



United States Mission to the OSCE

U.S. Statement on the Situation Regarding Nagorno-Karabakh

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 8, 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States calls on both sides to end the violence immediately, to draw on existing tools, including direct communication links, to deescalate. We encourage the sides to reduce tensions by avoiding belligerent rhetoric and actions, and to return to substantive negotiations under the auspices of the Minsk Group. Negotiating, in good faith, without preconditions is the only way to achieve the lasting peace the people of the region deserve. The United States reiterates that participation in the escalating violence by any external party only exacerbates regional tensions.

As noted in the Secretary's October 5 joint statement with the Foreign Ministers of fellow Minsk Group Co-Chairs Russia and France, the United States condemns in the strongest terms the escalation of violence along the *Line of Contact*, as well as recent attacks allegedly targeting areas with civilian populations on the territory of Armenia and Azerbaijan. We are alarmed at increasing civilian casualties and deplore the loss of human life. We extend our condolences to the families of those killed or injured.

We support the Co-Chairs' call on October 3rd for an urgent and immediate humanitarian ceasefire to enable the repatriation of remains under the auspices of the OSCE and *International Committee of the Red Cross*. We also echo their calls for the sides to observe fully their obligations under international law, including to protect civilian populations. Deliberately targeting civilians is never acceptable under any circumstances.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.