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

Statement
In Response to Azerbaijan
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1061st Meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council
July 02, 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

Displacement has been a feature of Armenian people in 20 century. It is difficult to find an Armenian both in Armenia and Diaspora whose ancestors have not been displaced. Nowadays Armenia is receiving tens of thousands Syrian Armenian refugees whose group has been displaced for the second time in last century. Thus, we know what it means to be a refugee and displaced in both social and cultural dimension of this phenomenon and we certainly join the commemoration of the World Refugee Day with strong feelings and sympathy.

We took note of the statement of the distinguished representative of Azerbaijan and would like to make some comments in this regard.

Unfortunately, the interest of Azerbaijan towards the topic of refugees and IDPs is not consistent. Azerbaijan is the only OSCE participating State, which hinders humanitarian access of the UNHCR and UN special procedures to Nagorno-Karabakh, where, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on IDPs of the year 2008 30 thousand Armenian IDPs are residing. Azerbaijan does not offer any policy of return or compensation to more than 400 000 Armenian refugees, who were forcibly displaced from Azerbaijan in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Human rights of refugees should come first and the suffering of displaced population should not be instrumentalized to gain political advantages in conflict resolution. Back in 90s both Armenia and Azerbaijan held hundreds of thousand refugee population. In the proportion of its original population Armenia had more displaced population than Azerbaijan. Yet Armenia did not build refugee camps and opted for local integration, which has been only possible durable solution. Yet Azerbaijan did everything to sustain and even augment the declared number of displaced population at the expense of realization of human rights of the displaced population.

Finally, we wish to remind the Azerbaijani side that the issue of refugees is among the elements of the negotiation process of peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Thank You.