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**Statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan
at 878th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
1 September 2011**

ENGLISH only

As for delivery by Ambassador G.Israfilov

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Our Delegation takes note of the fact that the EU and USA monitor the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the rule of law in Azerbaijan.

We would like to see this practice to be applied to the situation of Azerbaijani IDPs who were expelled violently from their homes of origin in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan as well as Azerbaijani refugees. At least, it would ensure a fair and balanced approach to the entire third basket of this Organization, but not to the issues which are on the agenda of some participating States.

Almost every eight person in Azerbaijan is IDP and refugee. Azerbaijan is doing its best to alleviate the plight of IDPs and refugees. At the same time, we expect the international community, particularly the EU and USA to devote similar attention and care to the fate of that part of our population, their property rights, the rights to live in their homes and the lands of origin.

For the last two decades we have hardly heard the EU or USA urging Armenia to allow displaced Azerbaijanis to return to their lands, to restore their property rights and to enjoy their basic and fundamental rights.

Therefore we don't accept such a selective approach to the issue of human rights in Azerbaijan as it undermines the universality of human security.

For these reasons, we don't accept the reference that could be made by some delegations that issues of IDPs and refugees are discussed in the framework of

the OSCE Minsk Group and this is the only proper forum for the consideration of the situation.

Coming to specific points raised by the EU, we would like to provide our immediate reaction and reserve the right to come back to them if necessary at next meetings of the PC.

“Recent demolition of houses”

We express our concern that the EU and USA statements delivered today are based on the information provided by NGOs concerned.

The renovation and reconstruction activities in that part of Baku city is already ongoing for two years. Every individual who left property since that time had been properly compensated with finances provided that he or she possesses property rights. Compensation value is assessed at the level of 15000 Azerbaijani manat per one square meter that is equal to 2000 USA dollar per one square meter.

We can not understand why the EU expresses its concern about an issue without studying it and having consultation with the authorities concerned.

If the EU is interested in getting more information before speaking in the PC, it can get in touch the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OSCE or through its diplomatic representations in Baku.

“Political prisoners”

This politically exploited phenomenon has not found its proper legal assessment and definition neither in the CoE nor in the OSCE framework.

We are concerned that EU uses this politically motivated language with respect to Azerbaijan. We believe that it doesn't correspond to the principles of developing partnership between EU and Azerbaijan.

We have already spoken several times on the issue of demonstration and don't see the necessity to repeat ourselves.

The same points are valid with regard to the so called youth activities and bloggers B. Hajiyeu and C.Savalan imprisoned due to the illegal activities. We suggest EU and others not to politicize these issues and respect the results of the court's decision.

The Government of Azerbaijan will extend the invitation to the rapporteur of PA of CoE as soon as there is an agreement among member states of the CoE on the definition of terms of political prisoners.

Finally, Azerbaijani Delegation is ready to provide more detailed responses on any inquiries related to the above-mentioned issues.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.