

Reply by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Working Session 6:

Freedom of Religion or Belief

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It is well-known fact that Armenia committed aggression against Azerbaijan and occupied Azerbaijan's Nagorno Karabakh region and adjacent to it 7 other regions. Due to the ongoing conflict with Armenia and occupation of Azerbaijani lands about one million Azerbaijanis were deprived of their right to live in their own homes and native lands and cannot visit their sacred places. It is worth to mention that more than one thousand mosques, 23 madrasas, more than 500 cemeteries and other sacred places belonging to Azerbaijanis were destroyed in Armenia only. They exist only on photos now. Besides, there were more than 800 religious monuments belonging to Azerbaijanis in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Almost all of them are destroyed.

But regardless the ongoing conflict with Armenia, Azerbaijan is pursuing the policy of religious and ethnic tolerance. In 2010 Catholicos of all Armenians Garegin II who participated at World Religious Leaders Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan was able personally to see Armenian church safe in the very center of Baku. This fact once more demonstrates the high level of religious tolerance and respect of Azerbaijani government and Azerbaijani people towards all religions. Unfortunately, we cannot state the same about Armenia.