



STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

1038th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council February 5, 2015

Abduction and capture of Azerbaijani civilians by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan remains deeply concerned with continuous violations of human rights of the Azerbaijani civilians Mr. Dilgam Askerov and Mr. Shahbaz Guliyev, who have been illegally captured in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan by Armenia. These persons are being subject to torture and degrading behavior by the occupying forces, which is evident by the latest photos released by the Armenian mass media. As per media reports, the occupying forces have invited Georgian doctors to visit the hostages in the face of their deteriorating health conditions.

As it was previously stated by our Delegation these persons, who attempted to visit the graveyards of their natives was taken hostage by occupying forces in the Kelbajar region of Azerbaijan in July 2014. Armenia makes a notorious attempt to use the captured persons to propagate the illegal regime established on the occupied territories and in this regard, has fabricated silly claims against them and designed a so-called "court" over these hostages.

The Azerbaijani side once again reminds the Armenian side of its obligations under international humanitarian law to respect the rights of civilians during the armed conflicts. We reiterate once again that taking hostages, as well as torture, cruel, inhumane and other degrading behavior against the civilian population of the territories under occupation is prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Illegal capture of the Azerbaijani civilians once again testifies Armenia's notorious practice of ethnic intolerance. This has been already manifested through unprecedented ethnic cleansing against the Azerbaijani population of Armenia *per se* and the occupied Azerbaijani territories, in the result of which no single Azerbaijani was left in neither Armenia nor in the occupied territories. For the sake of comparison, I have to underline that in all protracted conflict zones in the OSCE area the indigenous people, to some extent are allowed to live in or return to their native lands, as it was also the case even under the Nazi occupation. But the Republic of Armenia continues to demonstrate intolerance to the

Azerbaijanis wishing to visit their homes. This illustrates the true essence of the policy of the Republic of Armenia that is based on ethnic discrimination.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is the third time that the Delegation of Azerbaijan raises concerns on this issue. Regrettably, we don't see any action or condemnation of Armenian violations either by the representatives of the OSCE structures or OSCE participating States. In this regard, we strongly urge the OSCE Participating States to undertake necessary measures to persuade the Armenian side to immediately release the abducted and illegally captured Azerbaijanis, especially in view of their deteriorating health conditions.

I ask this statement to be duly registered in the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.