



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **U.S. Statement on the Position of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs on the Nagorno-Karabakh Settlement**

As delivered by Deputy Political Counselor Lane Darnell Bahl  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 22, 2020

The United States fully supports the efforts of the *Minsk Group Co-Chairs* to facilitate a ceasefire and to bring Armenia and Azerbaijan back to the negotiation table. This is the only framework accepted by all.

The United States as a *Co-Chair* of the *Minsk Group* condemns in the strongest terms the violence along the *Line of Contact* and especially any attacks on civilian populations. The Foreign Ministers committed themselves on October 10, and again on October 17, to a humanitarian ceasefire to facilitate the exchange of detainees and the return of remains.

Azerbaijan and Armenia must take immediate steps to honor this agreement in full in order to prevent catastrophic consequences for the region. We call on external parties not to contribute to the ongoing violence, but instead to use their influence to urge both sides to adhere to the humanitarian ceasefire and to return to substantive negotiations under the auspices of the *Minsk Group Co-Chairs*.

The United States deplores the increasing civilian casualties and extends our condolences to the families of those killed or injured. We call on the sides to observe fully their obligations under international humanitarian law, including their obligations related to protection of civilians and civilian objects.

We urge the sides to support the work of the *Co-Chairs* and the *Chair-in-Office's Personal Representative*, who together with the *International Committee of the Red Cross*, are ready to facilitate the return of prisoners of war, captives, and remains.

We call on the sides to cease inflammatory rhetoric and actions, and to urgently redouble their efforts to complete substantive settlement negotiations based on the accepted basic principles.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.