



Hügelgasse 2, A-1130 Vienna Tel: +43 (1) 403 13 22 Fax: +43 (1) 403 13 23 E-mail: [vienna@mission.mfa.gov.az](mailto:vienna@mission.mfa.gov.az)

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

**982nd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
January 30, 2014**

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ENGLISH only

*in response to the US Delegation on Yadigar Sadiqov*

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

In response to the statement delivered by the Delegation of the United States at the Permanent Council meeting held on January 23, 2014 our Delegation would like to provide the following information.

We do not share the concerns of the US side on the conviction and imprisonment of Mr. Yadigar Sadiqov on the charges of hooliganism on January 13, 2014 and see no alleged relation of his imprisonment to his political activity. As every Azerbaijani citizen Mr. Sadiqov has a right to appeal to the court of higher instance to contest the ruling.

Moreover, we consider the statement by the US Delegation "*that this is another incident in a series of troubling developments affecting civil society and political pluralism in Azerbaijan*" as a demonstration of a narrow approach and indication of a lack of proper understanding of political processes taking place in Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani authorities have established all necessary legal bases for free and open functioning of a vibrant civil society, fair administration of justice and transparent judicial processes. We are working with the OSCE and other international organizations to advance democratic transformation in the region, consolidate independent and prosperous Azerbaijani nation and contribute to the strengthening of peace and security in entire South Caucasus region and beyond.

The Azerbaijani nation has its own path of democratic development which is fully in line with the commitments undertaken within the OSCE and other international organizations. This path could serve as an example of how a young democracy with predominant Shia Muslim population could consolidate the ideals of freedom and independence, take a full command over its booming economy and benefit from advancing values of humanity and sustainable development.

As every OSCE participating State around this table Azerbaijan faces a number of risks and challenges, perhaps even with a bigger extent and implications over its security. Unlike many around this table we have no security or defense umbrella organizations that would protect our national boundaries and our democratic choices. We are not part of any economic integration processes that would alleviate the challenges of transformation to the market economy, accompanied with the risks of globalizations. On the contrary, we found ourselves lately on the edges of deepening dividing lines within the OSCE and our appeals to utilize the OSCE as a platform for dialogue and cooperation on many security challenges that non-allied OSCE participating States face, have been left unanswered.

Therefore Azerbaijan, probably as some of our neighbors in this buffer zone, has to rely on ourselves in consolidating our democratic achievements and building stronger institutions and statehood. Our policy over the last two decades has proven that strengthening independence and promoting international law based approach brought new realities to the South Caucasus and Caspian region. The projects that we realize bring positive development not only for South Caucasus, but also expanding and facilitating the prospects of integration of this region into European, Asian and global markets.

In this view we do not share the statement of US Delegation and its allegations against the Government of Azerbaijan. We call on the US Delegation to demonstrate more balanced approach within the human dimension and OSCE comprehensive security concept. Such an approach could be based on the similar attention to the difficulties experienced by close to a million Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs and to their inherent right to return to their lands of origin and to restore their property.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.