

Datüb

Thank you, Madame Chair. Datüb, the World Union of Ahiska Turks, I speak today on behalf of Ahiska Turks, also known as Meskhetian Turks in Georgia. In 1944, more than 126,000 Turks were exiled from the Ahiska region of Georgia to Central Asia, resulting in the tragic loss of approximately 17,000 lives. For 81 years, our people have lived dispersed, often without citizenship, facing hardship and exclusion. Despite, these challenges, the Ahiska Turks actively contribute to the societies, in which they live, through work, culture, education, and civil engagement. Their experience shows that diversity is a strength, not a threat. We welcome Georgia's commitments to support a voluntary and dignified return, but it is essential to note that many Ahiska Turks still live without legal status. Some children lack identity documents, and access to essential services remains limited. We offer three recommendations: guarantee legal status and access to public services to eliminate statelessness; recognize and value the contributions of the Ahiska Turks to economic, social, and cultural life; ensure our meaningful participation in return processes and institutional follow-up. Our request is simple: to transform a history of exile into a path of reconciliation. In line with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals 10 and 16. Thank you for your attention.