



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RAUF ENGİN SOYSAL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY
2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Opening Plenary Session
Warsaw, 11 September 2017**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I may slightly exceed the usually allotted time limit. I do seek your indulgence as the messages I have to impart are of great importance.

I begin by recognizing Ms. Gisladottir, as she embarks upon her first HDIM as our new ODIHR Director. I would like to express our appreciation to our Polish hosts for their traditional generous hospitality.

This HDIM commences at a time where our common security and stability are faced with multifaceted risks. Numerous terrorist attacks have claimed so many innocent lives since last September. We offer our condolences over all those who perished in those dastardly attacks which targeted our common values and, therefore, all of us.

They have caused and deepened a sense of insecurity, also exacerbating already existing evil phenomena such as racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. Within this context, they have fanned the rise of Islamophobia in large swaths across the OSCE. This is a particularly dangerous dynamic, where exclusion and alienation on the one hand, radicalization and violence on the other, fuel each other. We have to break this cycle.



Mr. Chairperson,

The HDIM is the most important forum in the OSCE's human dimension. It provides a unique opportunity to collectively make progress in the vital area of human rights.

It is essential, to make the best use of this meeting to develop a common understanding and narrative with regard to the challenges and risks that threaten the delicate balance between security and rights and freedoms. The participation of the true representatives of civil society enriches HDIM. We value their work and contribution to the advancement of human rights. But we must be vigilant against those who wish to infiltrate our meetings for ulterior motives.

Our times are clouded by the crisis in and around Ukraine, by the scourges of terrorism and racism, by stresses caused by massive influx of refugees and migrants. Turkey is deeply affected by all these emergencies. We, moreover, are still trying to grapple with and uproot an insidious terrorist organization that tried to hijack our state apparatus, first by infiltration and then by outright violence. Just like in other areas, we believe we are justified in expecting full cooperation and solidarity from our partners in our quest to deliver justice to those who killed hundreds of our citizens and bombarded our parliament for their sinister objectives.

Mr. Chairperson,

My initial statement was what I just read out, with some minor differences, and concluding paragraphs wishing success. Now, I have come to the part we were compelled to add at the last minute.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE is a security organization. It aims at bolstering our security through its unique concepts and toolbox. If the OSCE does not serve to bolstering our security, then it will have diverged from its intent and purpose.



We carefully examined the participants to this year's HDIM. Among them is a so-called NGO, namely the "Journalists' and Writers' Foundation". Some moments ago, I referred to the coup attempt in my country last year that was staged by a terrorist organization led by Fethullah Gülen. Well, according to the website of this so-called NGO, guess who they have as their honorary president. It is the same Fethullah Gülen! It is simply revolting that I will be expected to sit around the same table with persons so closely linked to those who used our own military equipment, including fighter jets and tanks, to murder 250 of our citizens, to wound over two thousand others, to bombard our parliament, and to overthrow our elected government and to assassinate our President.

This entity is so closely linked to the Fethullahist Terror Organization, "FETÖ", that it was among the first to be banned in Turkey, less than two weeks after the attempted coup horror. The United Nations also took action against this entity, revoking its consultative status with the ECOSOC earlier this year. But, here we are, in a meeting brandishing their names among its participants, despite the alerts we gave in line with the relevant OSCE commitments, including Helsinki Document which prevents participation of those "resorting to the use of violence or publicly condoning terrorism or the use of violence."

This is not the way to advance security as the OSCE intends. This is certainly no way to advance human rights. To the contrary, this is a betrayal to the OSCE which we helped establish and flourish over the decades. We will certainly continue on this path to both protect and assist our organization in its noble quest to advance our security. This is why we will not be part of this betrayal. It is also with the same spirit that we will take any additional measure and stance we may deem necessary to ensure that such betrayal does not recur.

It saddens me deeply that our official delegation has to leave this HDIM, but I re-assure you that this is done with the sole purpose of protecting the OSCE itself.

Thank you and good-bye.

