

**AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ
ATƏT YANINDA
DAİMİ NÜMAYƏNDƏLİYİ**



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN
TO THE OSCE**

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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**28th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council
Stockholm, 2-3 December 2021**

Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate H.E. Ms. Ann Linde, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for hospitality and excellent organization of the Ministerial Council. I wish every success to our distinguished colleague H.E. Mr. Zbigniew Rau of Poland as the incoming Chairperson-in-Office.

Dear Colleagues,

The Ministerial Council meeting almost coincided with the first anniversary of the trilateral statement of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation that put an end to the armed conflict and set the agreed parameters for establishing durable peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This statement was further complemented by the trilateral statement of 11 January 2021, specifically dealing with the opening of transport communications in the region.

“Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” that lasted for almost 30 years is over. Immediately after the end of the conflict, Azerbaijan has proactively engaged in large-scale construction works in the liberated territories.

To this end, only this year \$1.3 billion has been allocated from the State budget. We have already accomplished construction of infrastructure and facilities, such as highways and airports. Cultural and religious monuments vandalized, desecrated or misappropriated during occupation are now being rebuilt and renovated.

Thus, the traces of occupation are being eliminated and the return to normal life is well underway. The OSCE, with its experience and available tools in post-conflict rehabilitation, can contribute to this process. We have proposed the OSCE to be engaged in targeted and demand-driven practical cooperation with Azerbaijan and are still expecting response.

In the meantime, the end of the conflict presents a unique opportunity for both Armenia and Azerbaijan to move forward in building good-neighborly inter-State relations on the basis of mutual recognition of and respect for each other’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders.

Azerbaijan repeatedly emphasized its readiness, in this regard, and took several unilateral steps in practice immediately after the end of the conflict. Armenia is yet to reciprocate. In this context, continued violations by Armenia of its commitments under the trilateral statements are source of serious concern. Armenia has yet to comply with the 10 November trilateral statement and fully withdraw its armed forces from the territories of Azerbaijan.

Delay in restoration of all economic and transport links in the region must be ceased. It is a significant confidence-building and post-conflict normalization measure, along with its vast economic benefits for all concerned. Soonest operationalization of the Zangezur corridor is needed not only for unobstructed movement of persons, vehicles and cargo between mainland Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, it will also restore transport communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan in both directions, and thus, will serve the cause of irreversible peace and cooperation, and create new unprecedented opportunities for the whole region.

Armenia has also failed to submit full and accurate maps of all mined areas. This slows down the process of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction in the liberated territories, and poses a serious barrier to the return of internally displaced persons to their homes in safety and dignity. Presently, Azerbaijan is among the most heavily mined countries in the world. Since the signing of the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020, 181 citizens of Azerbaijan, including 70 civilians, among them journalists and other media workers, have been killed or seriously wounded due to explosions of mines indiscriminately laid by Armenia. Additional pressure needs to be exerted on Armenia to provide accurate maps of all mined areas, in line with its obligations under customary international humanitarian law.

Furthermore, Armenia has yet to implement its obligations with regard to identifying the whereabouts of close to 4000 Azerbaijanis missing since the armed hostilities in early 1990s. This is important for healing the wounds of the former conflict.

Distinguished Ministers,

With liberation of territories of Azerbaijan from occupation, the justice and order are restored, replacing the so-called “reality” that Armenia had created by force in violation of international law. As a result, peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan is within reach for the first time after nearly three decades.

In this regard, the meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Armenia in Sochi on November 26 proved to be a significant step forward. The three leaders held detailed and substantive discussions on the implementation of previously agreed parameters and also identified further steps related to post-conflict normalization. The establishment by the end of this year of a bilateral Armenia-Azerbaijan commission, with consultative role of the Russian Federation, for border delimitation and demarcation is of particular importance. Azerbaijan expects that these agreements will be realized in practice without delay and contribute to our goal of transforming the South Caucasus into more stable and predictable space.

At the current critical juncture, joint efforts by entire international community are needed to help consolidate security and stability. The best thing the international community could do now is to avoid reinvigorating false expectations, and instead, focus all its efforts towards contributing to the full implementation of the trilateral statements and practical engagement with Armenia and Azerbaijan for building confidence and stability in the region.

The OSCE Minsk Group can also be helpful in post-conflict context in normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In view of changed realities, we call upon our colleagues and partners to assess and take advantage of new promising opportunities in the region for development and cooperation.

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

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.