



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
TO THE OSCE

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STATEMENT

**in response to the Report by the High Commissioner on National Minorities
as delivered by Ambassador Andranik Hovhannisyan
at the 1523rd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

05 June 2025

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes High Commissioner Christophe Kamp and thanks him for the comprehensive report. As this is his first appearance before the Permanent Council in his current capacity, we wish to express our confidence that his extensive diplomatic experience and profound knowledge of the OSCE will enable him to put his mandate at the best service for this Organization.

The core of this mandate, enshrined in its founding document, is to act as an “instrument of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage.” This task remains both vital and challenging, given that the root causes of many conflicts are often linked to the persistent denial of human rights, and particularly in the discrimination and exclusion of compact or significant minority group populations, including the indigenous people, the repression or dismissal of their culture, language, education or religion. Prevention is most effective when timely measures are taken to address these grievances and violations. Third-party engagement, whether through international or regional organizations or other diplomatic efforts, is essential before tensions escalate into violence.

One of the earliest warning signs of impending human rights violations is the rise of hate speech, xenophobia, racism, and majoritarian nationalism, which fuel violence and attacks against minorities. In such an environment, minority groups may find themselves increasingly targeted as “others” or as threats to the majority “nation”, leading to an “us versus them” polarization, instrumentalized by majoritarian political figures for the rally around the flag effect. Hate speech breeds hate crimes. Dehumanizing language, often reducing minority groups to animals or insects, is aimed at normalizing violence against such groups and often leads to their persecution and atrocity crimes. However, the existence of early warning tools does not automatically lead to the identification of the problem, or necessarily translate to early action, which we have been, unfortunately, witnessing time and again.

We also wish to draw attention to the importance of preserving cultural and religious sites, which play a critical role in promoting peace and understanding among nations, particularly in conflict-affected areas. Both the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights underscore the right of all individuals to participate freely in cultural life, including the right of persons belonging to ethnic, linguistic, or religious communities to maintain and practice their cultural heritage. These protections are especially relevant in areas where indigenous populations have been uprooted or forcibly displaced. States that violate these rights cannot legitimately claim to uphold tolerant and multicultural societies.

Mr. High Commissioner, we noted your references in the report to differing interpretations of history that can lead to tensions. We ask you also to consider the examination of falsification of history and the invention of aggressive new narratives, especially when such state-driven efforts condone violence and perpetuate conflict.

Combined attacks on people, monuments, and symbols, alongside the falsification of historical narratives, the erasure of authentic geographical names, and negative discourse about minorities and indigenous groups, can amount to cultural cleansing, undermining the potential for lasting peace.

We also emphasize that the mandate of the High Commissioner includes a strong component of accountability. The rights to truth and justice for victims of persecutions are among the essential prerequisites for effective conflict prevention.

We note with satisfaction the emphasis of the High Commissioner on the role of women and youth in upholding minority rights. We are also impressed by the vast geography of his engagement with participating States during the first six months of his tenure.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we would like to note that the Armenian people have a deep understanding of the experiences of ethnic minorities, having lived as such in numerous countries worldwide. We cherish the benefits of multicultural and multi-religious societies, while also being acutely aware of the consequences of persecution based on ethnic and religious identity.

Armenia is home to diverse national minorities who live and thrive in an environment characterized by freedom, respect, and tolerance. We remain committed to strengthening our cooperation with the High Commissioner on promotion and protection of minorities in the OSCE area.

Thank you.