



---

Hügelgasse 2, A-1130, Wien | Tel.: + 43 (1) 403 13 22 | Fax: + 43 (1) 403 13 23 | E-mail: vienna@mission.mfa.gov.az

**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
1149<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,  
8 June 2017**

*in response to the Delegation of the United States of America  
on the case of Afgan Mukhtarli*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

In response to the issue of Mr. Afgan Mukhtarli, I would like to refer to the comments made by the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Mr. Hikmat Hajiyev, made on 5 June, which is publicly available.

The State Border Service and the Prosecutor General's Office of Azerbaijan thoroughly explained the reason for Afgan Mukhtarli's arrest in their Joint Statement of 1 June, 2017. Georgian relevant authorities also made their statements on this issue. Attempts to politicize this legal issue are counterproductive and those who try to undermine Azerbaijan-Georgia relations by deliberately politicizing the issue will not succeed. The historical friendship and strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Georgia are based on the principles of common interests, mutually beneficial cooperation and respect, non-interference in each other's domestic affairs, and not using their territory against each other.

Mr. Chairman,

On this issue, I would like also draw attention of the Permanent Council to the Press Release distributed by the ODIHR Director Mr. Link, who voiced alarm over alleged abduction and ill-treatment of Azerbaijani journalist.

Mr. Chairman, through you, I would like to address the Director of the OSCE institution, which have been empowered by this body to represent all OSCE participating States, with the following questions. Soonest response to these questions would be extremely helpful for our Delegation to come to the conclusion on the effectiveness of this institution in the view of upcoming appointment of the head of the institution.

First question is, what are the basis for such a statement made by Director of ODIHR? Where from the Director of ODIHR derives his mandatory authority to make such a statement in response to this case? As far as we know, we have not empowered ODIHR to be a monitoring, watchdog exercising institution of OSCE.

Second question is, what are the sources of information that Director of ODIHR uses traditionally or regularly in his public statements distributed at the OSCE websites and in this case related to Azerbaijani journalist. While there are publicly available responses of relevant authorities of OSCE participating States, Director of ODIHR deliberately refers to the allegations made by a lawyer of the detained person. So, the question is what are procedures that Director of ODIHR utilizes for making such judgments publicly.

Thank you.

