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

ENGLISH only

**Statement**

**In Reply to the Ms. Christine Beerli, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross**

**delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1160th Meeting of the OSCE**

**Permanent Council**

**October 12, 2017**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to start by thanking Ms Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Christine Beerli for outlining the activities of the ICRC and sharing her ideas on better interaction between the OSCE and the ICRC.

Armenia highly values the principles of impartiality and neutrality upon which the very concept of ICRC had been anchored and we always consider that effective implementation of these principles in practice without exception is an essential prerequisite for successful and sustainable humanitarian engagement.

The ICRC accumulated valuable experience in addressing humanitarian needs of people living in conflict areas and the outreach of ICRC remains critical for the plight of civilians.

The ICRC is the only permanent international humanitarian presence in Nagorno-Karabakh. We appreciate the cooperation of the ICRC with the NK authorities along with close interaction with the OSCE permanent presence on the ground in conflict zone. The humanitarian response of the ICRC to the last April escalation in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict area, due to large scale military offensive, has been largely proportionate and effective. We have already referred to various aspects of the ICRC humanitarian actions last year at the level of the Permanent Council and thus we would like to elaborate only on some ongoing activities.

The protection of people residing in conflict areas is essential. We appreciate close involvement of ICRC to protect schools and kindergartens through construction of safe rooms and protection walls. The economic empowerment of households through providing means of subsistence is another important undertaking. We believe that valuable experience

of ICRC in this field can be used and developed by OSCE conflict related field operations in mitigating economic consequences of conflicts through confidence building measures including harvest time cease-fires.

We believe that all instances of ceasefire violations which entail losses among civilians should be thoroughly investigated and thus OSCE investigative mechanism into cease fire violations are particularly important in the environment where civilians may become targets or human shields.

The ICRC involvement in assisting the sides to implement international humanitarian law is of utmost importance. Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh implement international humanitarian law without any conditionality. Our adherence to Geneva conventions and its protocols have never been pre-conditioned by reciprocity. However reciprocity is important since it enables an environment of comprehensive respect of IHL. We regret that on many instances our strong adherence have not been responded if not same at least in similar manner. I will not come up here with list of our concerns and I will refer only to the case which was brought by us in the Permanent Council. Armenia raised the issue of detention of Armenian citizen Mr. Zaven Karapetyan by Azerbaijani armed forces and reminded Azerbaijani side that under similar conditions in June 2016 an Azerbaijani citizen Ms. Hatiba Alakbarova who according to Azerbaijani side was mentally ill crossed the border with Armenia. In three days, Armenia through ICRC returned the citizen of Azerbaijan. So far Azerbaijani side did not return Mr. Zaven Karapetyan. There is a record of torture and extrajudicial killings of the Armenian civilians captured by Azerbaijan and we strongly urge Azerbaijan to protect civilians in line with Geneva Conventions

As far as exchange of information on missing persons is concerned, de-politization of this purely humanitarian issue is essential in registering further progress. Instead of inflating numbers of missing persons or designating them as putative prisoners of war the sides need to cooperate at the level of relevant state commissions.

Thank you.