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**DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

**Statement**

**On the Recent Attacks of Foreign Terrorist Fighters  
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1105th Meeting of the  
OSCE Permanent Council**

June 16, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

The Armenian delegation expresses its grave concern over the last escalation of the situation in north-western Syria, around the city of Aleppo. In the recent days Aleppo was attacked by the terrorist organization Al-Nusrah Front, which led to numerous casualties among the civilian population.

We strongly condemn the continuous and deliberate bombardment of the Christian-populated districts of Aleppo, resulting in human losses and destruction. In the result of those attacks only in the Armenian neighborhood dozens were killed and injured, Armenian nursing home, the Holy Trinity “Zvartnots” Armenian Catholic Church and a number of buildings of scientific-educational, historical-cultural and civilian significance were seriously damaged.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia since last two years has consistently raised the issue of foreign terrorist fighters, operating in Syria and Iraq. The terrorist organizations ISIL, Al Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups and entities, associated with Al Qaeda primarily target ethnic and religious minorities, including the Armenian community.

The threat to the very existence to ethnic and religious minorities in Syria and Iraq is widely recognized by the international community. On February 3, 2016, the European Parliament adopted a resolution, according to which ISIL “is committing genocide against Christians and Yezidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities”.

The UN Congress Resolution, adopted in March, 2016 recognized that “the atrocities perpetrated by ISIL against Christians, Yezidis, and other religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide”.

In Helsinki Declaration, adopted last year the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly strongly condemned persecution and violence against Christians and other religious

minorities in the OSCE area and beyond, including in the Middle East and North Africa, and actions that limit their right to religious freedom and to practise their faith.

Mr. Chairperson,

The challenges posed by the above-mentioned terrorist organizations, constitute a serious security threat for the OSCE region. Violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism, target different ethnic and religious minorities, threaten their very existence in the Middle East and contribute towards ongoing migration crisis in the OSCE area. The Armenian community in Aleppo had been formed by the descendents of victims of the Armenian Genocide. After 101 year this besieged community is struggling for its survival in the environment of apparent cross-border support rendered to the terrorist groups.

The OSCE adopted important Ministerial Declarations in Basel and Belgrade, which recognize the grave nature of the problem and the need to fully implement the UN Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, 2199 and 2249. In the Belgrade Declaration on Reinforcing OSCE Efforts to Counter Terrorism in the Wake of Recent Terrorist Attacks the participating States strongly condemned all terrorist attacks, in particular by the ISIL, Al-Nusrah Front (ANF), and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida and recognized that they constitute a global and unprecedented threat to international peace and security.

We strongly call upon all participating States to unconditionally implement their commitments to fight the scourge of terrorism.

In particular, we call on Turkey to prevent the use of its territories by terrorist groups for cross-border attacks against civilian populations, including religious and ethnic minorities in Syria.

Thank You.