Suad Masud, almost one thousand Azerbaijani nationals left for Syria and Iraq to join ISIL (Da’esh) or other associated terrorist groups. The majority of them are considered dead, while approximately 150 persons returned to Azerbaijan and have been prosecuted where applicable.

The delegation noted the various measures taken by Azerbaijan to address the threats related to the flows of FTFs, varying from enhanced border controls resulting in apprehension of attempted FTF travel, through strengthening legal mechanisms for prosecution of returning FTFs, to ongoing efforts to enhance interagency and international cooperation. The delegation also noted Azerbaijan’s preventive and awareness-raising measures, including counter-narratives, implemented in partnership with the State Committee of Religious Associations. Azerbaijan is actively working on issues related to the return of children to Azerbaijan from Iraq, including in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and is developing reintegration and rehabilitation measures for returning women and children, with the involvement of the State Security Service, the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Health, as well as other relevant agencies.

“Existing national measures provide a great opportunity for developing a comprehensive and integrated counter-terrorism strategy that engages all the various ministries and stakeholders in the society,” Mr. Ahmed Seif El-Dawla, CTED Chief of Section, said in his concluding remarks.

A representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan reiterated his country’s commitment to continue working closely with CTED on the implementation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee’s recommendations and relevant Security Council resolutions.

The visiting delegation included CTED experts, as well as representatives of the International Criminal Police Organization, the International Organization for Migration, and the Anti-Terrorist Centre of the Commonwealth of Independent States.