

Chairmanship: Albania**1286th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 22 October 2020 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 1.10 p.m.
Resumed: 3.05 p.m.
Closed: 6.15 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador I. Hasani

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the Permanent Council of the technical modalities for the conduct of meetings of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chairperson welcomed the new Permanent Representative of Canada to the OSCE, Ambassador Jocelyn Kinnear.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE OSCE MISSION TO MOLDOVA

Chairperson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova (PC.FR/38/20 OSCE+), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1452/20), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1441/20), United States of America (PC.DEL/1419/20), Turkey (PC.DEL/1425/20 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1436/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/1416/20 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/1422/20), Ukraine (PC.DEL/1447/20), Moldova (Annex 1)

Agenda item 2: **COMMEMORATION OF THE TWENTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED NATIONS SECURITY
COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325**

Chairperson, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Gender (CIO.GAL/199/20/Rev.1 OSCE+), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1453/20), United States of America (PC.DEL/1417/20), Russian Federation, Turkey (PC.DEL/1427/20 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1438/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Holy See (PC.DEL/1420/20 OSCE+), Permanent Representative of Georgia (also on behalf of the Permanent Representatives of Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Mongolia, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the European Union) (Annex 2), Norway (PC.DEL/1423/20), Afghanistan (Partner for Co-operation), Canada (PC.DEL/1468/20 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/1449/20 OSCE+), Spain (PC.DEL/1418/20 OSCE+), Lithuania (PC.DEL/1426/20 OSCE+), OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA.GAL/20/20 OSCE+), Director of the Office of the Secretary General

Agenda item 3: **REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES**

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/1428/20), Canada (PC.DEL/1469/20 OSCE+), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1454/20), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1439/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1430/20), United Kingdom, Turkey (PC.DEL/1424/20), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1435/20 OSCE+)
- (b) *Situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements:* Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1432/20), Ukraine
- (c) *Aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan:* Azerbaijan (Annex 3), Turkey (Annex 4)
- (d) *Position of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries on settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict:* Russian Federation (Annex 5), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1437/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1431/20), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area;

as well as Andorra, Moldova, and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1455/20), Canada (PC.DEL/1470/20 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Azerbaijan (Annex 6), France (PC.DEL/1444/20 OSCE+), Armenia (Annex 7), Turkey (PC.DEL/1451/20 OSCE+)

- (e) *Aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters: Armenia (Annex 8)*

Agenda item 4: **REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE**

- (a) *Logistical modalities for the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, to be held in Tirana and via video teleconference on 3 and 4 December 2020 (MC.INF/1/20): Chairperson*
- (b) *Indication of preferences regarding the candidates nominated for the posts of Secretary General, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Representative on Freedom of the Media, and Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: Chairperson*
- (c) *Third OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference, to be held via video teleconference on 27 and 28 October 2020: Chairperson*
- (d) *Joint event themed “Gender equality for a more peaceful world” on the OSCE’s contribution to the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, organized by the OSCE Chairmanship together with Finland and Sweden, and held via video teleconference on 21 October 2020: Chairperson*

Agenda item 5: **REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT**

- (a) *Request for the donation of COVID-19 antigen test kits to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine: Director of the Office of the Secretary General*
- (b) *2020 Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, held in Vienna and via video teleconference on 19 and 20 October 2020: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/155/20 OSCE+)*
- (c) *OSCE Security Days round table on “Revitalizing trust and co-operation in Europe: Lessons of the Paris Charter”, held via video teleconference on 16 October 2020: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/155/20 OSCE+)*
- (d) *Participation of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in a conference organized by the Parliamentary Group for the Fight against Human Trafficking of the Parliament of Romania and held via video teleconference on 21 October 2020: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/155/20 OSCE+)*

- (e) *Participation of the Officer-in-Charge/Secretary General on 15 October 2020 in the third annual meeting of the OSCE-Tajikistan Partnership Platform, held via video teleconference on 15 and 16 October 2020: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/155/20 OSCE+)*
- (f) *Relations between the OSCE Secretariat and external structures: Russian Federation, Director of the Office of the Secretary General*

Agenda item 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 29 October 2020, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



1286th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1286, Agenda item 1

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF MOLDOVA

Mr. Chairperson,

We join previous speakers in welcoming Mr. Claus Neukirch back to the Permanent Council and thank him for the detailed report. We value the activity of the OSCE Mission in Moldova and using this occasion reiterate our full support to the work of its dedicated team in line with the given mandate.

From the outset, in these difficult times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we would like to express our gratitude to the OSCE participating States, including partner organizations, for their support in preventing the spread of this virus and for providing technical assistance to the people on both banks of the Nistru River.

During the reference period, the evolving situation on the ground has brought to light more aspects pertaining to the existing security situation and mechanism in the region, which were presented by the delegation of the Republic of Moldova at the OSCE Permanent Council on 8 and 15 October. This refers to the arbitrary and illegal installation of 37 barriers and control posts, indicating an attempt of internal “borderization”, the systematic violation of human rights in the Transnistrian region, expressed through abusive and illegal actions against the freedom of movement, freedom of expression, inviolability of private life, right to property, right to life, right to health. The logic of installation of a new infrastructure around the illegal posts in the Security Zone, signals the line of strengthening the region’s further isolation.

Despite constrains imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the chief negotiator and representatives of the national authorities have been engaged on the ground to resolve the issues related to the Berlin-plus package. We reiterate that some solutions reached in 2018–2019, such as freedom of movement for people and officials have not proved sustainable, not being respected by Tiraspol. We are compelled to note that the Moldovan officials still do not have access to the Transnistrian region, contrary to the agreements reached between the chief negotiators in September 2019, a solution abandoned in the meantime by Tiraspol. On the other hand, the residents can enter or exit the Transnistrian region only on the basis of written pre-notification, subject to the arbitrary decision of Tiraspol, the thing that was overlooked in this report.

Mr. Chairperson,

Chişinău has assessed these risks since the beginning of the pandemic and shared its concerns with the OSCE Mission to Moldova on a permanent basis. The foundation of the peaceful settlement of the conflict begins with the most inherent and fundamental human rights. In this respect, the Republic of Moldova is convinced that human rights cannot remain an afterthought any more. It is our shared responsibility to make our Transnistrian interlocutors understand that abducting Moldovan citizens by their KGB structures is not tolerable and represents a major impediment to any negotiations on economic co-operation and infrastructure projects benefitting their institutions.

Nevertheless, in the conditions of the pandemic, the dynamics of the negotiations were maintained, so 25 meetings of the sectorial working groups and 3 meetings in the 1+1 format took place in 9 months of 2020.

Based on the report, we want to make the following remarks:

We commend the field visits of the OSCE Mission related to the investigation of the situation of the illegal posts and the information provided regarding the situation observed on the ground.

We note that the restrictions imposed by Tiraspol during the pandemic have deepened isolation of the region from the rest of the country, blocking the free movement of thousands of residents who have not had access to jobs (some of them have already lost their jobs), to families and relatives, to medical centres and pharmacies in the proximity of the administrative line to benefit from reimbursable medicine (note: more than 18,726 of the persons in Transnistria have State-guaranteed health insurance and are medically assigned on the right bank).

Because of Tiraspol's obstructive approaches, there has been a substantial regression on some issues from the so-called Berlin Plus package, and namely (1) restriction on the free movement of Moldovan citizens and civil servants who, according to the agreements, were exempt from prior written notifications when making private visits to the region; (2) the access of the farmers from the Dubăsari district to their farmlands was restricted obliging them to co-ordinate in advance transportation of their harvest through Transnistria with the alleged customs structures of Tiraspol; (3) despite what might appear as progress the commitments of the protocol decision from 25 November 2017, regarding the issue on the Latin-script schools have been violated. Or, until 1 September 2020, the movement was possible only as a result of joint requests of the Chişinău and OSCE Mission. We continue to receive requests for assistance from schools to carry various goods, although the agreed protocol provides freedom of movement of goods.

Tiraspol obstructed the medical staff who resides in the region to access their work place on the right bank aimed at forcing them to work only in the regional facilities. Under these circumstances, the Moldovan authorities supported by the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union arranged a temporary mechanism for accommodations near the working places, 40 doctors out of 95 are benefiting from this opportunity. In this connection, we want to draw attention to the fact that from 1 December 2020 the European

Union will no longer be able to finance this alternative solution, but Tiraspol has already expressed its intention to extend the farfetched quarantine regime further.

The lack of alternative access routes across the Nistru River, as well the arbitrary obstructions imposed by Tiraspol, have determined Chişinău to intensify the traffic of the ferry from Molovata as an alternative mean to the land transport. Soon an additional ferry will be operating on this point for two simultaneous routes.

The human rights situation in the region has deteriorated considerably at the fault of serious abuses committed by Tiraspol: kidnapping of people for alleged extremist actions, detentions and fines for alleged unauthorized crossing of the administrative line, expulsions of people from their locality for three years (Victor Timuş's case in Dubăsari), intimidation and persecution for critical opinion against Tiraspol's regime (Larisa Calic from Tiraspol took refuge in Chişinău because she received several summons from the so-called security structure from the region after publishing a study on atrocities in the Tiraspol's military forces). In this regard, we regret that the report mentions only the case of Mr. Horjan, as a number of other cases were reported by my government to the OSCE Mission to Moldova which in our views are important and counting too (expelled veterans, people who participated in the protest in Rîbniţa).

With reference to the mentioned case of Catan and others regarding functioning of the Latin-script schools in the region, we would expect that the report be more specific and precise. We recall that in the case of Catan and others versus Russian Federation, the Russian Federation was recognized responsible for the violation of the applicants' right to education, based on the effective control exercised by Russia over the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, which could not survive without Russia's continued military, economic and political support. In this regard, it is worth highlighting that recently the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has issued its fourth interim resolution on Catan group of cases deeply deploring the lack of enforcement of the final judgment of the European Court of Human Rights and strongly urging the Russian authorities to pay the just satisfaction and default interest owed to the applicants without further delay and to provide an action plan setting out their concrete proposals as regards the execution of the judgments in this group before March 2021. Since the violations, which occurred 16 years ago, the victims still have not benefited from any form of redress.

Mr. Chairperson,

There are some issues on the agenda which Tiraspol politicizes excessively, proposing illegal options in terms of the national and international laws and obligations, which we cannot consider in a responsible manner. These refer to: (a) the so-called neutral driving licenses. Only the national and international ones apply; (b) the banking transactions not monitored by the National Bank of Moldova, avoiding and obstructing the legal circulation of the national currency (Moldovan Leu) in the region, that could pose critical threats to the security of the financial and banking system of the country; (c) the telecommunications do not only involve the assignment of agreed frequency bands, but also require compliance with the national regulations and international standards in the field, such as compliance with licensing conditions, authorized data processing, elimination of harmful interference, interactions and good faith in conducting operational investigation activities, etc.

On the politico-military dimension, we would like to point out that the report does not reflect the number and the extent of the military exercises in the region, including at night. Or at the Permanent Council, on 30 April 2020, the Moldovan delegation highlighted the impressive number of military convoys moving from Cobasna to an unknown direction. At that Permanent Council, there was a promise that greater efforts would be made to investigate these facts. Chişinău made an assessment on this issue and brought it to the attention of the OSCE Mission to Moldova.

Also, the enlistment of young people in the military and paramilitary structures from the Transnistrian region requires special attention from the OSCE Mission, especially in light of the recent case of Mr. Rjavitin, who left these structures for the second time, accusing indignities and ill-treatment, as well as the mentioned above investigation by Ms. Larisa Calic from Tiraspol.

It is worth mentioning that according to the principles of co-operation between the OSCE Mission to Moldova and the Joint Control Commission, the Mission should not only gather information about these events, but also participate in the investigation of the situation and share its findings with all the delegations to the Joint Control Commission and the OSCE participating States. We insist that the OSCE Mission should fully fulfil its mandate.

Together with the OSCE Mission we note with regret the lack of progress regarding the issue of withdrawing of the Russian troops and ammunition from the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Our position on the complete and unconditional withdrawal of the foreign military forces, including withdrawal and/or destruction of ammunition from the Cobasna stockpiles remains unchanged.

Within this very context, sharing on a positive note the progress in implementation by the Mission of a project on removal of obsolete pesticides from Transnistria, we cannot but remark that when a needed political will is in place the solution to the issues posing security risks could be found, even during the pandemic. It is obvious that the security situation in the region, which were presented by the delegation of the Republic of Moldova also at the OSCE Permanent Council on 8 and 15 October, proved once more that existing peacekeeping mechanism in the region is inoperative, and should be rethought through its transformation in a multinational mission under an appropriate international mandate.

Bearing in mind the above-reported, as well as the mandate given to the OSCE Mission to Moldova and the role of the OSCE Chairmanship, we call upon the need to synchronize efforts and mobilize the existing capacity to use all available levers to stop violations and abuses committed by the alleged authorities from Tiraspol, by eliminating illegal checkpoints, unblocking free movement between the two banks, restoring human rights according to the requirements of the international law and releasing persons in illegal detention, guaranteeing full exercise of the right to property and education, implementing common measures to prevent and combat COVID-19 and so on.

Furthermore, we hope by the end of the year all the necessary premises will be created for holding a new round of negotiations in the “5+2” format, with an agenda and possible co-ordinated and agreed draft protocol, as well as the adoption of a new declaration on the negotiation process in the “5+2” format on the Transnistrian settlement within the framework of the 27th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

Finally, we would like to reconfirm that the Moldovan authorities remain committed to provide maximal support to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights limited election observation mission in fulfilling its mission and will continue to take all necessary steps that the upcoming presidential elections are conducted in full conformity with international norms, standards and commitments, as well as national legislation.

Mr. Chairperson, I ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1286
22 October 2020
Annex 2

Original: ENGLISH

1286th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1286, Agenda item 2

**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GEORGIA
(ALSO ON BEHALF OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF
BULGARIA, CANADA, CYPRUS, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY,
LATVIA, LIECHTENSTEIN, MALTA, MONGOLIA, NORWAY,
SAN MARINO, SERBIA, SLOVENIA, SWEDEN, THE UNITED
KINGDOM AND THE EUROPEAN UNION)**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Women Ambassadors of the OSCE – Sweden, Finland, Germany, France, Bulgaria, Lichtenstein, Slovenia, Cyprus, San Marino, Canada, Mongolia, Serbia, Malta, Latvia, Norway, the European Union and Georgia.

We welcome the initiative of including this landmark anniversary to the agenda of today's meeting of the Permanent Council and thank the Albanian Chairmanship for keeping women, peace and security central throughout your efforts as Chairmanship. By doing so, the OSCE highlights the fact that we cannot reach comprehensive security without inclusive security.

The OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, has an important role in the implementation process of the women, peace and security agenda. The United Nations has since 1992 been OSCE's primary partner organization. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE supports the United Nations in maintaining peace and security at the regional level. The organization's wide reach and experience make the OSCE a unique facilitator of knowledge that contributes to better policies and practices all over the region.

Twenty years of projects, initiatives and implementation efforts – a lot of hard work has been put into creating progress for this cause. But from these years we have learned that if we ever want to achieve the full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, we will have to work even harder. The lack of awareness, resources and political will remains a challenge to reaching our common objectives. We must not forget what this commitment means for the population of our region and the responsibility we have

towards them to ensure regional security: a security that is for all, and that everyone has the same opportunity to create.

It is of greatest importance that the OSCE continues to enable and stand up for women's full, meaningful and equal participation in all forms of conflict prevention, not just those efforts directly related to women or gender-related matters. This includes conflict resolution, mediation, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction, such as demilitarization, disarmament and reintegration.

The women, peace and security agenda must be perceived as an integral part of the OSCE comprehensive security approach. The realization of the resolution will bring benefit to the whole OSCE area and participating States. The Women Ambassadors and representatives remain convinced that a strengthened commitment to women, peace and security and women's participation will contribute to the OSCE's work to achieve regional security and will thereby strengthen the Organization as a whole. Neglecting to carry out gender analysis or to integrate a gender perspective would negatively impact the OSCE's contributions.

We know that implementation will not come easy, or freely. We call on you all to stay committed, amplify your ambitions and to make sure that our efforts continue. It is on us to make sure that policy turns into action and that the OSCE's projects are provided with the adequate resources. We should ensure that the next generation of women have role models, who allow them to identify as future actors in the security sector.

Distinguished ambassadors, dear colleagues, we must act faster it is a matter of regional security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We warmly welcome any delegations that wish to align with the statement.

I would request to have this statement added to the journal of the day.



1286th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1286, Agenda item 3(c)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Azerbaijan would like to update the Permanent Council on the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and its consequences as well as situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in the reporting period since the last meeting of the Permanent Council on 15 and 16 October.

Despite the humanitarian ceasefire agreed during the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Moscow on 9 October 2020, to allow the return of remains and exchange of prisoners of war, effective as of 10 October 2020, the armed forces of Armenia continued to deliberately attack the densely populated areas in Azerbaijan, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law. These attacks are carried out from both the territory of Armenia and the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

On 17 October 2020, the Aghdam, Aghjabadi, Barda, Goranboy and Tartar districts and the cities of Ganja and Mingachevir in Azerbaijan were subjected to intensive missile and artillery fire, causing civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian and public property.

In the night hours on 17 October, at around 1 a.m., Ganja, the second largest city in Azerbaijan, once again came under the massive strike with “Scud/Elbrus” ballistic missiles from the territory of Armenia. The missiles hitting two residential areas in the city killed 15 civilians, including 5 children and 4 women. More than 50 civilians, including 5 children and 20 women, were seriously wounded. The nearby civilian infrastructure and many residential areas in the city were either destroyed or seriously damaged, including the secondary school and the Samukh (Azerbaijan)–Gardabani (Georgia) electricity line. The same day, Aghdam, Aghjabadi, Barda, Goranboy, Minghachevir and Tartar cities of Azerbaijan were under constant shelling of armed forces of Armenia with rockets and heavy artillery.

We thank the Secretary General of the United Nations, the European Union and other international organizations and individual States for deploring this heinous terrorist attack against innocent civilians.

This third bombardment of Ganja was preceded by attacks on the city with “Smerch” multiple-launch rocket systems on 4 October and “Scud/Elbrus” ballistic missiles on

11 October 2020. Armenia's strikes against Ganja and other cities, towns and villages of Azerbaijan are aimed at murdering of civilians and causing indiscriminate or disproportionate harm to civilian objects. Statements by officials of Armenia and agents of the unlawful puppet regime it has set up in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan are illustrative in that regard.

Thus, in his interview to the "Vesti" news programme at the "Russia" TV channel on 6 October 2020, Vagharshak Harutyunyan, Senior Advisor of the Prime Minister of Armenia, stated the following: "Now we have developed a tactic of striking artillery. And in the future we will strike at peaceful settlements in order to cause panic."

Two days earlier, Arayik Harutunyan, fake "president" of the unlawful puppet regime set up by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, said: "Many of you still remember both this photo & my statement. Reaffirming, we were not joking. Today I commanded to neutralize #Ganja military objects."

On 5 October 2020, Vagram Pogosian, so-called spokesperson for the puppet regime stated: "A few more days and I'm afraid that even archaeologists will not be able to find the place of Ganja. Get sober, before it is too late."

The delegation of Azerbaijan will distribute the updated factsheet to all participating States on the warmongering statements by the Armenian officials threatening to target Azerbaijan's civilian infrastructure, which demonstrate that these were not mere threats. Targeting civilian objects is part of Armenia's military doctrine.

Against the background of the irrefutable evidence attesting to bombardment of the city of Ganja, statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, describing this barbaric act as "disinformation" and referring to it as "so-called 'Armenian strikes on Ganja'" is illustrative of Armenia's persistent denial of its responsibility for the atrocious crimes committed against Azerbaijani civilians during the conflict.

As it was reiterated by the President of Azerbaijan in address to the nation following the recent missile strike against Ganja city, "Armenian leadership is committing a war crime. Shooting at civilians, including firing missiles, is a war crime, and they must and will bear responsibility for this crime." He reaffirmed that unlike Armenia, Azerbaijan has never fought and will never wage a war against the civilian population. But, Azerbaijan is and will continue retaliating on the battlefield.

Azerbaijan showing once again its goodwill based on the principles of humanism agreed to a humanitarian ceasefire from as of 18 October, 00.00 midnight local time. However, the armed forces of Armenia immediately after the declared ceasefire, starting from 00.02 a.m. local time fired at the Jabrayil city, as well as the villages of Jabrayil region liberated from the occupation, located along the Araz River using mortars and artillery. From 00.05 a.m. until 3.25 a.m., the armed forces of Armenia violating the ceasefire shelled the positions of Azerbaijan using the large-calibre weapons at the border of two States in the direction of Gadabay and Tovuz regions of Azerbaijan.

The armed forces of Armenia attempted to attack in the directions of Aghdara, Fuzuli, Hadrut and Jabrayil at 7 a.m. on 18 October.

On 18 October, the Armenian armed forces stationed in Chambarak and Berd districts of Armenia using large-calibre weapons fired at the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan in Gadabay, Goygol and Tovuz districts of Azerbaijan. In violation of the ceasefire Armenia's armed forces fired at the vicinity of the Jabrayil city, as well as the villages of this district liberated from the occupation and located along the Araz River. Aghdam, Aghdara, Fuzuli districts and city of Hadrut came under mortars and artillery fire.

Around 1 p.m. of 18 October, armed forces of Armenia launched missile to Khyzy city of Azerbaijan, which is located 300 kilometres away from the combat zone, aiming to hit Baku–Novorossiysk oil pipeline. The ballistic missile was destroyed before reaching target by the air defence forces of Azerbaijan and some of the explosive particles inside the rocket were scattered over a distance of 250 metres from the Baku–Novorossiysk oil pipeline passing through Sitalchay village in Khyzycity. Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action's (ANAMA) special mobile operation team found the remnants of the S-300 missile.

On 18 and 19 October 2020, residential areas of Aghdam, Aghjabadi (Yukhari Qiyamaddinli, Qarakhanli and Poladli villages), Goranboy and Tartar (Alasgarli village) districts of Azerbaijan were under constant mortar, rocket and artillery shelling by the armed forces of Armenia. On 19 October 2020, as a result of deliberate attack of the Armenian armed forces in Banovshalar settlement of the Aghdam district of Azerbaijan, a reporter of the Azerbaijan Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (AZTV) seconded to the front line zone was seriously injured. After shelling of Tartar city of Azerbaijan by the Armenian armed forces the secondary school No. 1 and cotton processing plant were seriously damaged.

Starting from the morning of 20 October 2020, the Armenian armed forces shelled the Tartar district of Azerbaijan from various directions with rockets and heavy artillery.

On 22 October 2020, ballistic missiles were launched from Armenia's Gafan and Jermuk regions in the direction of Gabala, Siyazan and Kurdamir regions of Azerbaijan, located more than 150 kilometres away from the border. All six missiles were intercepted by Azerbaijan's air defence system.

These attacks and attempts to occupy again the territories of Azerbaijan continue to date. In order to repulse the aggression and ensure the safety of the civilian population, the armed forces of Azerbaijan continue the counter-offensive operation, neutralizing Armenian fire and stronghold battle positions and liberating the sovereign territories of Azerbaijan from enemy occupation, in the exercise of right of self-defence and in full compliance with international humanitarian law, exclusively on Azerbaijan's sovereign soil. As of today, armed forces of Azerbaijan liberated around 100 towns and villages in Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Khojavand and Tartar districts of Azerbaijan, thus implementing the United Nations Security Council resolutions 874 and 884 demanding to withdraw the Armenian occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Since the outbreak of hostilities on 27 September 2020, direct and indiscriminate attacks of the armed forces of Armenia against the cities, towns and villages in Azerbaijan, as of 21 October 2020, 63 civilians, including children, women and elderly, were killed,

292 civilians were wounded, 1,981 private houses, 90 residential buildings and 386 other civilian facilities were either destroyed or damaged.

Officially, reported casualties from the Armenian side prove that armed forces of Azerbaijan distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and make every possible effort to prevent harm to the civilian population, acting in accordance with international humanitarian law. Azerbaijan faithfully implements its commitments under the 10 October agreement and communicated to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) its readiness to transfer unilaterally to Armenia remains of the Armenian servicemen via a pre-agreed corridor with the mediation of the ICRC. Azerbaijan provides adequate medical care and conditions for the Armenian prisoners of war Areg Sargsyan, Narek Amirjanyan and Albert Mikaelyan, who were captured during the combat operations in the occupied territories. These Armenian servicemen were provided opportunity to contact their families in Armenia by phone and informed them about the treatment they are undergoing.

On the contrary, continuation of bombardment of the towns and villages of Azerbaijan far away from the front line that moved deep into the occupied territories indicates that Armenia targets civilian objects deliberately to cause maximum indiscriminate or disproportionate harm to civilians and damage the civilian objects. Moreover, the notes verbales of the delegation of Armenia to the OSCE demonstrate that the Armenian side inflates the number of displaced population from the occupied territories with a view to using exaggerated figures for political ends. According to the figures presented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees during the informal consultation in the United Nations Security Council last week, the number of displaced persons varies from 10,000 to 20,000, much lower than the Armenian statistics.

We have reported previously to the Permanent Council that the Armenian side introduced restrictions on free movement in the occupied territories and prohibited male population of conscript age to leave this territory. Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence of Armenia admitted through a promotional video released this week that it recruits so-called “volunteers” abroad and sends them to the conflict zone to fight on the Armenian side. A women squad composed of 100 Armenian women was formed to join the combat operations. Against this background, it is obvious that hysteria unleashed by Armenia about alleged participation of so-called mercenaries on the side of the armed forces of Azerbaijan is nothing but a smokescreen to cover up recruitment by Armenia of foreign fighters, which is corroborated by the official Armenian sources. Our delegation has distributed to all participating States the factsheet on fake news and disinformation of Armenia under the reference number SEC.DEL/529/20.

The gross violation of the humanitarian ceasefire by Armenia, already for the second time after its formal declaration as well as recruitment of mercenaries and foreign terrorist fighters under the disguise of so-called “volunteers” demonstrates the continuation of the aggressive policy of Armenia against Azerbaijan and its reluctance to the negotiated settlement of the conflict. It is also an open disrespect by Armenia to the efforts of the mediators, who have been engaged in finding an accord of the sides to the humanitarian ceasefire.

Azerbaijan calls on the participating States and the international community as a whole to strongly condemn the barbaric and atrocity methods of warfare employed by Armenia, which amount to war crimes and demand justice and accountability.

Yesterday Armenia's Prime Minister stated during a live broadcast that "We have to clearly realize that, at least at this stage and for a long time to come, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict does not have a diplomatic solution, and we must give up all those hopes or proposals aimed at finding a diplomatic solution, especially in the current situation". This demonstrates that Armenia's leadership is not willing to seize the opportunity to engage constructively in the negotiations to resolve the conflict. On the contrary, Armenia's Prime Minister presented six steps, which in his view are required to achieve victory. To demonstrate how detached the Armenian leadership is from the reality, it is worthwhile to quote these steps as quoted by the News.am Armenian media outlet: "Step 1. Form a voluntary detachment (minimum of 30 volunteers). Step 2. Select a commander. Step 3. Address the military registration office of the place of residence of the commander. Step 4. Harmonize and undergo training at a military unit. Step 5. Go to the border to defend the homeland. Step 6. Achieve victory." This requires no additional comments.

This irresponsible position of Armenia is recent episode in the chain of warmongering statements of the Armenian leadership, which led to the current situation. This sense of impunity and permissiveness must be urgently addressed by the international community, in particular the OSCE and its co-chairing countries, since it leaves no room for any meaningful negotiation with the current Armenian Government. Armenia must be brought back to the logic and understandings underlying the OSCE Minsk Group-led negotiation process before it is too late.

Armenia must demonstrate in words and deeds that it is genuinely interested in peace in the region; it must cease its policy of annexation and ethnic cleansing; it must comply with its international obligations and withdraw its forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, which will pave the way for the achievement of lasting peace, security and stability in the region.

The responsibility for the consequences of counter-offensive measures, which Azerbaijan is obliged to take in connection with the continued illegal presence of the Armenian armed forces in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in order to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders lies entirely with the Republic of Armenia.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



1286th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1286, Agenda item 3(c)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

First of all, I would like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Azerbaijan for this update.

Armenia continues to attack civilians and civilian settlements.

This week a delegation of Turkish parliamentarians headed by the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Mr. Mustafa Şentop, was in Azerbaijan. On Tuesday the delegation inspected the ruins of the civilian apartment building in Ganja that was targeted by Armenia on 17 October. Fifteen civilians were killed. In a hospital in Ganja the delegation members visited patients injured in the Armenian attacks, expressing their condolences to the people who lost their homes, relatives and neighbours. Speaker Şentop again made clear in Ganja that attacking civilians constitutes a war crime.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to remind the context:

Despite four United Nations Security Council resolutions, which call for immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces, Armenia continues to occupy almost 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory.

Armenia makes a mockery of international law and the rules-based international system.

Armenia does not want a peaceful negotiated settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenia wants to preserve the status quo and consolidate its occupation.

Armenia has done everything to sabotage the negotiations under the auspices of the Minsk Group and its three Co-Chairs.

Armenia was using the stalemate to change the demographic composition of the occupied Azerbaijani territories by resettling ethnic Armenians from Syria and Lebanon in Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent districts.

On 27 September, Armenian armed forces started an intense shelling of Azerbaijan's defence positions and civilian settlements in blatant violation of the ceasefire, as well as the international law, along the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan launched a counter-operation to protect its population and restore its territorial integrity by invoking its inherent right of self-defence enshrined in the Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Azerbaijan is conducting its operations within its internationally recognized borders, on its own territory.

In a state of frenzied desperation, Armenia is intensifying its attacks on the civilian population and infrastructure in Azerbaijan away from the conflict zone. Armenian armed forces are targeting major cities in Azerbaijan with long-range artillery and rocket fire.

Armenian attacks constitute a clear violation of international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The attacks have already caused over 60 deaths among the civilian population.

By targeting the cities outside the occupied lands of Azerbaijan, Armenia aims to provoke Azerbaijan to retaliate on Armenia. Armenia hopes to widen the conflict.

We strongly condemn the rocket attack launched by Armenia from the occupied Qubadli district targeting the Ordubadh district in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan on 16 October.

The attacks on the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, with which we share a common border, are a new and dangerous manifestation of Armenia's attempts to broaden the conflict beyond the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Armenia must abandon these reckless provocations.

We strongly condemn Armenia's attack on Ganja on 17 October. Residential areas were again targeted, 15 civilians killed. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu has stated: "Armenia still commits war crimes and massacres civilians, kills innocent people including children. Silence against this atrocity equals sharing responsibility of these murders. Those who have no humanity will be held accountable for their crimes."

Azerbaijan's leadership has declared that Azerbaijan will not respond to such Armenian provocations and it will keep counter-operations confined to the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chairperson,

Not seeing any tangible results after decades of negotiations, we can understand Azerbaijan's frustration with the ultimately futile talks. Remaining equidistant to both sides regardless of who is the occupier, is not a healthy understanding of impartiality; it rewards the aggressor.

The international community must pressure Armenia to resume sincere, substantive and result-oriented negotiations in good faith.

We need the negotiation process to renew its original thrust and focus on a settlement based on the United Nations Security Council resolutions and OSCE principles.

Turkey wants to see a negotiated settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on Azerbaijan's territorial integrity in accordance with international law, United Nations Security Council resolutions and OSCE decisions to ensure enduring peace and stability in the region.

Our support for Azerbaijan is not only based on our special bonds. It also stems from the fact that Azerbaijan stands on the right side of international law. Azerbaijan has the moral and legal high ground in this conflict.

Azerbaijan is determined to remain on the right side of the international law and norms as it has always done.

Turkey gives and will continue to give strong political and moral support to Azerbaijan.

However, Turkey is not a party to this conflict and is not present on the battleground.

Turkey does not want conflict and war just across its borders. But the peace we need is one that is lasting and fair. Otherwise we will be having what we had for 30 years: constant instability and evading of a lasting settlement.

Mr. Chairperson,

I am not going to comment at length on the disinformation, distortions and deceptions that we are most probably going to hear again. I said everything necessary in the last weeks.

Today, I want to make a different point.

Listening and engaging in dialogue are the fundamentals of the Helsinki process. This constitutes the *raison d'être* of the CSCE and OSCE.

You are all well aware how these behavioural codes were upheld among different actors even under very tense circumstances. The overwhelming majority of the participating States are still engaging in a respectful dialogue with each other – no matter how firm the position is being expressed. We are all diplomats.

On the other hand, we regret to see that one participating State is in fact denying the basic tenets of our forum. As I said last week: Like its invasion on the ground, its discourse here in the OSCE breaches internationally recognized boundaries.

This approach is highly regrettable as it – in reality – does not harm the two participating States intended to harm but damages the OSCE as a whole.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1286
22 October 2020
Annex 5

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

1286th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1286, Agenda item 3(d)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. Chairperson,

We note with deep concern the continuation of active hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. As a result of the use of a wide range of artillery pieces, drones and other means of destruction, the number of casualties is growing and civilian infrastructure objects are being destroyed. We urge the parties to cease fire immediately.

The hostilities are occurring despite the efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries on behalf of the international community in support of urgent de-escalation of the situation in the conflict zone, including the agreement reached by the parties in Moscow on 10 October as a result of the trilateral meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The humanitarian ceasefire established by the authorities in Baku and Yerevan following the mediation initiative by France on 17 October has been broken.

We reaffirm the continued validity of the statement by the Presidents of the Russian Federation, the French Republic and the United States of America of 1 October. We expect the parties to take a responsible approach to the implementation of the agreements reached. They must adhere strictly to the provisions of the Moscow statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan of 10 October on a humanitarian ceasefire, namely to cease fire immediately and completely, verify compliance with the “silence regime”, exchange prisoners and the remains of the dead and resume, without further delay, the political process on a settlement of the conflict through the mediation of the three Minsk Group Co-Chairs on the basis of the existing practices.

In co-ordination with the other OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, Russia is taking active steps to help the parties stop the bloodshed. On 17 October, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held telephone talks with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan. On 20 and 21 October, separate meetings took place with Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan.

We will continue working to remove obstacles to the stabilization of the situation in the region and to restart negotiations on the substantive aspects of a settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention.



1286th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1286, Agenda item 3(d)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation for the statement on behalf of the three countries co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group.

Azerbaijan has consistently brought to the attention of the Permanent Council that unlawful military presence of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is the main cause of continuing conflict and the re-occurring escalation on the ground. It was exactly the Armenian armed attacks against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories, which elicited resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) of the United Nations Security Council, as well as seven statements by its President.

In the aforementioned unanimously adopted resolutions, the Security Council condemned the use of force against Azerbaijan, the occupation of its territories, the attacks on civilians and the bombardment of inhabited areas in Azerbaijan, reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory. In response to territorial claims and forcible actions, the Security Council reconfirmed in those resolutions that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an integral part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories.

These key United Nations Security Council demands have remained unimplemented until now and, as an immediate corollary, the unresolved conflict and its military and humanitarian consequences continue to endanger peace, security and development.

These resolutions provide authoritative clarification as to the illegality of Armenian armed attacks against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories, the violated obligations and the duties to put an end to the illegal situation thus created. They qualified the Armenia's actions as the unlawful use of force and invalidated its claims over the territories of Azerbaijan once and for all.

Serious breaches of obligations under peremptory norms of general international law give rise to additional consequences. They include, *inter alia*, the duties of States to co-operate in order to bring to an end such breaches by lawful means and not to recognize as

lawful a situation created by a serious breach, nor render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation. It is pertinent to recall in that regard that the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 884 (1993) welcomed the declaration of the OSCE Minsk Group of 4 November 1993, adopted in connection with the expansion of territorial seizures by the Armenian armed forces notwithstanding the Security Council resolutions, which stated in particular that “no acquisition of territory by force can be recognized, and the occupation of territory cannot be used to obtain international recognition or to impose a change of legal status” (UN Doc. S/26718, enclosure I).

It is therefore critical that the international community insist on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) and on strict compliance by Armenia with its international obligations.

The OSCE Budapest Summit document of 1994 confirmed the commitment of participating States to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and established the institution of co-chairmanship of the Minsk Conference to ensure a common and agreed basis for negotiations and to realize full co-ordination in all mediation and negotiation activities.

In this regard, the title of the current issue under which the delegation of the Russian Federation read its statement raises questions. These countries can have position on the conflict resolution only in their national capacity, but not as mediators. As Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group in accordance with their mandate, they are guided in their activities by the principles and norms of the OSCE, the OSCE decisions, including the decisions by the Council of Ministers on 24 March 1992 and particularly the Budapest Summit decision and resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, which form the political and legal framework for the conflict resolution.

The United Nations Security Council resolutions and the OSCE decisions, in particular the Budapest Summit decision defined the step-by-step approach to the conflict resolution, addressing in the first stage elimination of the major consequences of the conflict, starting with immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, followed by the opening up communication and transportation and return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes in security and in dignity. This is the primary objective of peace process. These tasks of the peace process remain unfulfilled and valid until the conflict is resolved. They are consensus-based decisions of the OSCE and are not subject to re-negotiation. We have repeatedly warned our interlocutors that deviation from this established framework of negotiations is a serious blow to the entire peace process.

As was stipulated in the United Nations General Assembly resolution on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, adopted by consensus, responsible and credible mediation requires, *inter alia*, national ownership, the consent of the parties to the conflict, respect for the national sovereignty, the impartiality of the mediators, their compliance with agreed mandates, compliance with obligations of States under international law. Thus being said, Co-Chairs have no mandate to impose on the sides to the conflict their views on the resolution of conflict or to force through any proposal to this end.

The Republic of Azerbaijan remains committed to resolution of the conflict by political means on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), as well as the decisions of the OSCE, which provide legal and political framework for the conflict settlement. The resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the norms and principles of international law, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. Azerbaijan considers no political solution to the conflict beyond this framework and participates in the settlement process based on this understanding.

I wish to comment on the intervention of the delegations on this agenda item. Azerbaijan thanks the delegation of the Russian Federation for its statement. Azerbaijan is concerned with the number of growing casualties among civilians. However, these civilian losses occur on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Thus, we would like to encourage the Russian delegation to specify that this occurs on the territory of Azerbaijan. Generalization and using this issue against both parties could only take place had Azerbaijan responded to attacks on its civilian population by bombarding civilians and towns of Armenia as well. We are not doing it. Azerbaijan complies with its commitments and does not consider people of Armenia as targets. We do not execute punishment measures against Armenian civilians. Azerbaijan adheres to its commitments within international humanitarian law. Also, we are in favour of establishing humanitarian ceasefire, which has been agreed two times, as well as implementing these agreements. Alongside with the ceasefire it is important to launch the negotiation process.

Humanitarian ceasefire was one of the elements in the declaration that was adopted in Moscow, but along with the humanitarian ceasefire there was an explicit recognition of the need to start substantive negotiations based on the basic principles, which were elaborated by Co-Chairs and both sides. The President and Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan have even called for immediate resumption of the negotiations. However, this was rejected by the Armenian side. We agreed to the soonest resumption of negotiations, which was rejected by the Prime Minister of Armenia yesterday. The Armenian side openly attacks the OSCE Minsk Group and its members. The Armenian delegation challenges the composition of the High-Level Planning Group and questions on ethnic grounds the competence and effectiveness of OSCE officials. The Armenian side openly challenges the format of the mediation by trying to introduce a third party into the process. The Armenian side refuses to consider the basic principles as a basis for negotiations. Finally, yesterday the Armenian side rejected the political negotiations.

So how are we supposed to start the negotiations if the Armenian side clearly prefers military confrontation instead of a political solution? Prime Minister of Armenia publicly announces militarization and calls volunteers to engage into military action on the territory of Azerbaijan. Thus, he again refuses to engage in peaceful search of the solution. Azerbaijani delegation would like to inquiry the delegations of Switzerland, Canada, the European Union and Moldova that aligned with the European Union's statement – how do you envision the negotiations process if one party to this process refuses to engage in it. One million of Azerbaijanis still experience humanitarian catastrophe for almost last 30 years. Azerbaijan remained committed to these negotiations through these years and we have developed common ground for these negotiations. And now, when Armenia refused to resume negotiations, the above-mentioned delegations try to equalize the approaches of the aggressor State who refused to negotiate and the aggrieved one who is ready to start negotiations

immediately. Let us imagine that ceasefire is established and we wait until Armenia comes back to negotiations. Even if the negotiations are resumed, Armenia will again demand so-called “independence” of whatever they name it. If Armenia refuses to negotiate on the basis of international law, the United Nations Security Council resolutions, the OSCE principles and commitments, how Azerbaijan can negotiate in this way. What are the grounds and meaning of this negotiation process, if Armenia thinks that it can continue to enjoy this impunity, because those delegations, which have stated their positions, prefer not to call upon Armenia, but to share the blame between Azerbaijan and Armenia? Azerbaijan is realizing its legitimate right to exterminate the Armenian military targets on its territory. If concerned delegations wish to convince Azerbaijan to stop it, then an alternative offer should be presented. The ceasefire has been signed two times under the pressure of the mediators, but it was not sustainable. The ceasefire agreements, to which Armenia agreed, were violated by it at the moment they entered into force by shelling Azerbaijani civilians. Azerbaijan has consulted with all those who spoke on this issue.

If the concerned sides are interested in negotiations, they have to convince Armenia to adhere to the basis of negotiations, to the OSCE principles to which we have commonly agreed. The United Nations Security Council adopted relevant resolutions on the conflict; in the meantime, no one even tries to mention them and to recall them. Such selective standards and biased approach are not acceptable. Azerbaijan started to implement these resolutions by itself. Azerbaijan has impeccable position from the legal and humanitarian points of view. Azerbaijan is happy to take any reasons of concerns on board, but we expect reciprocity. My country is suffering from the occupation for last 30 years. If the delegations are sincerely interested in peace, let us talk about peace based on exclusion of the military aggression and elimination of its consequences. Military counteroffensive is not our preferred way of resolution, but we have no other option so far, because lack of condemnation provides the luxury for Armenia to enjoy this situation and it cannot be allowed. If you do not want to bring Armenia to responsibility and accountability, then Azerbaijan will.

Azerbaijan wishes to thank the delegation of Turkey for standing in one line with Azerbaijan and expressing its political and moral support. That is support not only to Azerbaijan, but also to international law and OSCE commitments. We also thank the delegation of the Russian Federation and its Government, which is taking a principled position as the member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which explained to the Armenian government that the conflict is on the territory of Azerbaijan and CSTO has nothing to do on the territory of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan cannot accept verification mechanism to which we have not agreed and signed. Azerbaijan has suggested the OSCE Minsk Group to arrange its high-level meeting to discuss seriously the negotiation process. There was no response to that and no one has reciprocated to that offer. Turkey is the only country that has supported this proposal. If there are countries willing to help or caring about the impacts of this conflict, then they should contribute to the political resolution. If you cannot, we ask not to put blame on Azerbaijan for the failure to achieve peace. My country is clear in its conscience and fulfilment of its OSCE commitments.

Our appeal would be to those countries who took the floor under this current issue to be more sincere and more targeted in their statements. Your statements shall be addressed to Armenia.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



1286th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1286, Agenda item 3(d)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the distinguished delegation of the Russian Federation for the statement on behalf of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, which once again confirms the Co-Chair countries' position on an exclusively peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We also thank the distinguished delegations of the European Union, Switzerland, Canada and the United Kingdom for calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and for demanding adherence to the humanitarian truce agreed on 10 and 17 October.

We appreciate the continued efforts by the Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, in particular the personal engagement of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, and the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, who have both contributed significantly towards reaching the recent ceasefire agreements.

Another meeting was held in Moscow yesterday between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Mr. Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, in a follow-up to the telephone conversations held by President of Russia Mr. Vladimir Putin with the Prime Minister of Armenia, Mr. Nikol Pashinyan, and the leader of Azerbaijan. At this meeting, issues related to the situation on the ground in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and to the implementation of the ceasefire agreements were discussed, with a special focus on the introduction of verification mechanisms. We highly appreciate Mr. Lavrov's tireless efforts in this regard.

Unfortunately, the agreements reached on 10 and 17 October remain on paper due to Azerbaijan's treacherous stance encouraged by Turkey, and its actions aimed at further aggravating the situation. We reiterate our firm conviction that it is Turkey, with its extremely destructive policy, as we have already mentioned – that is obstructing the establishment of a humanitarian truce in line with the agreements reached with the assistance of the leaders of the Russian Federation and France.

Armenia reiterates its commitment to the agreements on the cessation of hostilities reached on 10 October and 17 and to the accompanying statements. A sustainable ceasefire, supported by verification mechanisms, is the only viable option for ending the violence.

Taking into account Turkey's direct involvement in the Azerbaijani aggression as well as its export of foreign terrorist fighters and jihadist groups from Syria and Libya to the South Caucasus (part of the Turkish Government's strategy of projecting Turkish power into neighbouring regions by creating new conflict hotspots), Armenia can no longer consider this country as a legitimate and equal member of the Minsk Group. Indeed, Turkey's membership in the Minsk Group undermines the very credibility of this structure.

Turkey cannot and should not play any role whatsoever in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We call on all OSCE participating States to continue to pressure Turkey to withdraw its military personnel and armaments from the South Caucasus, together with its affiliated terrorist groups.

I should like to conclude by thanking also the United States Government for facilitating further talks in Washington, D.C., on 23 October, with a view to bringing about a cessation of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.

Thank you.



1286th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1286, Agenda item 3(e)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Mr. Chairperson,

As of today, fierce fighting continues in violation of yet another agreement on a humanitarian truce announced on 17 October, causing tremendous suffering to the people of the Republic of Artsakh. The war waged by Azerbaijan with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters poses an imminent threat to the peace and security of the wider region. The Azerbaijani armed forces, in violation of both the humanitarian truces announced on 10 and 17 October, have carried out massive airborne and artillery strikes along the northern and southern parts of the line of contact. In the early morning of 21 October, the Azerbaijani armed forces resumed their shelling of civilian settlements, in particular the town of Martakert and the surrounding villages, with the use of prohibited ammunition. Later that morning, at around 8.30 a.m. (local time), Artsakh's air defence forces shot down one Azerbaijani military aircraft flying over the southern part of the line of contact. During the last 24 hours, the Artsakh air defence forces have also shot down two Turkish "Bayraktar TB2" unmanned combat aerial vehicles.

Mr. Chairperson,

It has become a tradition for the military-political leadership of Azerbaijan to flout their own agreements. They have been doing so immediately after leaving the negotiating table and, apparently, under the pressure of a so-called "third party" – a term that has become a synonym for Turkey in international, including OSCE, vocabulary in relation to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. By the way, it is not clear why the international community is so reluctant to name this "third party", given that Turkey itself is not even trying to hide its direct involvement.

In both instances of Azerbaijan violating the truce, the scenario was exactly the same. The agreement of 10 October on a humanitarian truce, reached with the active involvement of Moscow, was announced in a joint statement. Subsequently, the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, having spoken to his Turkish counterpart by telephone, declared that the conditions for a humanitarian truce were absent. This statement was echoed by the announcements made by various Turkish officials, which proves beyond any doubt that Turkey is the main obstacle to the establishment of a humanitarian truce.

The same scenario was repeated after a new agreement on a humanitarian truce was reached on 17 October with the active involvement of France. At 11.23 p.m. on 17 October, just 37 minutes before the truce was supposed to enter into effect, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry issued a press release about another telephone conversation between the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Subsequently, the Azerbaijani military in defiance of the recently agreed truce continued to carry out large-scale attacks along the whole line of contact.

Even the spokesperson of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry admitted shortly after the announcement of the humanitarian truce on 17 October that her Government did not intend to support the truce for long, pointing out: “The purpose of this humanitarian truce is to exchange prisoners and bodies, but it is not the end of the war.” This statement was made live on CNN Türk after the announcement of the ceasefire and prior to its entry into effect.

These developments clearly demonstrate that the decision-making in Azerbaijan is heavily influenced if not directly dictated by Turkey.

Mr. Chairperson,

Azerbaijan also refuses to comply with one of the unwritten rules of war and with international humanitarian law – specifically with regard to the repatriation of bodies of fallen soldiers and the exchange of prisoners of war, including through the good offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In fact, Azerbaijan has declined to cooperate with the ICRC, and we believe that there are several reasons behind this inhumane stance. One reason is the large number of bodies and remains of Azerbaijani troops left on the battlefield. According to our estimates, the death toll among the Azerbaijani military is currently close to seven thousand. As of 21 October, Armenian experts have identified by names – and in most cases also military ranks – the 937 Azerbaijani soldiers killed in action. Since Azerbaijan, probably fearing public outrage, does not release any data on its military casualties, the estimates of our experts may well be the only credible source of information in this regard.

The most sensible course would of course have been to agree to and accept the services of the ICRC. But Azerbaijan rejects that option – an attitude that is symptomatic of an authoritarian and inhumane regime at war. Instead, the Azerbaijani authorities have come up with yet another “creative” idea, namely to return some of the bodies of fallen Armenian soldiers unilaterally and without any involvement of the ICRC through a special corridor in the north-eastern part of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border – far away from the areas of fighting. And, again symptomatically, nothing is said about their country’s own fallen soldiers. Moreover, this proposal is clear proof that it is Azerbaijan which has been breaching the ceasefire agreements, despite its claims to the contrary.

Another reason for Azerbaijan’s refusal of the ICRC’s good offices is closely linked to the involvement of foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists in the hostilities. Azerbaijan understands that if the ICRC or any other international body becomes engaged on the ground, the involvement of terrorists on its side may be further exposed and registered.

Moreover – and this could be yet another reason why Azerbaijan will not allow an international presence in the areas of fighting – out of the 250 casualties suffered by

Azerbaijan during the recent hostilities in the southern direction, 160 were Talysh, 70 were Lezgin, and 17 were Udin, that is, most belonged to the country's national minority groups in Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chairperson,

The situation with regard to freedom of the media in Azerbaijan was already abysmal before the start of its recent offensive. Now even more severe restrictions have been imposed on already curtailed freedom of the media and of expression in that country, and we are witnessing an unchecked and massive outpouring of disinformation and fake news produced by the Azerbaijani propaganda machine. We would therefore caution our colleagues not to take for granted the narratives coming from the so-called media in Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, we have seen how even reputable institutions have fallen victim to this information warfare and made one-sided and unsubstantiated statements, which very much undermines the credibility and even-handedness of those who are making it.

We once again call upon the international community to refrain from making any statements based on obviously staged scenes that are calculated to manipulate public opinion, or on unverified allegations and claims.

Mr. Chairperson,

On many occasions – also at this very venue – we have heard that Turkey is not a party to this conflict and is not engaged in the recruitment and transfer of foreign terrorist fighters. However, this line of argument becomes even more preposterous if one takes into account the statements coming from the Turkish leadership itself. On 20 October, after a meeting of the Presidential Cabinet, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that as Turkey grew greater and stronger, its areas of interest and the issues it was directly or indirectly involved in were naturally expanding, that that it would continue to stand by “our brothers and sisters” in all regions “from the Balkans to the Caucasus, from Asia to Africa”. He also warned that his country would “give many more nightmares” to those who did not relinquish their dreams to remove Turkey from “this geography”, which it defended as its “homeland”.

This statement proves beyond any doubt that Azerbaijan is not the main player in the current war. It is more than obvious that the war was initiated by the Turkish leadership with the intention of realizing its long-cherished dream of reviving the Ottoman Empire. Azerbaijan in this particular context is simply doing what it is being told to by its puppeteers in Ankara, who are pulling all the strings.

Mr. Chairperson,

Azerbaijan relies heavily on supplies of armaments, primarily Turkish-made (and Turkish-operated) military equipment and weapons, which it is using indiscriminately to target and kill civilians and damage civilian settlements and infrastructure. The production of this military equipment relies in turn heavily on technologies and components supplied to Turkey by various States, including OSCE participating States.

We appreciate the steps taken by some States to suspend the export of important technologies and components to Turkey, and we call on other States to follow suit and thereby demonstrate their sense of social and political responsibility.

Mr. Chairperson,

With this latest aggression or, rather, all-out war against Artsakh and its people, Azerbaijan has proved beyond any doubt that Artsakh under no circumstances and in no way can be a part of Azerbaijan. By its actions Azerbaijan has lost all moral, political or legal right even to claim any sort of authority over Artsakh and its people. Therefore, only international recognition of the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination and the creation of an independent State can provide the necessary political and legal framework for ensuring the safety and security of the people of Artsakh. We call on all OSCE participating States to consider this issue, taking into account all the dire consequences of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan with the support and involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters.

As I have already stated on previous occasions, we are raising this current issue for the attention of 54 participating States – not more.

For we see no added value in engaging in lengthy discussions with either Turkey or Azerbaijan – countries that openly condone violence and terrorism. It would be a waste of time. There is no point in talking to countries that seek to resolve problems solely by force and use foreign terrorist fighters to fight their battles.

Mr. Chairperson,

With your permission, I shall say a few words about the statement delivered by the Turkish delegation on so-called “Armenian terrorism”.

I already touched upon this issue on previous occasions when the Turkish Ambassador tried to attribute to the Republic of Armenia the responsibility for events that happened well before Armenia regained its independence in 1991. I am far from assumption that Turkish delegation is not aware of that fact, but it is desperately trying to pin on the Republic of Armenia the actions of Armenians - survivors of the genocide that was perpetrated by Ottoman Turkey and is now being glorified by the modern Turkish leadership. These attempts are futile and are undertaken solely to justify somehow the State-sponsored terrorism of Turkey, a country that aligns itself with terrorists and uses them as a tool for its misguided policy of trying to restore the Ottoman Empire.

On another note, probably not many colleagues here are aware that the decision to convert Hagia Sophia from a museum back into a mosque was announced on 26 July at exactly 14:53. The symbolism of the time of this announcement speaks for itself – Constantinople was conquered by Ottoman forces in 1453.

The Turkish leadership of today is fond of symbolisms, especially those related to the Ottoman Empire. And it was not at all a coincidence that Azerbaijan attacked Artsakh and Armenia on 27 September. A hundred years ago, in September 1920, Turkish nationalist

forces invaded the First Republic of Armenia with a view to conquering and eliminating Armenia and finishing off the Armenian Genocide.

The current Azerbaijani aggression is clearly the implementation of the plan devised by Turkey and aimed at finalizing the policy that Turkey embarked on 100 years ago. With each passing day we are becoming more and more convinced of this. The President of Turkey was quite explicit on that score when he said on 22 July: “We will continue to fulfil the mission our grandfathers have carried out for centuries in the Caucasus.”

These words leave no room for doubt as to the Turkish leadership’s intentions with regard to Armenia, the Armenian people and the South Caucasus in general. It is clear what fate awaits the Armenian people if the Republic of Armenia fails to withstand this massive offensive by the combined Azerbaijani-Turkish-terrorist-jihadist forces.

Thank you.