

Chairmanship: Albania**1288th PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 5 November 2020 (via video teleconference)

Opened: 10 a.m.
Suspended: 1.05 p.m.
Resumed: 3 p.m.
Suspended: 6 p.m.
Resumed: 10 a.m. (Friday, 6 November 2020)
Closed: 12.15 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador I. Hasani
Ms. E. Dobrushki

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the Permanent Council of the technical modalities for the conduct of meetings of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Permanent Council, welcomed the new Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the OSCE, Ambassador Kairat Umarov.

The Chairperson offered his condolences to the family of Ms. Tatiana Palaguta, a Kyrgyz national and staff member in the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, who passed away in Bishkek on 2 November 2020 following complications related to COVID-19 pneumonia.

The Chairperson, on behalf of all 57 participating states, condemned all acts of terrorism and remembered the victims of recent terrorist attacks, including the attack in Vienna on 2 November 2020. The Council observed a moment of silence. Austria thanked the Permanent Council for its condolences (Annex 1).

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: REPORT BY THE CO-ORDINATOR OF OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Chairperson, Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (SEC.GAL/163/20 OSCE+), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1559/20), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/1508/20 OSCE+), Russian Federation, Turkey (PC.DEL/1519/20 OSCE+), Armenia (PC.DEL/1551/20), United States of America (PC.DEL/1510/20), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1513/20 OSCE+), Belarus, Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/1550/20 OSCE+), Serbia (PC.DEL/1522/20 OSCE+), Georgia (PC.DEL/1523/20 OSCE+), Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan

Agenda item 2: MOSCOW MECHANISM INVOKED BY SEVENTEEN OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES

Chairperson, Rapporteur under the Moscow Mechanism on Alleged Human Rights Violations Related to the 2020 Presidential Elections in Belarus, Denmark (also on behalf of Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (PC.DEL/1516/20), United Kingdom (PC.DEL/1520/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1514/20) (PC.DEL/1525/20/Corr.1), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; and the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine in alignment) (PC.DEL/1561/20/Rev.1), Canada (PC.DEL/1568/20 OSCE+), Russian Federation, Poland (PC.DEL/1511/20 RESTRICTED), Kazakhstan, Switzerland (PC.DEL/1512/20 OSCE+), Czech Republic, Lithuania (PC.DEL/1515/20 OSCE+), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1535/20 OSCE+), Uzbekistan, Turkey (PC.DEL/1544/20 OSCE+), Iceland (PC.DEL/1524/20/Rev.1 OSCE+), Tajikistan, Belarus, Netherlands

Agenda item 3: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea:* Ukraine (PC.DEL/1527/20), Canada (PC.DEL/1567/20 OSCE+), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1562/20), United

Kingdom, Turkey (PC.DEL/1545/20 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1557/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1528/20)

- (b) *Situation in Ukraine and the need to implement the Minsk agreements:* Russian Federation, Ukraine
- (c) *Aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters:* Armenia (Annex 2)
- (d) *Aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan:* Azerbaijan (Annex 3), Turkey (PC.DEL/1564/20 OSCE+)
- (e) *Statement by France on behalf of the three countries co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group:* France (also on behalf of the Russian Federation and the United States of America) (PC.DEL/1542/20 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/1533/20), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Moldova and San Marino, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1563 /20), Norway (PC.DEL/1555/20), United Kingdom, Holy See (PC.DEL/1532/20 OSCE+), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1556/20 OSCE+), Russian Federation, Canada, Azerbaijan (Annex 4), Armenia (Annex 5), Turkey (PC.DEL/1565/20 OSCE+)
- (f) *International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, observed on 2 November:* Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1560/20), Russian Federation, France (also on behalf of Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (PC.DEL/1542/20 OSCE+), Switzerland, Armenia (PC.DEL/1554/20), United States of America (PC.DEL/1546/20), Latvia (PC.DEL/1547/20 OSCE+), France, Ukraine, Turkey (PC.DEL/1566/20 OSCE+), Azerbaijan
- (g) *Continuing provocative actions and non-transparent military convoy movements in the Security Zone of the Republic of Moldova:* Moldova (Annex 6), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1541/20 OSCE+), Germany-European Union, United Kingdom, United States of America (PC.DEL/1548/20), Ukraine, Georgia
- (h) *Compliance by Azerbaijan with obligations under international humanitarian law:* Azerbaijan (Annex 7)

Agenda item 4: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Status of negotiations on the draft Ministerial Council decisions/documents proposed for adoption by the OSCE Ministerial Council in the year 2020:* Chairperson
- (b) *Logistical modalities for the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, to be held in a virtual format on 3 and 4 December 2020:* Chairperson
- (c) *Meeting of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan, held in Geneva on 30 October 2020:* Chairperson
- (d) *Keynote remarks by the Chairperson of the Permanent Council at the Fourth OSCE-wide Seminar on Passenger Data Exchange, held in Vienna on 29 and 30 October 2020:* Chairperson

Agenda item 5: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

- (a) *Announcement of the distribution of a written report on the activities of the Secretariat:* Director of the Office of the Secretary General
- (b) *Offering of condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in Vienna on 2 November 2020:* Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/169/20 OSCE+)
- (c) *2020 OSCE Mediterranean Conference, held via video teleconference on 3 November 2020:* Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/169/20 OSCE+)
- (d) *Joint Council of Europe-OSCE meeting of National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators and Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms, held on 3 and 4 November 2020:* Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/169/20 OSCE+)
- (e) *OSCE Cybersecurity Awareness Month:* Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/169/20 OSCE+)
- (f) *Fifteenth Conference of the Central Asia Border Management Initiative (CABMI), held via video teleconference from 2 to 5 November 2020:* Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/169/20 OSCE+)
- (g) *Joint HCNM-OCEEA webinar on the economic consequences of COVID-19 on national minorities, held on 30 October 2020:* Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/169/20 OSCE+)

- (h) *Presentation on the work of the OSCE Secretariat at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, held on 3 November 2020: Director of the Office of the Secretary General (SEC.GAL/169/20 OSCE+)*
- (i) *Informal briefing by the Office of the Secretary General, held on 4 November 2020: Switzerland*

Agenda item 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Parliamentary elections in Georgia, held on 31 October 2020: Georgia

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 12 November 2020, at 10 a.m., via video teleconference



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1288
5 November 2020
Annex 1

ENGLISH
Original: GERMAN

1288th Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1288, Point 2

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AUSTRIA

Mr. Chairperson,
Dear colleagues,

I should like to express my sincere gratitude for the messages of condolence and sympathy over the past few days, and also today. For Austria it is important to know that at such a difficult time we are not alone and can count on the solidarity and support of our partners and friends. Like many other OSCE participating States – most recently in the case of our friend France – we will not allow ourselves to be intimidated by such crimes. Our thoughts and solidarity are also with our partner country Afghanistan, which had also been shaken shortly beforehand by a terrible attack. We will not let ourselves be divided by violence and hate and will defend our democracy and open society together.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson, I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1288th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1288, Agenda item 3(c)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Today is the 40th day of the war of aggression against the Republic of Artsakh and its people unleashed by Turkish-backed Azerbaijani armed forces with the direct involvement of foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists. The aggression has been accompanied by numerous war crimes, including the deliberate targeting of hospitals, religious sites, monuments, civilian settlements and critical infrastructure, the use of prohibited cluster and phosphorus munitions, as well as cruel murders of civilian captives and prisoners of war, beheadings and the mutilation of dead bodies. On Monday, 2 November, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet warned that the continuing indiscriminate attacks in populated areas of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, in contravention of international humanitarian law, might amount to war crimes.

Since the last meeting of the Permanent Council, Azerbaijan has continued its attacks against civilians in Artsakh despite persistent calls of the international community and the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries. The Azerbaijani military has continued indiscriminate targeting of the civilian population and infrastructure in contravention of the agreement reached on 30 October in Geneva during the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the participation of the Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office.

Yesterday, two civilians were wounded as a result of a rocket attack on the Mother and Child Health Centre in Stepanakert. Another hospital in Stepanakert was targeted while surgeons were operating on injured civilians. These cowardly attacks clearly demonstrate that the goal of the Azerbaijani politico-military leadership is to inflict maximum damage on the civilian population of Artsakh, especially women and children. After each such attack, the leadership of Azerbaijan hypocritically speaks about “unfortunate collateral damage and perspectives of future peaceful co-existence”.

According to official information, as of today, 50 civilians have been killed and 148 have been wounded as a result of the Azerbaijani aggression. More than 19,000 buildings, including infrastructure and private property, have been partially or entirely destroyed. Two days ago, the border village of Davit Bek in Armenia was shelled, resulting in the death of one civilian and two wounded.

Azerbaijan keeps “conquering new heights” when it comes to violations of international humanitarian law. Yesterday, an Azerbaijani subversive group disguised as Armenian soldiers attacked an ambulance carrying a wounded soldier, killing the medic.

This past weekend, Azerbaijan started using a new type of prohibited munition, white phosphorus, to burn down the forests around civilian settlements, including the city of Shushi, the second largest city of Artsakh. White phosphorus is a toxic material that can cause severe burns when it comes into contact with skin. It is very difficult to put out a white phosphorus fire and it can reignite easily, even on the skin. A cloud of phosphorus can mix with moisture in the air and can form phosphoric acid, which can damage or destroy the lungs. The use of incendiary weapons in civilian areas is banned under the Geneva Convention. Its use by Azerbaijan to attack civilian areas amounts to a war crime.

Armenia has already officially applied to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) with a request to launch an investigation into the use of chemical weapons by Azerbaijan. With the use of white phosphorus, Azerbaijan adds environmental terrorism to the long list of its war crimes. These munitions have a clear destructive effect on the environment. The forests have been on fire for more than three days now.

These actions of Azerbaijan come as no surprise to the people of Artsakh and Armenia. For more than a decade, we have been raising concerns about anti-Armenian propaganda, hatred and xenophobia at the highest political level of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani president himself, when referring to Armenia and Armenian people in general, has not shied away from using extremely offensive and derogatory language which has nothing to do with civilized discourse and deserved at least a condemnation. We have also drawn attention to the dehumanization of the Armenians and the indoctrination of the Azerbaijani population from a very young age with hatred towards everything Armenian. For decades, the Azerbaijani leader has been creating a very convenient image of Armenia as the arch-enemy, which he has exploited as a means of continuing his dictatorial regime.

The monitoring of the Azerbaijani segment of the social media reveals that xenophobia and hate speech against Armenians has reached an unprecedented level in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani citizens, including officials, have been making open calls on social media for the killing of all Armenians without distinction. The anti-Armenian hatred is manifested not only in politics but also in civil society, the media, culture, academia, sport and elsewhere. For example, a few days ago the public relations and media manager of the Azerbaijani football club Qarabag, Nurlan Ibrahimov, placed a posting on social media calling for the killing of Armenian women, children and elderly. As a result, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has decided to provisionally ban Nurlan Ibrahimov from exercising any football-related activity with immediate effect.

Today’s war is the logical continuation of this process. However, as we have already mentioned, this aggression stands out on account of new elements and factors, in particular the use of foreign terrorist fighters and jihadist groups and Turkey’s direct politico-military involvement, as well as the more serious geostrategic implications that continued violence may well have for the region and the world beyond it.

Mr. Chairperson,

Azerbaijan claims that the war is about territories. For Turkey, which we believe to be the real mastermind and instigator behind the aggression launched on 27 September, this war is about strengthening its political and military presence in Azerbaijan and extending its sphere of power into the Caucasus.

Today, the Turkish leadership is taking advantage of the moment. Under the pretext of the concept of “one nation, two States”, Turkey is actively involved in the conflict, with a view to forcing its way to the negotiating table and hoping to secure geopolitical gains for itself. Therefore, Turkey cannot and should not play any role in the settlement process, since with each passing day it becomes ever clearer that Turkey is indeed a party to the conflict and is directly involved in the military hostilities – from planning to execution, exercising command and control over the Azerbaijani military and its general staff. Thus, it came as no surprise that the chief of general staff of Azerbaijan was dismissed in the early days of the conflict at the insistence of Turkish generals. There were also reports of his arrest. Now we hear reports of the *de facto* dismissal of the Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan, though without him being formally relieved of his duties.

We have already provided detailed information on the number of Turkish troops, officers and military advisers who remained in Azerbaijan after the joint drills in July and August this year. We have also informed the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation about the military equipment that was stationed in Azerbaijan and remained there. There have also been reports of Turkish commando units amounting to 1,200 men being sent to fight a guerrilla war in Artsakh; during the last week we have seen a corresponding change of tactics in the battlefield, which makes the reports even more credible. We also see regular visits to Baku of Turkish high-level military officials, including the Minister of Defence and chiefs of various branches of the Turkish armed forces.

All these facts prove beyond any doubt that today the Defence Army of Artsakh is fighting not only the Azerbaijani military but also the Turkish army, reinforced by foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have continuously raised the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and jihadist groups being recruited by Turkey and transferred to Azerbaijan as early as August, to be used in the planned aggression against the Republic of Artsakh and its people.

We believe that Turkey’s direct role in this recruitment and deployment scheme has been proved beyond any doubt. For almost a decade, Turkey has according to some estimates been cultivating and nurturing 29 different terrorist groups in Syria. It has channelled arms and money to them and has provided safe passage through its territory. For the last couple of years, we have seen the active use of foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists in Syria and in Libya. Now we are seeing it in Artsakh. The gross violations of human rights committed by members of these groups against the local population in Syria have been presented in relevant international enquiries and reports.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a London-based non-governmental organization, continues to monitor the process of the recruitment of terrorists and their transfer to Azerbaijan. On 3 November, SOHR announced that a new batch of nearly 230 Syrian fighters had arrived in Azerbaijan; for information, at least 22 fighters have fled the fierce battles and returned to Syria.

The arrival of a new group of fighters brings the total confirmed number of Syrian fighters at the Artsakh-Azerbaijani battlefield to 2,580. As many as 342 fighters returned to Syria after having “given up and forgone their payments”.

And last but not least, the Defence Army of Artsakh has already captured at least two terrorist fighters, Yousef Alabet Al Haji, born in the village of Jisr al-Shughur in the Idlib province of Syria, and Mehred Muhammad Alshkher, born in the Syrian city of Hama. Their interrogation revealed the exact routes and schemes used for the recruitment and transfer of foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists to fight against Artsakh. They have confirmed that they were recruited by Turkey to fight against “infidels” and that they were promised a salary of 2,000 US dollars per month with an additional 100 dollars as a reward for every severed head of an “infidel”.

I believe that other details could be communicated to our international partners through the relevant channels. As a responsible member of the international community, Armenia has contributed to the international efforts to combat the scourge of terrorism. We warned that the proliferation of international terrorism to the region of South Caucasus would have a dramatic effect for each and every country of the region and beyond. Therefore, it is more than obvious that we should reinforce our efforts towards the eradication of terrorism, and we should particularly concentrate on stopping the financing of terrorist and jihadist groups and their supporters. In this context, we should highlight again that Turkey, with its recruitment scheme, supports terrorism.

Mr. Chairperson,

A State which condones and profits from the services of terrorists and jihadists and is supported by a State that finances and supports terrorists and jihadists cannot claim any right to sovereignty over Artsakh and its people, which is fighting for its inalienable rights. The right to live freely and independently in its ancestral homeland. The right to development and a dignified life. The right to freely practise its religion and preserve and enjoy its language and culture. The right to its identity.

Only international recognition of the right of the people of Artsakh to exercise self-determination and create an independent State can provide the necessary political and legal remedies for ensuring the safety and security of the people of Artsakh and the protection of their inalienable rights. We call on all OSCE participating States to consider this issue, taking into account all the dire consequences of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan with the support and involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists.

Mr. Chairperson, I kindly request that my statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.



1288th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1288, Agenda item 3(d)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Azerbaijan would like to update the Permanent Council on the ongoing aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and its consequences as well as the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in the reporting period since the last meeting of the Permanent Council on 29 October.

At the most recent meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan with the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, held on 30 October in Geneva, the Co-Chairs once again called on the sides to implement their commitments, including on a humanitarian ceasefire agreed on 10 October in Moscow and reaffirmed by the mediation efforts of Paris on 17 October and of Washington, DC, on 25 October. In the released statement, the sides also undertook not to deliberately target civilian populations or non-military objects in accordance with international humanitarian law. Despite this, after the Geneva meeting, the Armenian armed forces using heavy artillery continued to intensively shell Azerbaijani military units and civilian areas in the Tartar, Aghdam, Goranboy and Aghjabadi districts.

Thus, it is a fourth time in a row that Armenia has blatantly violated the agreed humanitarian ceasefire and ignored the calls of mediators. This was preceded by violations of humanitarian ceasefires agreed on 10, 17 and 25 October, almost immediately after they entered into force. The consistent pattern of these violations by Armenia is demonstration of wilful ignorance of its commitments and a sign of open disrespect to the efforts of international mediators. This clearly resonates with provocative and warmongering statements coming from Armenia's officials and confirms that this country is not interested in a peaceful negotiated solution to the conflict and that its ultimate goal is to continue the military occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan.

From 30 October to 2 November, Armenia continued to launch attacks in various directions, including across the international border with Azerbaijan. The border regions of Azerbaijan – Dashkesen, Gadabay, Gazakh, Gubadli, Tovuz and Zangilan were fired at from the Noyemberyan, Berd, Chambarak, Gorus and Vardenis regions of Armenia. Armenia's armed forces continuously targeted the Aghdam, Aghjabadi, Goranboy and the Tartar districts with heavy artillery causing human suffering and damage to civilian infrastructure.

On 2 November, one of the shells fired by Armenia fell on a school in the Mahrizli village of Aghdam district and inflicted severe damage on the school building. In total, since 27 September, as a result of Armenia's bombardments, nine school children have been killed, while 50 schools have been destroyed or damaged.

On 3 November, the border regions of Azerbaijan – Gadabay, Tovuz and Dashkesan were fired at from the Berd, Chambarak and Vardenis regions of Armenia. Armenia's armed forces also targeted the Aghdam and Aghjabadi districts with heavy artillery. Fuzuli city and its surrounding villages were attacked with a 300mm "Smerch" multiple-launch rocket system. Furthermore, two artillery shells were fired at Sahlabad village of the Tartar district. One of them fell on a private house.

Last week we informed the Permanent Council that on 26 October, after Armenia's armed forces shelled the Dashkesan district, located outside the conflict zone, a major fire broke out in the forest located in this district. As a result of artillery fire on 3 November, another fire broke out in the forest near Tazakand village of the same district. Thus, we observe a worrying tendency of intentional firing on forests, which is a manifestation of environmental terror employed by Armenia. The map that you see on the screens represents damage that has thus far been inflicted on forests in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan as a result of Armenia's aggression.

On 4 November, the Armenian armed forces continued to heighten tensions and kept shelling the cities, settlements and villages of the Aghdam, Aghjabadi and Tartar districts. Furthermore, Armenian armed forces using mortars and small arms fired at the positions of Azerbaijan's armed forces on the State border between the two States in the Tovuz and Aghstafa districts of Azerbaijan.

Until this morning of 5 November, Armenia's armed forces continued to fire upon settlements of the Goranboy and Tartar districts. Four shells have been fired at Giyameddinli village of the Aghjabadi district. Later during the day, Armenia has been shelling again the city of Tartar and Sahlabad village of the Tartar district, as well as Hajituralli and Afatli villages of the Aghdam district.

Last week the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan has issued the statement informing about the delivery of a large amount of phosphorus cargo to the units of Armenian armed forces stationed in the direction of the occupied Khojavend district of Azerbaijan. The purpose of this, as it became known later, was to lay basis for Armenia's further provocations by spreading false and fake information about the alleged use of white phosphorus by Azerbaijan's armed forces. Further to this, Armenia, using white phosphorous munitions, has set fire to the forests of Shusha, thus aiming to create smoke and hinder visibility as well as the vision of drones used by Azerbaijan's armed forces. This constitutes an environmental terror and represents another sign of desperation on the Armenian side.

We would like to further remind that Armenia has a track record of using phosphorus munitions. Back in 2016, during the four-day April escalation, Armenia fired phosphorus projectiles on Askipara village of the Tartar district of Azerbaijan. The unexploded ordnance has been neutralized back then. More recently, on 8 October 2020, Armenia fired a phosphorus projectile on the Fuzuli district of Azerbaijan. Fortunately, it did not explode, and experts of the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) have identified and

decomposed it. Lastly, on 3 November, Armenian armed forces fired phosphorus shells at Sahlabad village of the Tartar district. ANAMA neutralized this unexploded ordnance on the spot. These instances of the active use of phosphorus munitions by Armenia exemplify its typical blame-shifting exercises and attempts to evade responsibility.

We would like to further inform the Permanent Council that in the reporting period ANAMA continued to carry out its activity in the areas close to as well as farther away from the conflict zone affected by Armenian aggression. As a result of this work, as of 4 November, ANAMA found 318 unexploded ordnances, 1,627 pieces of anti-personnel mines, 276 pieces of anti-tank mines, explosives of 460 anti-tank mines, 76 pieces of detonators, 1,174 pieces of 9N235-type cluster munitions and 753 exploded missile parts. Furthermore, mine awareness specialists conducted a mine safety awareness campaign among 42,777 civilians. On 2 November, while on duty, ANAMA's deminer was wounded by an anti-personal mine placed by Armenia's armed forces in the Jabrayil district of Azerbaijan.

Overall, since the outbreak of hostilities on 27 September 2020, deliberate and indiscriminate attacks of the armed forces of Armenia against the cities, towns and villages in Azerbaijan, as of today, claimed the lives of 92 civilians, including children, infants, women and elderly, 404 civilians were wounded, 2,971 private houses, 100 residential apartment buildings and 502 other civilian facilities were either destroyed or damaged.

Deliberate and indiscriminate attacks carried out by the Armenian armed forces on densely populated civilian areas of Azerbaijan, including those located far away from the conflict zone, indicate that Armenia does so in order to inflict a high level of casualties and cause disproportionate harm among the civilian population and civilian objects. Such attacks constitute a war crime and a crime against humanity and an act of State terror, for which all perpetrators, including those at the highest echelon of the politico-military leadership of Armenia must bear international legal responsibility. Against the background of irrefutable evidence attesting to the continuous bombardment of cities and other densely populated civilian areas of Azerbaijan, Armenia continues to deny its responsibility for the atrocious crimes committed against Azerbaijani civilians during the conflict. In this regard, Azerbaijan calls on the participating States and the international community as a whole to strongly condemn the barbaric and atrocious methods of warfare employed by Armenia. These inhumane acts call for justice and accountability.

In particular, we reiterate our call on OSCE participating States made at the latest Permanent Council and FSC meetings and urge them again to fully implement their relevant collectively agreed commitments in the politico-military dimension in order to deny Armenia any means to commit further crimes against the civilian population of Azerbaijan with weapons and ammunition that it continues to get from OSCE participating States through various schemes of trafficking. Against the backdrop of unabated attacks on the civilian population of Azerbaijan, the OSCE participating States concerned have to take prompt actions arising from their relevant OSCE commitments and to reconsider their military-technical co-operation with Armenia.

Alongside indiscriminate attacks on civilians, in the reporting period, the Armenian armed forces continued to attack the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan along the front line with the aim of regaining control over positions they lost in the course of

Azerbaijan's counteroffensive. Armenia's provocations and attacks along the restored State borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan, particularly in the direction of the recently liberated Gubadli and Zangilan districts, deserve closer attention. On 2 and 4 November, Azerbaijan's armed forces neutralized the attempts of Armenian reconnaissance-sabotage groups to attack our units from the territory of Armenia and seize favourable high ground at the State border in the direction of the Zangilan district of Azerbaijan.

The Armenian politico-military leadership must now realize and reckon with the fact that the restored State borders of Azerbaijan in the territories previously occupied by Armenia are not a zone of conflict anymore, but the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan, over which Azerbaijan has full sovereignty. The inviolability of these State borders must be ensured and any provocation by Armenia in this direction will be assessed as an attack on our territorial integrity.

In the reporting period, further credible evidence continued to emerge on the deployment of terrorists and mercenaries in the conflict zone by Armenia. Most recently, the presence of mercenaries from Lebanon and Syria along with PKK terrorists in the ranks of Armenia's armed forces has been reflected in the reportages by Reuters and France 24. More than 300 mercenaries have been recruited through the "VOMA" (Voxj Mnalu Arvest – The Art of Survival) terror organization. These are citizens of different countries, including Lebanon and Syria, as well as some OSCE participating States.

We further remind that at least some of the terrorists and mercenaries deployed by Armenia in the combat zone are dressed in the military uniform of the armed forces and State Border Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This is an intentional misrepresentation and constitutes a clear case of a false flag operation, which is forbidden under the laws and customs of war. This dangerous practice employed by Armenia may have adverse repercussions and we have already warned the participating States in this regard.

As we informed the Permanent Council, Armenia – which uses children in its combat operations yet presents itself as one of the "advocates" of the Safe Schools Declaration – also does not hesitate to use school buildings and even kindergartens for military purposes, thus committing grave violations of its international obligations. There is further evidence that Armenia is using a secondary school in Girmizi Bazar village in the occupied Khojavend district of Azerbaijan as a weapons and ammunition storage. The drone video shared by Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defence clearly show that Armenian servicemen load arms onto a military truck next to the school building. On the left side of the screen you can see a screenshot from this drone video, while on the right side there is a Google Earth image of the school with location co-ordinates. This is yet another testament to the fact that Armenia is using kindergartens and schools as a cover for its weapons and ammunition depots in the hope that Azerbaijan will not strike them. But in case Azerbaijan does so, there will be "incontrovertible proof" to show the international community that Azerbaijan attacks "schools" and "kindergartens". But even after this school has been converted into a legitimate military target, the armed forces of Azerbaijan did not destroy it and targeted only the military personnel loading ammunition outside the school building.

We also would like to draw the attention of the OSCE community to the continuing deplorable practice of putting pressure, using hate speech and intimidating journalists reporting on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Last week we presented the case of insults and

threats by radical Armenian groups against the French TF1 television channel. Since then similar attacks continued, this time against the *New York Times*, which published an article on the conflict. Azerbaijan has repeatedly called on the Representative on Freedom of the Media to observe relevant media developments in all participating States without exception, political or geographic preferences. The Representative on Freedom of the Media should advocate and promote full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments regarding freedom of expression and free media in a comprehensive, objective and impartial manner in full compliance with its mandate. Unfortunately, we have not yet seen any reaction from the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media on the aforementioned cases and we reiterate our call on the Representative on Freedom of the Media to this end.

We would like to further update the Permanent Council that as a result of the counteroffensive conducted by Azerbaijani armed forces, as of today Azerbaijan liberated four cities, 200 villages and three settlements in the Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Gubadli, Khojavand and the Tartar districts of Azerbaijan, thus implementing United Nations Security Council resolutions 874 and 884 demanding the withdrawal of the occupying forces from these territories of Azerbaijan.

Liberation of these territories disrupted some of the illegal activities, including the illegal exploitation of non-ferrous metal deposits near Vejnali village in the Zangylyan district of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has repeatedly drawn the attention of the OSCE that Armenia and the unlawful regime it has set up in the occupied territories are profiteering economically and financially from the armed conflict and occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan. The illegal economic and other activities in the occupied territories include, *inter alia*, implantation of settlers from Armenia, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere, destruction and appropriation of historical and cultural heritage, permanent infrastructure changes, exploitation, illicit trafficking and trade in natural resources and other forms of wealth, accompanied by substantial and systematic interference with public and private property rights. Certain foreign businesses and entities, including those run by Armenians or based on the Armenian capital, played a decisive role in funding, enabling and facilitating these illegal activities both for private gain and for supporting the prolongation of the occupation of these territories. These activities carried out in flagrant violation of international law were aimed at further consolidating the status quo and preventing the hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani forcibly displaced persons from returning to their homes and properties in those areas. The Prosecutor-General's Office of Azerbaijan under the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code of Azerbaijan launched criminal cases with regard to these illegal activities.

During the investigation by the Prosecutor-General's Office, it was determined by the Ministry of Taxes of the Republic of Azerbaijan that "Base Metals" Closed Joint-Stock Company, a branch of the Vallex Group of companies officially registered in Switzerland, during 2009–2017 illegally exploited non-ferrous metal deposits in Vejnali and made illegal profits amounting in total to 301,918,000 AZN (approximately 152 million euros). Based on the collected evidence, Vartan Sirmakes, a financial investor in the Vallex Group, a citizen of the Swiss Confederation, Valeriy Mejlumyan, head of Vallex Group as well as Arthur Mkrtumyan, CEO of Base Metals CJSC, in connection with the above-mentioned criminal facts, were charged under the provisions of the Criminal Code of Azerbaijan. By the relevant court decisions they were declared internationally wanted in absentia.

The delegation of Azerbaijan would like to reiterate that responsibility for the consequences of any action, including the pursuit of individuals and corporations through the national legal system of Azerbaijan and domestic courts of involved or third party States, which the Republic of Azerbaijan may be obliged to undertake in connection with the unlawful activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in order to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, as well as the rights and legitimate interests of its citizens, will lie entirely with the Republic of Armenia and the engaged natural and legal persons, entities and bodies.

Meanwhile, the amount of military equipment of the Armenian armed forces destroyed and captured by the armed forces of Azerbaijan in the course of our counteroffensive keeps growing. Thus, as of 4 November, Azerbaijani armed forces destroyed and captured 318 tanks of the Armenian armed forces. To compare, in the latest annual exchange of military information within the Vienna Document and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, Armenia declared to possess only 145 tanks. Our armed forces also destroyed and captured 609 artillery pieces, while Armenia declared to have only 242 artillery pieces. These vast differences in numbers speak for themselves and once again testify to Armenia's grave violations of its commitments and obligations under the relevant politico-military instruments, which we repeatedly have been bringing to the attention of the FSC. It also reveals a high scale of militarization of the occupied territories, which pursued the obvious goal to consolidate the unlawful occupation of these territories. One can only wonder how many more pieces of military equipment are still left at the disposal of Armenian armed forces in the occupied territories.

The irresponsible position of Armenia's politico-military leadership expressed in its failure to honour commitments on the humanitarian ceasefire, repeated blatant violations of this ceasefire moments after it enters into force, unabated indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population of Azerbaijan which constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, a series of warmongering statements and public denunciations of peaceful negotiated resolution of the conflict based on agreed core principles, attempts to propagate the illegal puppet regime set up in the occupied territories, are the chief reasons for the current impasse. Armenia's sense of impunity and permissiveness must be urgently addressed by the international community, in particular the OSCE and co-chairing countries of the Minsk Group, since it leaves no room for any meaningful negotiation with the current Armenian Government. Armenia must be brought back to the logic and understandings underlying the OSCE Minsk Group-led negotiation process before it is too late.

To conclude, we reiterate that Armenia must demonstrate in words and deeds that it is genuinely interested in peace in the region; it must cease its policy of annexation and ethnic cleansing; it must comply with its international obligations and withdraw its forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, which will pave the way for the achievement of lasting peace, security and stability in the region.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



1288th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1288, Agenda item 3(e)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of France for delivering the statement on behalf of the co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group. Our delegation has already responded to similar statements of the Co-Chairs and leaders of their countries at the last meeting of the Permanent Council. We also provided our views on recent aggressive actions by Armenia under a previous current issue. So I will refrain from repeating our position, focusing instead on some of the key aspects.

Azerbaijan has a solid track record of pushing for result-oriented substantive negotiations to achieve progress in political resolution of the conflict. To this end, we called for active involvement of the OSCE Minsk Group and none of the members of this group, except Turkey, reciprocated these calls. We call on those States who spoke about the commitments to ceasefire also to implement their own commitments on the basis of peace process as responsible members of the OSCE Minsk Group. We encourage you to restore the ownership of the OSCE over the conflict resolution process, because there are clear problems in the peace process.

The Budapest Summit decision of 1994 strongly endorsed the mediation efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group as a whole and expressed appreciation for the efforts by individual members of the Minsk Group. It established the institution of co-chairmanship of the Minsk Conference to ensure a common and agreed basis for negotiations and to realize full co-ordination in all mediation and negotiation activities. Thus, the role and mandate of the Co-Chairs is identified within its precise limits. This mandate never meant to sideline the Minsk Group or to monopolize the process. Unfortunately, this is what is happening and it is happening with a deafening silence of the Minsk Group members.

It is clear that there can be no business as usual. Assumptions, which were guiding the activities of the Co-Chairs for years, did not work. There is an urgent need to bring the conflict resolution process back on track. The United Nations Security Council resolutions, the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the decisions and documents of the OSCE provide the political and legal framework for the resolution of the conflict, define the mandate of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and identify tasks to be implemented and sequence to be followed. We have communicated our proposals to the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Kasprzyk and the High-Level Planning Group (HLPG). In view of the lack of

clarity on the OSCE's possible role in the resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, we suggest to separate the budget of the Minsk Process, the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and the HLPG from the 2021 Unified Budget Proposal, as it is the case in other conflict cases.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has demonstrated that the military occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan does not represent a solution and will never produce the political outcome desired by Armenia. Azerbaijan will never reconcile with the so-called reality that existed over the last 30 years. Azerbaijan will fully restore its sovereignty and territorial integrity, either through peaceful or politico-military means. In doing so, Azerbaijan implements the United Nations Security Council resolutions, which were supposed to be implemented by the OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We have changed the status quo and created a new reality on the ground that everybody will have to reckon with. Azerbaijan liberated from the Armenian occupation most of its occupied territories.

There is still a chance to resolve the conflict by political means and to save lives. Armenia must start to implement the demands of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and withdraw its armed forces from the remaining occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The Armenian Prime Minister has to denounce the use of force and to recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized boundaries. Implementation of these steps will be conducive for bringing about peace to the region.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.



1288th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1288, Agenda item 3(e)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the distinguished Ambassador of France for presenting to the Permanent Council the statement by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs following their meetings with Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers in Geneva on 30 October. We also thank the delegations of the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, the Holy See, Switzerland, the Russian Federation and Canada for their persistent calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities and adherence to the humanitarian ceasefire agreements of 10, 17 and 25 October.

We appreciate the continued efforts and engagement of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, in particular their latest call on the sides to implement, in full, their commitments, including the immediate establishment of a humanitarian ceasefire, in accordance with the 10 October Moscow Joint Statement, which the sides reaffirmed in Paris on 17 October and in Washington on 25 October. It is worth mentioning that at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Geneva, with the participation of the Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, the sides agreed not to deliberately target civilian populations and non-military objects, and to take steps in line with norms of international humanitarian law. Last night, up until the morning hours, the capital city of Stepanakert was heavily shelled without interruption, also with cluster munitions.

Mr. Chairperson,

Armenia and Artsakh remain committed to the agreements on an immediate cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a humanitarian ceasefire. We are convinced that a sustainable ceasefire, supported by robust international verification mechanisms, is the only viable option for ending the violence.

However, despite the constructive position and adherence of the Armenian sides to humanitarian ceasefire, on 31 October, at 7.08 a.m., a few hours after the agreements had been reached in Geneva, the Azerbaijani armed forces targeted the central market and nearby houses in capital Stepanakert with heavy artillery, once again violating its agreement in accordance with international humanitarian law not to deliberately target civilian populations or non-military objects.

It is clear that Azerbaijan, instigated by Turkey, is continuing its policy of undermining the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and is aiming to further aggravate the situation on the ground, not least by trying to create unbearable conditions for the civilian population. In this context, we have repeatedly noted the extremely destructive actions and interference of Turkey, which is the main obstacle to the establishment of a humanitarian ceasefire. It is no coincidence that after each meeting with the mediation of the Co-Chairs and certain agreements reached, another high-ranking “team” from Ankara lands in Baku. As a result, all agreements are broken by Azerbaijan, and the aggression against Artsakh continues with renewed vigour.

It is already obvious that Turkey intervened in this conflict in pursuit of its own goals. Having promised Baku assistance in a military solution to the conflict, Ankara expects in return to strengthen its politico-military presence in Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chairperson,

Given the direct participation of Turkey in Azerbaijan’s aggression against Armenia and Artsakh, as well as the transfer of Turkish-backed foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists to the South Caucasus as an instrument used by the Turkish Government to project its power into neighbouring regions by creating new hotspots, Armenia can no longer consider this country as a legitimate and equal member of the Minsk Group. Turkey’s membership in the Minsk Group undermines the credibility of this structure and hinders any progress in the settlement process.

Turkey cannot and should not play any role in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We call on participating States to continue to put pressure on Turkey to withdraw its military personnel and weapons from the South Caucasus, along with the affiliated terrorist groups.

Armenia reiterates its commitment to the exclusively peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, on the basis of the three basic principles proposed by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, namely, the non-use or threat of force, territorial integrity, and equal rights and self-determination of peoples, which are all currently violated by Azerbaijan.

As for the four United Nations Security Council resolutions, I believe that I have already reflected on this issue in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner.

I thank you.



1288th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1288, Agenda item 3(g)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF MOLDOVA

Mr. Chairperson,

At the Permanent Council meetings from 8, 15 and 22 October, the Moldovan delegation has raised the issue of the worsening human rights situation in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, as fixed also in the report of the Head of the OSCE Mission, to the Permanent Council.

Regrettably the cases of abduction are continuing. We would like to draw the attention of the OSCE participating States to a recent case of human rights violation which took place on 29 October, in the same locality – Sănătăuca of Camenca district in the Security Zone – where a citizen of the Republic of Moldova, Oleg Babii employed at the State enterprise “Drumuri-Sănătăuca” SA, was abducted and deprived of liberty, by the Tiraspol’s “KGB/MGB” structures, following the same scenario as in the other previous four cases of abductions reported. The information about Mr. Babii disappearance was found out as he hasn’t arrived to the office. His car was seen abandoned on the Camenca-Sănătăuca Bridge. From the available information, Oleg Babii is charged with the so-called “espionage” by the *de facto* structures of the regime in Tiraspol. The person has been intimidated, questioned and put under psychological pressure by the “KGB/MGB” structures.

Following the involvement of State institutions of the Republic of Moldova and the Joint Control Commission, which had its regular meeting on the same day, Mr. Oleg Babii was released, without being informed if he is still charged with criminal offence of so-called “espionage”.

Mr. Chairperson,

Even to this date, the fate of the two illegally detained persons, Mr. Glijin and Mr. Menzarari, abducted on 7 and 8 October, is still unknown. There is no information about the place of their detention, whether they have access to an independent doctor and to a trusted defender, as well as if their families and close relatives can visit them.

The case of the five abducted persons from Camenca has generated new challenges in the security area. We underline that these individual cases are turning into a dangerous tendency with the regime in Tiraspol attempting to cover it with “the fight of terrorism and extremism”.

Mr. Chairperson,

Deterioration of the security and confidence in the region is fed also by the uncontrolled movements of the Russian military convoys from Cobasna ammunition depot. We would like to inform the Permanent Council that on 29 October the Moldovan authorities observed the move of four convoys (ZIL and URAL trucks) from Tiraspol to Cobasna.

Regrettably, the Russian side continues to ignore the appeals of Moldovan authorities to be informed on the content of the military cargos, their final destination, as well as the refusal to be accompanied by the military observers, represents not only an uncertainty, but also a security threat.

It should be emphasized that the military commander of the Moldovan side, in accordance with provisions of the Agreement of 21 July 1992 on the Principles for the Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova and the Decision of the Joint Control Commission, No. 828 of 13 January 2017, proposed that convoys be escorted by military observers, but it was rejected by the Russian side.

In corroboration with the statements made by this delegation at the Permanent Councils on 8, 15 and 22 October, the Republic of Moldova considers that this trend is of nature to hinder the work of the "5+2" format and, in this regard, sustained efforts to prevent the further deterioration of the security situation, which includes the human rights, security matters and freedom of movement in the Transnistrian region are needed.

I ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1288th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1288, Agenda item 3(h)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. Chairperson,

Since the beginning of the counteroffensive, the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan has repeatedly stated that the Azerbaijani armed forces neutralize only legitimate military objects in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and do not target the civilian population and civilian infrastructure, adhering to the principle of distinction. They distinguish at all times peaceful civilians from combatants, as well as civilian from military objects.

In Azerbaijan, civilians continue to suffer from the ongoing Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and the latest aggression of Armenia. Tens of civilians were already killed or injured. Direct or indiscriminate attacks by the Armenian armed forces damaged and destroyed homes, schools, hospitals, places of worship and other civilian infrastructure. Hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis were forced from their homes for more than 28 years.

The armed forces of Azerbaijan and high-level officials have on many occasions appealed to the civilian population in the occupied territories to stay away from the combat zone and that Azerbaijan's armed forces are not fighting against them. Figures on the number of civilians in the occupied territories are varying. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that the number of refugees moved to Armenia due to the last escalation stands around 10,000–20,000 people, while the figures provided by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (EU ECHO) are around 6,800. According to the report of the Sputnik news agency dated 4 November 2020, 70 per cent of the civilian population in the occupied Azerbaijani city of Khankendi is relocated to Armenia.

We are considering the Armenian residents of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan as our citizens and have properly instructed our armed forces to follow the necessary guidelines on protection of civilians and international humanitarian law standards. After liberation of the occupied territories both Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region will resume their relations and inter-communal life as they lived before the conflict.

The Armenian side employs a broad disinformation campaign and produces fake news in order to demonstrate that Azerbaijani armed forces are targeting the civilian population and infrastructure, as well as to divert attention from and cover up Armenia's own attacks on the civilian population of Azerbaijan. Last week, we demonstrated that just at the

same time as Armenian armed forces attacked Barda city, Armenian propagandists spread fake news about the alleged bombardment by Azerbaijan and Turkey of a maternity hospital in Khankendi with F-16 jets. It was clear that the shared photos depicted an abandoned building rather than a functional hospital, as there were no traces of damaged medical equipment or even elementary pieces of furniture. Another recent example is an unsophisticated and unprofessional fake created by the Armenian side, depicting a missile fired at a civilian area in the occupied territories. Taking a closer look at the photo, one can easily notice that the producers of this fake have even forgotten to remove the spider net from the munition.

United Nations High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet in her statement of 2 November 2020 confirmed that many images circulating on social media on alleged violations of international humanitarian law are fake. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Defence and the Prosecutor General Office of Azerbaijan take seriously any allegations of alleged non-compliance with international humanitarian law and promptly investigate them. Thus, the alleged shooting of Armenian prisoners of war in social media was investigated accordingly and it was found that it was a fabricated fake video.

Azerbaijan transferred unilaterally to Armenia the remains of 30 fallen Armenian servicemen via a pre-agreed corridor with the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Azerbaijani side has hundreds more deceased Armenian servicemen, which we are ready to hand over to Armenia immediately and we call on the ICRC and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office to facilitate this. Moreover, Azerbaijan consistently has been proposing to exchange all prisoners of war on the basis of “all for all” principle.

However, the Armenian side politicizes the issue and uses every pretext in order to drag by all means third countries and their troops into the conflict and in the combat zone, even abusing the humanitarian issues. The discussions on the modalities of the humanitarian ceasefire and related commitments are still ongoing. Meanwhile, we urge the Armenian side not to lose its human face and collect and return the remains of fallen Azerbaijani servicemen without any delay.

Armenia is anxiously looking for videos of Azerbaijan’s alleged violations of international humanitarian law. Instead, we call on Armenia to direct its efforts towards investigating the reports in social media regarding its own grave violations of international humanitarian law, including the disturbing reports attesting to inhumane and degrading treatment of corpses of deceased Azerbaijani servicemen by feeding the dead bodies of our servicemen to pigs. This attests to the barbaric nature of the Armenian armed forces in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The Armenian Ambassador should reflect on these reports, which I am sure he is aware of and come to terms with morale.

It is utterly deplorable that despite the renewed commitment reached in Geneva on 30 October not to deliberately target civilian populations or non-military objects, the armed forces of Armenia immediately violated it and continued direct and indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population and civilian objects in Azerbaijan far away from the front line in a gross violation of its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

Last week we informed the Permanent Council that Barda district and city have been subjected to heinous attacks by the Armenian armed forces two times in a row on 28 and 29 October, the second attack being thus far the deadliest single attack on civilian areas of Azerbaijan, which left 21 civilians dead and more than 70 seriously wounded. This war crime and a crime against humanity, which once again exposed the terrorist nature of Armenia's military-political leadership, also gained attention of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. In their respective reports, these two non-governmental organizations have confirmed the use of cluster munitions by Armenia for killing civilians in Barda.

Armenia's actions are aimed at inflicting indiscriminate or disproportionate harm not only to Azerbaijani civilians, but also to the Azerbaijani citizens of Armenian origin residing in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Amidst the reports that civilians are leaving Khankendi, Shusha and other settlements, the Armenian side introduced more restrictions on free movement in the occupied territories and closed the Khankendi-Lachyn road for use by civilians. Obviously, Armenia intends to use them as a human shield, putting them in harm's way.

Moreover, the evidence suggests that Armenian armed forces are using kindergartens and school areas as military ammunition depots and for other military purposes, knowing exactly that the armed forces of Azerbaijan make a clear distinction between the civilian objects and military targets.

The most effective way to protect civilians is to prioritize respect for international law in all circumstances and by all available means, along with ensuring the earliest resolution of this conflict by demanding from Armenia to withdraw its forces from the remaining occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.