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

Statement

in response to the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, and the Head of the High Level Planning Group

delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1025th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

November 13, 2014

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to warmly welcome the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Popov, Pierre Andrieu and James Warlick, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and the Head of the HLPG, Colonel Markus Widmer to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports.

We highly appreciate the joint efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – France, Russian Federation and the United States who have convened three consecutive summits in Sochi, Newport and Paris within three months to prevent escalation and advance the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As recently as on October 27th, at the summit in Paris Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan reaffirmed that the existing format of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs is an active and effective format and that there is no alternative to the negotiation process aimed at the settlement of the conflict exclusively by the peaceful means.

Such meetings give an opportunity to the Presidents to better assess the approaches of each other and to clarify the framework of the possibilities to move towards the peaceful settlement. We believe that a speedy adoption of the Basic Principles will give an opportunity and become a basis for drafting the main agreement.

Mr. Chairman,

Yesterday, a helicopter of the Nagorno-Karabakh armed forces, while on a training flight was shot down by Azerbaijan in yet another gross violation of the cease-fire regime. Such aggressive actions threaten to further destabilize the situation and undermine the peace process.

We strongly condemn the shooting down of the helicopter.

Before and after every high-level meeting on the resolution of the issue, Baku is resorting to new provocations to undermine the negotiation process, the efforts of Armenia and the international community aimed at exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The Azerbaijani side is grossly violating its commitments on the peaceful resolution of the conflict reached during the recent summits.

Such a criminal provocation demonstrates that Baku is not only ignoring the appeals of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, the international community on non-use of force, consolidation of ceasefire, implementation of confidence-building measures, but is acting contrary to them bearing full responsibility for the escalation of the situation.

Armenia has continuously raised the issues of non-compliance by Azerbaijan with the 1994 trilateral cease-fire agreement. In 2014 the cease-fire violations have multiplied and intensified in such dangerous forms as subversive activities and infiltration attempts, targeting civilian population and resorting to heavy weaponry. These attempts of Azerbaijani armed forces claimed unprecedented high number of casualties on all sides and further undermined the negotiation process.

We had stressed many times and would like to reiterate once again that every casualty in the conflict zone deepens the gap between the peoples, increases the distrust and hinders the settlement process. Therefore, confidence and security building measures proposed by the Co-chairs on consolidation of the cease-fire regime, creation of investigation mechanism for incidents on the Line of Contact, withdrawal of snipers, if implemented would not only reduce the number of cease-fire violations and save lives, but would create conducive environment for achieving progress in peaceful resolution.

Our approaches in this regard are shared by the Co-Chair countries. However, Azerbaijan refuses to implement CSBMs. According to their long standing position the CSBMs can be implemented once the progress on the peace process is achieved. However, it's obvious that if a certain settlement is reached, there would not be a need for the CSBMs to this extent.

By the pattern of blatant cease-fire violations and by the refusal to adopt CSBMs Azerbaijan bears the whole responsibility for the escalation of the situation.

It is clear that without mutual confidence no solution is possible. Armenian representatives have seized all possible opportunities to have people-to-people contacts with their Azerbaijani counterparts and the participation of the Armenian Parliamentary Delegation to the Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Baku is a good case in point.

Regrettably, the arrests of civil society representatives who have been involved in international projects on confidence building measures under the absurd allegations

of espionage activities casts doubt on sincerity of Azerbaijani side to pursue humanitarian contacts between our societies.

We will continue joint efforts with the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk group, aimed at the exclusively peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Thank You.

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Mr. Chairman,

There is a significant gap in the perception of the problem and the ways to resolve it between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We stress the importance of settlement of the conflict through full upholding of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Nagorno Karabakh, in particular the right to freely choose their own destiny. Azerbaijan puts the focus on forceful imposition of its will on Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh by using the wide spectrum of military, economic and other forms of oppression. In other words, we focus on human rights, while our neighbours focus on power politics.

The people of Nagorno Karabakh is de-facto independent since the last 23 years and they should be the masters of their future. Should the human rights of people of Nagorno Karabakh including right to freedom of movement, right to vote and finally right to self-determination be respected, then our region can move towards greater prosperity and respect of human rights in general.

When it comes to the UN SC resolutions referred here by the Ambassador of Azerbaijan, it should be mentioned that they were adopted during the military phase of the conflict and did not lead to immediate cease of hostilities due to the position of Azerbaijan. Today after 20 years of ceasefire Azerbaijan refers to single element of resolutions by downplaying all others such as lift of blockade or neglecting parties of the conflict referred in the resolutions. All the UN SC Resolutions have clearly recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict. If Azerbaijan is willing to implement the UN SC resolutions it should first and foremost reach authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in achieving progress on the conflict resolution.

As for the recent military exercises held in Armenia, we would like to inform that Armenia in the spirit of transparency has duly issued prior notification, according to its commitments under Vienna Document. What regards the military exercises, held by Nagorno Karabakh, we would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council that the Nagorno Karabakh authorities in the spirit of transparency had made them public. We see opposite trend in Azerbaijan, which continuously fails to notify its military exercises, particularly those, being held along the Line of Contact.

Thank You.