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

Statement

On the Fight against Violent Extremism, Radicalization leading to Terrorism

as delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1158th Special Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, we would like to thank Chairman-in-Office Minister of Foreign Affairs and Integration of Austria Sebastian Kurz, to the Permanent Council and thank him for his timely and forward looking address.

We would also like to Secretary General Thomas Greminger and Professor Peter Neumann OSCE Chairperson in Office's Special Representative on Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism for their reports.

Armenia appreciates the efforts of the Austrian Chairmanship to address violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism as a high priority of the Organization. There are two important realities which give eminence to this priority.

First, all participating states affected by activities of terrorists, which impose global security threat and second there is consensus to address these threats in the OSCE despite diverging views on other issues of the European security. At this uneasy time of sustained contradictions in the OSCE this consensus should be particularly valued and continuously built on.

Mr. Chairperson,

We certainly agree that no any religion should be associated with terrorism or violent extremism. That being said we cannot overlook two facts. First, terrorists, who often act in the name of a religion while promoting a peculiar form of religious solidarity. Second, they target particular religious or ethnic communities.

Armenia considers the countering and preventing violence against religious groups and their members as an important part of overall fight against violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism. The mass atrocities and genocidal violence perpetrated by ISIL and ANF against Christians, Yazidis and members of other religious groups have been strongly condemned by number of participating states and we appreciate all efforts to protect these communities and ensure their right to life and existence in their ancestral homeland. Armenia looks forward to

be actively involved in OSCE cooperation which will aim at countering and preventing violence against Christians and other members of religious groups.

OSCE as an organization with multidimensional approach to security is well placed to address persistent political and structural drivers of radicalization. We subscribe to the view that states, as duty bearers have main responsibility to counter violent extremism and radicalization under their jurisdiction as much as they have responsibility to ensure fundamental freedoms including freedom of expression and association.

In our view the lack of freedom of expression and association, independent civil society coupled by constant promotion of identity based hatred creates fertile ground for violent extremism and radicalization. Hate narratives should not be manipulated let alone promoted by states but they should be dispelled by dialogue to which vibrant civil society should be a genuine part.

Constant flow of foreign terrorist fighters should be thoroughly assessed and those societies who produce those fighters need to do a self assessment in order to evade the destiny of those countries where their members go en masse.

Mr. Chairperson,

Any attempt to use terrorist organizations or adopt their tactic within the existing conflicts has always been and will remain counterproductive. Attempts to campaign along religious lines and seek religious solidarities in the context of conflict do not merely create dangerous liaisons but at some point are destined to serve as powerful driver of radicalization in own country. There are too many examples not to be caught in this dangerous illusion.

Thank you.