

## ISRS expert: Rehabilitation of repatriates requires a comprehensive approach and international cooperation



The event, organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, the OSCE and the Government of Kazakhstan, was attended by representatives of more than 20 countries and international organizations - about 100 people.

The dialogue was held within the framework of the chairmanship of the Kazakh side in the Regional Expert Council on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, created at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The goal of the event is to promote the development of interregional exchange of experience and effective practices in the development and implementation of measures for the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of persons returning from conflict zones.



As part of the session "Comprehensive and Holistic Approaches to Rehabilitation", the head of the department of the Institute of Strategic and Interregional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISRS) Timur Akhmedov made a report. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of institutional and humanitarian approaches to repatriation issues, and shared Uzbekistan's experience in implementing large-scale programs for the return and integration of citizens who had previously been in armed conflict zones.

It was noted that since 2019, a series of humanitarian operations "Mehr" have been carried out in Uzbekistan, during which more than 530 people have been repatriated. Based on consultations with UNICEF, UNDP and the UNOCT, a comprehensive rehabilitation program was developed. It includes measures to process documents, amnesty for women, as well as social, medical, educational and labor support. Particular attention is paid to reducing the level of isolation of repatriates: thanks to the support of the mahalla institution, they adapt faster and reunite with their families.

The ISRS expert placed special emphasis on education issues. According to him, mobile classes were created within the framework of the program, which made it possible to organize a full-fledged educational process even during rehabilitation. Subsequently, the children were successfully integrated into general education schools and kindergartens.

Speaking about future challenges, T. Akhmedov emphasized the need to modernize existing programs, develop infrastructure in the regions where repatriates live, and expand economic opportunities through preferential lending and vocational training. "The long-term goal of these efforts," he noted, "is to reduce the social base of terrorism and sustainably reintegrate people into civilian life.

Summing up the discussion, the experts unanimously confirmed the importance of continuing work in this area. Uzbekistan's initiative to create a Regional Expert Council on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees was highly appreciated by the meeting participants. It was noted that the Council continues to play a key role in ensuring security and stability in Central Asia.