



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

1049th Meeting of the Permanent Council

30th April 2015

Situation in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Mr. Chairperson,

Our delegation consistently raise its concerns over disturbing situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan with a view to updating the members of the Council on different aspects of the situation on the ground and its impact on prospects for peaceful resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. In so doing, we legitimately expect the OSCE and its participating States to take necessary measures at their disposal to compliment the efforts of the Azerbaijani side to stop the situation from further deterioration.

In recent meetings of the Council, the participating States have been informed about the continuous illegal military activities in the occupied territories, including illegal transfer of military equipment and personnel to these territories, which lie at the core of increased tension along the Line of Confrontation. We have asked the OSCE and its relevant structures to consider deployment of an OSCE border monitoring mission to the occupied part of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border to monitor and prevent the illegal military activities, which could be a significant measure to ease tension on the ground and create conducive environment for negotiations on peaceful settlement of the conflict to proceed. Furthermore, we have called all OSCE participating States to reconsider their military cooperation with Armenia, including banning arms sale to this country, in the light of Armenia's overt violation of its bilateral and multilateral obligations and abuse of this cooperation to sustain its illegal military presence in the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan.

From humanitarian point of view, the Permanent Council has been informed about serious violations of the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of hundred thousands of Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons who are still unable to exercise their inalienable right to return to their homes and enjoy their property therein. Armenia's actions against two Azerbaijani civilians, namely Mr. Dilgam Askerov and Shahbaz Guliyev, who have

been taken hostage in the occupied Kelbajar region of Azerbaijan, are of special concern, especially in the light of their dire health conditions. It is of deep regret that the OSCE, as well as its participating States, especially those that demonstrate keen interest in raising several human rights issues in the Permanent Council meetings, have opted to remain silent on this issue, which is conceived by Armenia as a sign of encouragement for its decades-old policy of intolerance and discrimination against civilian Azerbaijanis of the occupied territories.

Furthermore, we have raised the issue of missing persons in the context of the agreement reached between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia under the mediation of the President of the French Republic on exchanging data on missing persons under the auspice of the International Committee of Red Cross. In this regard, our proposal for the Chairmanship to organize consultations with participation of Armenia, Azerbaijan and representatives of the ICRC with the support of the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group to define the modalities of implementation of this agreement is still standing.

We have called the OSCE, co-chairmen of the Minsk Group and the participating States to exert pressure on Armenia to start drafting comprehensive peace agreement without further delay, as repeatedly suggested by the co-chairing countries of the Minsk Group.

The intention of Armenia to hold “parliamentary elections” in the occupied territories as an attempt to consolidate the results of its illegal use of force against the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is yet another provocative step which necessitates principled reaction from the OSCE. We expect the OSCE Chairmanship and participating States to condemn this step of Armenia and demonstrate their solidarity with Azerbaijan in upholding the principles upon which this Organization is established.

Against this background, our Delegation regrets that discussions in the Permanent Council do not result in preventing Armenia from actions that further undermine prospects of peaceful resolution of the conflict. While Armenia continues to ignore the calls for engaging in result-oriented negotiations for finding a peaceful end to the conflict, it becomes more urgent to call the meeting of the Minsk Group of the OSCE in full format to discuss these issues in a comprehensive manner. It is high time to move beyond formally expressing concerns over incidents along the Line of Confrontation towards addressing the causes of deteriorating status-quo on the ground. Further delay in engaging within the Minsk Group format in discussions of real challenges to the negotiations would considerably limit the prospects of containing tensions and can only serve to deterioration of situation on the ground, which neither sustainable nor acceptable.

In the light of the above-mentioned, we renew our call on the OSCE Chairmanship, co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group and its members to convene, as soon as possible, the meeting of the Minsk Group in Vienna in its full format to address the situation in the conflict zone and explore the ways out of current impasse.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.