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STATEMENT REGARDING THE CHECKPOINT ON THE LACHIN CORRIDOR

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 27 April 2023

Thank you,

Mr. Chair,

The trilateral ceasefire agreement 10 November 2021 stipulates that Azerbaijan shall guarantee traffic security for citizens, vehicles, and goods in both directions along the Lachin corridor. However, since December traffic restrictions by Azerbaijan has caused severe humanitarian difficulties for the population in Nagorno-Karabakh.

A decision by the International Court of Justice 22 February orders Azerbaijan to “use all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded traffic of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin corridor in both directions”. So far Azerbaijan has not shown any sign of implementing the ICJ decision. Moreover, Azerbaijan has recently unilaterally established a checkpoint at the entrance of the Lachin corridor.

Mr. Chair,

According to the trilateral agreement, the Lachin corridor shall remain under the control of the peace-keeping forces of the Russian Federation. It is difficult to see how this control is being exercised at present. This is an unfortunate side-effect of recent geopolitical developments. But this also creates the opportunity for the countries in the region to develop bilateral relations and cooperation.

Norway supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Sustainable peace is crucial. Peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and normalization between Turkey and Armenia, would create conditions for a better integrated and more prosperous region. It would make all three regional capitals more able to resist pressure from those who want to keep the South Caucasus weak and fragmented.

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In the present situation, the countries themselves are responsible for ensuring stability.

Azerbaijan would give an important contribution to stability by altering its present course of action.

Thank you.