



Georgia

UN Security Council debate on “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices”,

New York, March 14, 2017

Statement by

Dr. Mariam Jashi – Head of the Delegation of Georgia to the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61), Chairperson of the Education, Science and Culture Committee of the Parliament of Georgia

Madam President, Excellencies,

Let me express gratitude to the UK Presidency for convening today’s important debate. I also thank the Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres and distinguished panelists for their contribution in the debate.

Georgia aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union; And let me add few remarks in my national capacity.

Madam President,

Trafficking is a global problem affecting the most vulnerable - women, children, internally displaced persons, refugees and minorities. This gruesome violation of Human Rights contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime. Terrorist groups such as ISIL, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and others use human trafficking and sexual violence as weapons of terror and sources of revenue. And large movements of refugees and migrants have significantly increased the threat of human trafficking. Therefore, we welcome increased focus of the Security

Council on the topic, with its most recent resolution 2331, calling upon member states to take decisive action.

UN and its agencies have a crucial role to play in confronting this challenge at all levels, especially in addressing the needs of IDPs and refugees in emergency and post-emergency settings. Engagement of the Security Council on this matter will further promote efforts to this end, alongside the measures consolidated in the New York Declaration.

Excellencies,

Combating Human Trafficking has been one of the key priorities for Georgia over a decade. The country has witnessed progressively high appraisal of its counter-trafficking efforts in global reports and measurement instruments. The latest 2016 **Global Slavery Index**, the **2016 US State Department Report** and the **2nd evaluation report of GRETA** (Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings) - all document the visible progress made by the country.

Namely, the Global Slavery Index places Georgia among the countries that take the most effective actions to end human trafficking. The report ranks Georgia as the 1st country in the CEE/CIS region, as the 2nd country worldwide taking “Most Action by GDP” and as the 17th country among 167 states taking the most effective actions to end human trafficking.

Madam President,

Let me review 4 success factors and lessons on what has worked in my country.

Sustainable political commitment and continuously evolving legislative framework has been a key to success. Adequate legislative framework is in place and Human Trafficking is explicitly criminalized in Georgia. Most recently the country consolidated its vision in the 2017-2018 National Action Plan structured around 4Ps - Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnership around Human Trafficking.

Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholders’ approach has been critical to effective counter-trafficking measures - In this respect the Interagency Coordination Council chaired by the Ministry of Justice has played a critical role. The Council brings together the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, the State Fund for Protection and Assistance of Victims and NGOs. .

Focus should be placed on proactive investigations. Georgia has almost doubled proactive investigations in the last 4 years, as a result of Mobile Inspection Groups and Special Anti-trafficking Unit under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Ministry of Labor will be also conducting regular preventive inspections on cases of forced labor and labor exploitation.

Finally, awareness raising on trafficking is an essential prevention measure – Therefore, Georgia intensifies its efforts with a new Common Information Strategy to reach out the most vulnerable groups, including IDPs, children, minorities and rural households people from the rural areas living in poverty.

Madam President,

Illegal **occupation** of Georgian regions of Tskhinvali/South Ossetia and Abkhazia by the Russian Federation remains as the main limitation for the Government of Georgia to fully exercise its counter-trafficking measures. There are no mechanisms to effectively identify, investigate and prosecute alleged TIP cases in occupied regions, while the occupying power continues to place undue restrictions on the local population, particularly, ethnic Georgians.

Madam President,

Finally, let me reiterate that the Government of Georgia remains committed to expanding international cooperation for effective cross-border control measures. We remain committed to stronger international efforts for preventing and combating conflict-related human trafficking and modern slavery.

I thank you.