



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

**Statement**

**On the Presidential Elections in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic  
delivered by Mr. Vaheh Gevorgian, Deputy Head of Delegation, at the 920<sup>th</sup>  
Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
July 12, 2012**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank the distinguished delegation of Azerbaijan for bringing the issue of the upcoming Presidential elections in Nagorno-Karabakh to the attention of the Permanent Council.

However, it is disappointing to see the reaction of Azerbaijan, an OSCE participating state, to the exercise of fundamental human rights by the population of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

My delegation would like to remind that Nagorno-Karabakh is not merely the name of the conflict but a territory inhabited by a population which cannot be deprived of exercising its fundamental human rights, under any circumstances. In particular, the article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that in applying the Declaration "...no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty". As far as rights to vote or participation in the governing bodies are concerned, they are fully enshrined in the article 21 of the Declaration.

It should be recalled here that the elections are not something new in the political life of Nagorno-Karabakh which conducted elections as an entity even before its independence. Let us remind the Azerbaijani delegation that these elected authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh initiated legal process of acquiring independence since February 1988, which eventually led to the referendum and the establishment of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in 1991. Azerbaijan maintained direct contacts with elected authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh even during military phase of the conflict and thanks to those contacts the ceasefire of 1994 was established. The Armenian Delegation has recently circulated part of the correspondence between the authorities of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh that led to ceasefire (SEC.DEL/184/12 June 15 2012). Moreover, Bishkek Protocol was co-signed by the elected authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, the President of the Parliament. Furthermore, we would like to remind that throughout the process of peace negotiations for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and particularly in the OSCE Helsinki 1992 and Budapest 1994 decisions there is a reference to the elected representatives of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to participate in the Minsk Conference. The

elected representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh have been regularly meeting with the mediators and the most recent meeting took place just yesterday in Stepanekert.

We simply would like to stress that to have elected representatives one needs elections. The power cannot be reproduced by an act of inheritance in Nagorno-Karabakh or elected authorities cannot automatically prolong their tenure in Office and form another authoritarian regime. None of the Presidents of Nagorno-Karabakh remained in power more than two consecutive terms and this certainly constitutes a good practice which can be followed in the region.

The claim that the Presidential elections cannot be considered valid since the Azerbaijanis who used to live in Nagorno-Karabakh did not take part in those elections is misleading for two reasons. First, the Azerbaijani population was in Nagorno-Karabakh when the referendum of independence took place and they were given all possibilities to express their will along with other inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh. Second, the Armenian population constituted absolute majority of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, around 80% in 1991 and this population should have right to continue to form the Government through elections. If we take same line of reasoning of Azerbaijan then we can question legitimacy of all elections in Azerbaijan itself since 400 hundred thousand Armenian refugees who outnumber 1 to 10 the number of Azerbaijanis from Nagorno-Karabakh did not participate in them starting from 1991.

Unfortunately, the election will not be held on the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic since 15% of its territory is currently under the control of the Azerbaijani armed forces. When Azerbaijani delegation refers to the ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh, it should remember that no single Armenian remains on that territory which previously was entirely populated by Armenians.

And last but not least we will convey the content of the Azerbaijani statement to the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh and we will keep the OSCE updated on upcoming elections if we deem it appropriate.

Thank you.