



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
the 1045<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council**

**March 19, 2015**

*In response to the statement of the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia*

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to make the following remarks in response to the statement delivered by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia.

First of all, the Armenian Delegation referred to a paper of a non-existent entity, which Armenia itself has not recognized. I doubt that the practice of disseminating artificial papers within the OSCE can contribute to dialogue or confidence-building.

These territories have been occupied and ethnically cleansed by Armenia. Unlike other protracted conflict situations in the OSCE area, no single Azerbaijani was left in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan as result of this ethnic cleansing policy. Under these circumstances when the ethnic cleansing is going on, no election can be recognized as valid. In fact, many OSCE participating States has already pointed out the illegality of the “elections” that the Armenian Delegation referred to in its statement.

As for the right to vote is concerned, we do believe that this is one of the basic rights of the population that wishes to define its administrative structures. Until the indigenous Azerbaijani population expelled from the occupied territories returns to their homes, no “election” can be held in these territories that meet the international, as well as OSCE standards. As we have seen in the discussions on the previous agenda item, conformity to these standards is a prerequisite for any electoral process.

The Armenian Delegation also referred to Prague document of 1992 and alleged that this document is a reference point for identifying “elected representatives” of Nagorno-Karabakh. First of all, I would like to underline that this document recognizes the Nagorno-Karabakh region

as a part of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Secondly, it should be particularly noted that in time of its adoption the Azerbaijanis were still living in this region and the document reflects this state of affairs existed at the time of its adoption. After its adoption, the Government of the Republic of Armenia dispelled thousands of Azerbaijanis from Khojaly in February and subsequently ethnically cleansed the entire Nagorno-Karabakh region, including the city of Shusha, from where 50 thousand Azerbaijanis were forcefully dispelled. So, if the Armenian Delegation has any intention to invoke this document, they have to think about the Azerbaijani representatives of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, as it is quoted in this document.

As far as the quotation from the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs is concerned, I have to underline that these quotations are not axioms for the OSCE per se. The co-chairmen institution has been created by the OSCE and as such they are not immune from guidance of the Organization. They do need guidance, as well. Moreover, these out-of-context quotations do not reflect the entirety of their statement, either. In different statements on so-called “elections” held in the occupied territories, the co-chairmen declared that they do not recognize the constitutional and legal framework, within which these “elections” took place.

The distinguished Armenian Delegation alleged that the conflict is not about the territory but human rights. Well, the best option to prove it is to withdraw the occupying forces from these territories and thus, allow the people of the region to discuss their future. But no such discussions can take place under shadow of guns.

I would like to concur with my Armenian colleague on the point that each conflict is unique. But the principles are solid and should be applied without reservations. The principles that underline the very basis of our relations cannot and should not be applied differently depending on political preferences.

The claim that Nagorno-Karabakh has never been part of Azerbaijan is only a dream of the Armenian side. The Nagorno-Karabakh region has always been part of Azerbaijan and continues to be so. The abolishment of its autonomy status in 1991 was a reaction to the decision of the Government of Armenia to annex this region in 1989.

Finally, the Armenian Delegation invited us to join dialogue. In fact, we have accepted the calls for drafting a peace plan on the basis of progress achieved thus far in the negotiations. We are ready for that and the co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group have also expressed their readiness in this regard. It is just the Armenian side that continues to refuse these calls. During their last visit to the region the co-chairmen proposed to the sides to set up working groups on transportation matters and internally displaced persons. Not surprisingly, Armenia rejects these proposals and tries to avoid structured negotiations.

Thank you.