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

Statement

On the Escalation of Situation along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan
delivered by the Permanent Delegation of Armenia at the 1135th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
March 02, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent escalation of situation along the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

According to the Press Release of Nagorno-Karabakh Ministry of Defence on February 25, which was circulated in the OSCE by my delegation same day, during the period from between 3:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m., the Azerbaijani army attempted to attack simultaneously in south-eastern (Martuni) and eastern (Akna) directions of the Line of Contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan by deploying mine-clearance equipment and special devices.

The NKR Defense Army units timely detected the advance of Azerbaijani units on both directions and drove them back to their initial positions.

Some members of subversive group fled away leaving their killed and wounded in the neutral zone. The NK Defence Army did not suffer any casualties.

All the process of the failed incursion of the Azerbaijani subversive group, its advancement to the military positions of the NK Defence Army subsequent neutralization was recorded by the surveillance systems of the NK Defence Army. The video footage was provided to the Armenian side and was presented to the military attaches accredited in the Republic of Armenia and is currently available in open sources. We will distribute the relevant link¹. The evidence clearly indicates deliberate violation of the ceasefire regime by Azerbaijan.

The NK Defence Army agreed to let Azerbaijani side to retrieve the bodies of its five servicemen from neutral zone and on February 27, this humanitarian action was accomplished under the mediation of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office with the participation of the ICRC representatives and Field Assistants to the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

Mr. Chairman,

¹ See <http://www.ombudsokr.am/en/ann040317.html>

The situation along the Line of Contact continues to remain tense. According to the information of the NK Defence Army, movement in manpower and military equipment of Azerbaijani forces was observed in the eastern direction. The above attacks were followed by intensive shelling of military positions and settlements, including the civilian infrastructure of Talish village along the Line of Contact. The Azerbaijani armed units used also heavy weapons, in particular D-30 120 mm. howitzers and TR-107 multiple rocket launchers of Turkish production.

We resolutely condemn the continuous provocations of Azerbaijan aimed at further eroding the ceasefire regime and escalating the conflict to the stage of large-scale hostilities.

The entire responsibility for the recent ceasefire violations and caused casualties falls on the Azerbaijani leadership, which continues undermining of the ceasefire regime, established by the 1994 and 1995 tripartite ceasefire agreements and meantime denying proper monitoring and verification of the ceasefire regime by the OSCE.

We would like to stress also the continued negative role of Turkey in escalation of the situation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in its press-release openly supported Azerbaijan, which can serve as encouragement to undertake further measures aimed at escalation of the tension. Similar support this time along kinship and religious solidarity lines was voiced out by Turkish President at the Economic Cooperation Organization summit, recently held in Islamabad. Exploiting religion in order to justify use of force is a very dangerous move, which should be unequivocally condemned.

We underline the urgent need to implement agreements of Vienna and St. Petersburg Summits on establishment of an OSCE investigative mechanism and enhancement of the PRCiO monitoring and verification capacities. A strong OSCE permanent presence in the conflict zone, equipped by modern surveillance technologies and human resources could serve as restraining factor against attempts to escalate the conflict.

The side who rejects such a presence is responsible for escalation on the ground and its meaningless casualties.

Thank you.

Response to the Delegations of Azerbaijan and Turkey

There is only one point, out of the emotional outburst of Ambassador of Azerbaijan, which deserves to be addressed. Unlike the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan, the word “enemy” is not used even in the press releases of the Ministry of Defence of Armenia referring to the hostilities on the ground, while this word is widely used in Azerbaijani official media to portray Armenian people per se.

The statement of the distinguished Ambassador of Turkey clearly revealed once again that Turkey is part of the problem, not solution.

Thank You.