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PRESS RELEASE

Deplorable attempt by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to politicize death of the journalist

Vienna, 18 August 2015 – In response to the press release distributed by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) on August 11, 2015, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OSCE rejects the attempt by the Representative Mijatovic to politicize the tragedy resulting in the death of Azerbaijani journalist Mr. Rasim Aliyev. The tone of the press-release and the emphasis made by Ms. Mijatovic' Office indicate that the OSCE RFoM is unaware of essence of the incident as well as of the steps and position of the Government of Azerbaijan taken in response to it. Regretfully, the OSCE Representative again resorted to its usual practice of making hasty conclusions and unfounded allegations without contacting the authorities concerned for clarifications as it is required by the mandate.

Mr. Rasim Aliyev was beaten by a group of unknown people on August 8, 2015, in the Bayil district of Baku. As a result of multiple injuries he was delivered to the Clinical Medical Center where he died on August 9, 2015. The incident got a huge resonance in the Azerbaijani society. The President of Azerbaijan condemned the killing of journalist, called it as “*a threat to the freedom of expression and information, and to free activity of media in the country*” and ordered law-enforcement authorities to conduct full investigation and find those responsible for the act. In result of relevant measures suspects were brought to the investigation and detained in line with the decision of the court. Detailed information on the current status of investigation is publicly available and broadly distributed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Office of the General Prosecutor of Azerbaijan.

Violence against journalists, unfortunately, is an increasingly globally observed phenomena and none of the OSCE participating States is ensured against such crimes. Critically important is the capacity to accurately assess such incidents, conduct objective and fair investigation, find responsible and bring them to justice. The Azerbaijani authorities have undertaken all of these steps and the Azerbaijani society accepted it with understanding and extended it support. This is a clear sign of an evolutionary developing dialogue and engagement established between the Government of Azerbaijan on one side and civil society institutions, political parties and activists and media, on the other.

Ms. Mijatovic repeatedly inaccurate assessments of situation of media in Azerbaijan and regular violations of the mandate entrusted to her by the OSCE participating-States point to the necessity of much-needed improvements in the RFoM performance. The Permanent Mission expects that the OSCE Representative Mijatovic and her Office ultimately will take due note of the critics raised by Azerbaijan as well as other OSCE participating States at numerous occasion in the OSCE.