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

ENGLISH only

Statement

On the Arrest and Detention of Leyla and Arif Yunus
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1013rd Special Meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council

August 14, 2014

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Armenia would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the further deterioration of human rights situation in Azerbaijan.

We are very concerned on the arrest and detention of Mrs. Leyla Yunus, Head of the Institute of Peace and Democracy in Azerbaijan and her husband Mr. Arif Yunus. Mrs. Yunus was participating in public diplomacy joint projects with the Armenian non-governmental organizations aimed at strengthening trust and confidence between the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples and promoting dialogue between the societies.

The Delegation of Armenia shared its concerns on the arrest of journalist Rauf Mirkadirov and harassment of Leyla Yunus at the previous meetings of the Permanent Council and we took note that the Azerbaijani Delegation failed to address our concerns. On the contrary, the Azerbaijani side followed its usual practice of labeling everybody, who dares to disagree with its official policy as spy.

These developments clearly demonstrate how harsh and hostile are the conditions in which the Azerbaijani civil society strives to build bridges of confidence, trust and reconciliation with its Armenian neighbours.

Justification of repressions against representatives of civil society by misusing Nagorno-Karabakh issue and charging them with high treason and espionage undermines the dialogue between our civil societies and diminishes possibility of both conflict resolution and democratization.

Apparently dehumanization of Armenians and the Azerbaijani civil society members go hand in hand and take the deplorable form of racism, glorification of hate crime perpetrators and political repressions. The Government, which demonizes Leyla Yunus, Rauf Mirkadirov, Akram Aylisli and on the other hand glorifies Ramil Safarov has certainly taken the wrong path of distorting human and moral values on which any society should be based.

We would like to reiterate our call on Azerbaijan to comply with the OSCE principles and norms, to honor its commitments on the development of humanitarian contacts between the parties to the conflict and encouraging dialogue between their respective civil societies and

to stop arrests and intimidation of representatives of its civil society who advocate peace, mutual understanding and reconciliation.

Thank You.