

The impact of economic reforms on women's rights Azerbaijan Ombudsman's activity in the area of women's rights protection in the context of economic reforms

Protection and promotion of women's rights, ensuring gender equality, and restoration of women's rights are one of the Ombudsman's main activities. Here, the conceptual approach is that, in terms of the specificities of different groups of women, a different, sometimes individual approach to the protection of their rights is applied.

The Ombudsman has been instrumental in investigating women's rights, investigating legislation, investigating problems, conducting inquiries, studying international practice and promoting gender equality. For this purpose, according to the relevant decree of Ombudsman, the Office's staff member has been appointed as a specialized advisor on women's rights and gender equality on a public basis.

The lawsuit-related measures are being implemented with particular sensitivity to complaints and petitions of varying content that are addressed to the Commissioner. Individual complaints are being investigated, appeals to the relevant authorities are addressed to eliminate the violations of law and discrimination in the complaints and, if necessary, the complaints are examined on the spot. The appeals are analyzed and analyzed by gender, population groups, essence of the incident, problems, legal categories and other information, priorities of gender equality issues and activities to address problems.

For example, it is worth mentioning that in the year 2017, the Commissioner received 1,764 complaints about women, 116 of which were regarding domestic violence, others targeted social assistance, labor dispute, employment, disability, or dissatisfaction with the court decision. It was related to non-enforcement of court decisions. The vast majority of complaints have been resolved as a result of interference by the Ombudsman.

The Commissioner takes measures to provide women with job opportunities, expand their economic opportunities, organize micro-loans and other financial means, organize their income-generating activities, and expand access to basic social services, including education and medical services, and addressing the competent authorities with a view to solving the problems of women engaged in large entrepreneurship, and addressing the difficulties faced by entrepreneurial women.

The protection of the rights of female prisoners plays an important role in the Commissioner's activities. Thus, the Ombudsman, along with members of the National Preventive Group of Detainees and Prisoners of the Office of the Detainees and Prisoners, regularly visits the penitentiary facility of the Ministry of Justice Penitentiary for women prisoners and places of hostel, canteen and medical and sanitary part of the facility. Taking into account the previous recommendations of the Commissioner, the situation of convicted women has improved.

The Ombudsman passes an “open door events” in the same institution and

accepts convicted women individually listening to their inquiries, extradition, decriminalization of offenses and other criminal and civil-law relations, social and family matters in accordance with legislation, providing legal advice, and requirements of relevant legislation relating to amnesty, The powers of the Commissioner are explained, and some appeals are solved on the spot.

As it is known, Azerbaijan has been involved in armed conflict for more than 25 years, as a result of the military aggression of the republic of Armenia, twenty percent of its territory was occupied. The rights of more than one million refugees and IDPs, especially women, who are victims of this conflict, continue to be widely violated. However, international organizations preparing documents on human rights are still showing double standards. The Commissioner constantly calls on the international legal assessment of these murders committed against humanity.

It should be noted that the Commissioner regularly visits refugee and IDP refugee and IDP women in the areas of refugee and displaced populations, regularly traveling to areas where internally displaced populations are concerned, their problems, their proper nutrition, clean water, sanitation, shelter, social and health care services, including reproductive health, mothers and babies, and provides more support to refugee and displaced women in all forms of violence, and in most cases positive outcomes are achieved.

The Commissioner also focuses on the problems of female migrants, women-emigrants and returnees of Azerbaijan, as well as women's immigrants (not citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan).

As a result of the Ombudsman's activities in the field of scientific and analytical work, proposals on eliminating the obstacles to the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the determination of gaps or contradictions in the national legislation are made and proposals on amendments and supplements to legislative acts are prepared, legislative and executive power inquiries into the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan concerning normative legal acts violating their freedoms, as well as municipal and court acts.

It should be noted that the annual report of the Commissioner on ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on "Prevention and Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" was adopted by the Council of Europe on "Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual abuse" signed on November 17, Ratification of the Convention, Acceleration of the adoption of the Laws on the Protection of Children's Immortals, Reproductive Health and Family Planning, the adoption of the National Action Plan on eliminating and combating domestic violence in the country 2017-2025 and stressed the importance of the National Strategy on Reproductive Health.

Economic strengthening of women affects family relationships, contributes to the family budget, its social well-being and its status. On the other hand, the sense of self-confidence increases. The development of women's entrepreneurship promotes

poverty reduction, increased economic and social prestige of women, and, in many cases, the elimination of gender inequality in society.

In this regard, the Ombudsman's report highlights the importance of women's competitiveness in the labor market, the development of entrepreneurship among women, the acquisition of new professions, the creation of equal opportunities for entrepreneurial women, the population, businesses and government agencies, targeted awareness raising, preparation and dissemination of relevant publications, and enhancing the overall quality of education.

The Ombudsman is also proposed the recommendations that would enhance the capacity of active and professional women in various fields. Increasing awareness of women about decision-making powers, enhancing accountability in women's and men's participation in elections, increasing participation in public life, and social awareness about the importance of balanced participation of women and men in decision-making, suggestions on creating dialogue and co-operation among women's NGOs and government institutions that allow women to participate in all areas of decision-making.

The Commissioner and his regional centers regularly hold meetings (public hearings) with the population, families and communities in different parts of the country, enlightenment activities are carried out. In these activities, the importance of protecting the rights of women and single mothers, inadmissibility of early and unofficial marriages for girls, increased participation of women in the regions, as well as in their management, decision-making, active participation in elections, promotion of women entrepreneurship, awareness-raising campaigns, and the need to educate leading women leaders.

The Commissioner places an enormous emphasis on the promotion, provision and protection of women's right to education in their activities. It focuses on the creation of gender-sensitive school environments, improved educational infrastructure, covering number of girls attending school, organizing support for young mothers, expanding informal learning opportunities and attracting girls to vocational oriented education, women's information and communication technology awareness-raising campaigns, and a series of events and educational programs for girls to continue their secondary and higher education.

The Commissioner has recommended that gender relations be considered in curricula, including textbooks and manuals, and that teachers and caregivers with regard to children. At the initiative of the Commissioner, the Law and other faculties of the Baku State University have been teaching subjects for 'Human Rights' and 'Introduction to Gender' for several years, and lectures on both subjects are read. New "Introduction to Gender" textbook was compiled and presented to students.

On a regular basis, the Commissioner's office has a large number of students from Baku State University, Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan University of Languages, Baku Slavic

University and other higher educational institutions of Law, International Law and International Relations, Political Management, Economics and Management, and practical training sessions for masters are organised .

The Commissioner closely cooperates with the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, relevant ministries, other government agencies, international organizations, NGOs and the media, as well as civil society representatives in the mentioned direction, contributing to the promotion of women's rights.

Cooperation with the Resource Center for the Elderly, established under the Azerbaijan Women's and Development Center, with the support of the Commissioner, continues to be the first and ever-existing unity of women. Here, along with legal awareness, literary, artistic and musical events are also held. At the Leadership School of Azerbaijan, which operates under the Peace Network of Children and Youth of Azerbaijan, and annually produces more than a hundred children and young people in the issues related to drug addiction and other harmful habits, HIV / AIDS, early marriages, religious radicalism lessons are held.

The Commissioner establishes cooperation relations with the United Nations specialized agencies in various fields, and joint projects are being implemented. For example, it can be noted that the Commissioner's cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been in the forefront of the fight against violence since 2016. Within the framework of this activity, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with Furio De Angelis, head of the UNHCR office in Azerbaijan. The purpose of the Memorandum is to support the relevant efforts to promote gender equality and empowerment in Azerbaijan through the continuation of the project "Empowering Women in Disaster Situations". In the framework of the project, a series of events were held in Goranboy, Mingachevir and Ganja, as well as in Sabunchu and Binagadi districts of Baku with the participation of more than 3,000 IDPs.

One of the main activities of the Commissioner in the area of women's rights protection is Business and Human Rights. Thus, at the initiative of the Ombudsman, the Global Compact, the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the National Human Rights Institutions (hereinafter referred to as the NHRI) are based on the Edinburg Declaration and the Berlin Action Plan, an Operating Group on Business and Human Rights was established under the Ombudsman.

More than 20 government agencies, Trade Unions Confederation and NGOs, including the Women Entrepreneurship Association, Azerbaijan Women's and Development Center, the Women's Society of Disabled, representatives of relevant authorities, as well as representatives of parliamentarians and international organizations, depending on the topics discussed.

Various actual themes, including "Women's Rights and Business" round tables are organized within the group's activities, detailed discussions are held on the themes,

summarized proposals are sent to various state agencies, the Milli Majlis, and added to the annual reports of the Commissioner and widely publicized. As a result, a number of suggestions have been taken into account in some or all of the new state programs adopted in the amendments to normative-legal acts.

An example of these changes, which includes women's rights, is that changes have been made to the Labor Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan in February 2014, taking into account our suggestions on improving labor legislation, strengthening control over employment contracts, and introducing innovations to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population electronic information system.

In addition, the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On regulation of inspections in the field of entrepreneurship and protection of entrepreneurs' interests", which entered into force on March 1, 2014, including the establishment of single data registry of inspections in the field of entrepreneurship, the adoption of the Law "On termination inspections in the field of entrepreneurship " is of particular importance.

At the same time, the development of youth knowledge and skills in the State Program "Youth of Azerbaijan in 2017-2021", which was approved by the relevant order of the President on 15 September 2017, taking into account the proposals of the working group meetings and the Commissioner's annual reports increasing the level of awareness of youth on human rights, gender equality, and human trafficking, and awareness of the level of awareness of the fight against violence, employment and employment opportunities, promotion of entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, promoting entrepreneurial activity among young people, raising etc. such important provisions have been reflected.

One of the main activities of the Working Group is to take the necessary measures to implement the UN's "Business and Human Rights Principles". For this purpose, at the initiative of the Ombudsman, the UN Business and Human Rights Guidelines and the Charter of this document, as well as the UN International Treaty, the Edinburgh Declaration have been translated into Azerbaijan language and distributed to members of the Working Group The Ombudsman has been placed on the official website.