

16<sup>th</sup> Session of the UPR Working Group

UPR of Azerbaijan

Intervention by Ireland

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Thank you Mr. President,

Ireland thanks the delegation of Azerbaijan for its presentation this afternoon. Ireland takes note of measures taken by Azerbaijan since the first cycle of the UPR, including accession to a number of conventions.

Ireland notes the indication by the Government of Azerbaijan in its national report that it intends to decriminalise defamation and that the advice of the Venice Commission has been sought in this regard. At the same time, Ireland notes concerns expressed by UN Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures regarding restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, as well as restrictions on the work of human rights defenders. We urge the Government to ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers and other civil society actors are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear or threat of reprisal, obstruction or legal and administrative harassment. Ireland **recommends** that the Government revise the 2009 Law on Non-Governmental Organisations, so as to ensure that it complies with international human rights law.

Ireland notes that the Committee against Torture remains concerned about the use of torture and ill-treatment of suspects and detainees, and allegations that the authorities are reluctant to initiate criminal proceedings for alleged acts of torture or ill-treatment. Ireland **recommends** the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to ensure prompt, effective, independent and impartial investigations into all allegations of torture and other ill-treatment at remand and detention facilities, and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

I thank you.