



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 26, 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Please allow me this short statement.

The United States encourages the sides to work with the *Minsk Group Co-Chairs* to resolve the outstanding issues from the November 9 Russian-brokered arrangement that stopped the fighting. Lasting peace cannot be achieved through military means. A sustainable, long-term resolution must be based on the principles of the *Helsinki Final Act*: non-use or threat of force, territorial integrity, and the self-determination and equal rights of peoples.

Although the fighting has stopped, the humanitarian situation on the ground remains dire, and is becoming more acute as winter approaches. We are concerned the global coronavirus pandemic is exacerbating the situation. Last week, the United States announced it will contribute over five million U.S. dollars to humanitarian organizations so that they can begin to participate in relieving the suffering before the winter comes.

We urge the sides to work with the *International Committee of the Red Cross* and the OSCE's *Personal Representative* to facilitate the exchange of detainees and the return of remains, as well as the other steps arranged in Geneva on October 29.

This conflict has gone too long, and at too great a cost to local communities. We urge the sides to make use of this moment to reach a comprehensive political settlement that brings lasting peace. We encourage the sides to take advantage of the resources the OSCE has to offer to assist in fulfilling their commitments from Geneva and in upholding the OSCE's principles and commitments under the *Helsinki Final Act*.

One last word, Mr. Chairman - the *Minsk Group Co-Chairs* can help the sides to reach a lasting and permanent peace in the Nagorno Karabakh region. Mr. Chairman, we understand that there has been a recognition of the value of the Minsk Group. The ceasefire that has occurred is commendable. The sides should remember the availability of the OSCE Minsk group. It represents 57 countries in the region. There is, from time to time, a threat to this group, to its capacity to operate, through the Unified Budget. Such behavior and such actions, which has occurred on other occasions before, is a warning or a threat to hold all 57 countries hostage under the Unified Budget. This is a tactic that should be rejected. The Unified Budget of the OSCE must go forward so that the OSCE can continue to operate. The Minsk Group budget should be a part of that - they need the budgetary resources to do their job as well. All parties should recognize the value of the continuation of the Minsk Group co-chairs and the Minsk Group writ large.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

