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STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
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In response to the President of the ICRC, Mr. Peter Maurer

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan is pleased to welcome Mr. Peter Maurer, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the Permanent Council and to thank him for his thorough presentation. We congratulate President Maurer on 150th anniversary of humanitarian action by ICRC.

The noble humanitarian mission that the ICRC has been successfully implementing over many decades has made this unique Organization a symbol of hope and assistance for millions of people suffering from conflicts and disasters in various parts of the world.

Impartiality and neutrality of the International Committee of the Red Cross, sets an example of meeting humanitarian needs in conflicts.

Nowadays, as it was when the work of ICRC has started 150 ago, civilians continue to suffer from inadequate protection and discriminatory treatment in situations of armed conflict. Despite some progress, the reality on the ground continues to be characterized by the frequent failure to comply with obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect civilians as well as with relevant human rights obligations.

The dedicated work by the ICRC on the issue of missing persons is very well known in my country. According to the statistics of the State Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing People, as the result of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan fate of about 4500 Azerbaijani nationals remains unknown.

We are particularly grateful to the ICRC for its tireless efforts aimed at releasing Azerbaijani citizens held in captivity. Azerbaijan is pleased to cooperate with ICRC in such areas as provision of medical supplies, training of medical specialists and teaching on international humanitarian law. The ICRC's work aimed at helping and strengthening the capacities of the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan is commendable.

Mr. Chairperson,

Azerbaijan continues to suffer from having one of the highest numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the world and at present approximately one out of every nine persons in the country belongs to these categories of people.

The impact of conflict on housing, land and property, as well as on demographic situation in conflict zone require a more consistent focus in order to put an end to illegal practices and policies and ensure the safe and dignified return of displaced populations to their homes.

Taking into account abovementioned concerns we count very much on continuous support of the ICRC in elaborating specific projects and humanitarian programs to alleviate hardships of this vulnerable segment of population. We look forward to continuing our multi-dimensional collaboration with the ICRC on the issue of IDPs and refugees.

In conclusion, I would like to wish our distinguished guest and Organization he leads every success.

Thank you.