



STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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

Alarming trend of Islamophobic attacks in the OSCE area

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan expresses its deep concern over rising Islamophobic incidents in some OSCE participating States as manifested in increasing number of attacks on Mosques and threats against Muslims in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks committed in Paris.

Our Delegation, while joining other OSCE participating States in strongly condemning the heinous terrorist attacks in Paris, continues to believe that this act of terrorism cannot be used as a pretext for attacks on and harassments against Muslims.

While Islamophobic incidents are unfortunately not new, it is of deep regret to note a marked increase in attacks, in particular in EU member States, in the wake of the terrorist acts committed in Paris last month. We have been alarmed with increasing number of police raids against the Mosques, which can only deepen the prejudice against Muslims to the detriment of inter-cultural harmony and dialogue.

In total, more than hundred anti-Muslim incidents occurred in last January only in France. Amongst the incidents, a mosque in Le Mans was hit with four grenades and gunfire directed through one its windows. In Vienna, a mosque used by the Vienna Islamic Centre was defaced by Islamophobic graffiti and pig parts were left in front of it.

It is of extreme concern that the Islamophobic incidents were in some instances instigated by public figures, including the MPs. Thus, the leader of the Dawn of Direct Democracy movement in the Czech Republic Tomio Okamura in his public appeal called on the people “to bother Muslims in the Czech Republic by walking pigs in the vicinity of mosques”.

In this context, we recall that in accordance with the OSCE decisions all participating States are responsible for promoting tolerance and non-discrimination and call on the participating States concerned to strongly condemn Islamophobic attacks and to take effective measures to prevent their

re-occurrence in line with their relevant OSCE commitments with regard to combating manifestations of intolerance against Muslims.

We call on those states, which had the cases of Islamophobic attacks to promptly investigate these incidents to find the responsible and inform the Council on the steps undertaken to improve the situation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson