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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **USAID Mission Director Attends Anti-Human Trafficking Conference in Nakhchivan**

**July 30, 2016**

USAID Mission Director Mikaela Meredith traveled to Nakhchivan on July 29 to attend a conference on combatting human trafficking in Azerbaijan ahead of the July 30 “World Day against Trafficking in Persons.” The conference, which brought together international and regional experts to discuss ongoing initiatives and best practices, was organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and co-financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement.

Mission Director Meredith highlighted the U.S.-Azerbaijani partnership to fight the scourge of human trafficking and thanked the Azerbaijani government for working with the United States to counteract this heinous crime. She noted USAID, the Department of State, and IOM have partnered to implement programs designed to improve the quality of services at Azerbaijani shelters for victims of human trafficking and to increase the capacity of healthcare professionals to identify and care for human trafficking victims. In addition, she commended Azerbaijan for its ongoing efforts to prevent human trafficking, including through the implementation of its July 2014 National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking.

The United States has provided over \$1.3 billion in assistance to Azerbaijan since 1992, with almost \$4 million of those funds going toward assistance to combat human trafficking. This assistance has made a difference in the lives of many Azerbaijanis, including through improvements in victim assistance and technical assistance to governments and the NGO community and through efforts to strengthen civil society and empower women.