



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

1052nd Meeting of the Permanent Council,

May 14, 2015

Situation in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Mr. Chairperson,

Since this is the first time that I took the floor at today's meeting, allow me to convey our sincere condolences to the Macedonian Delegation on recent terrorist attacks in Kumanova. We share the pain of the Macedonian people and condemn this act of violence in strongest terms.

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the attempts of the Republic of Armenia to promote the visits of third-country nationals to the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which causes legal and criminal liability for the visitors and put their safety and security into serious risk.

The promotion of third-country nationals' visit to the occupied territories represent an element of Armenia's policy of prolonging the status-quo in the conflict zone through propagating the illegal regime established therein and generating illicit profit from these visits. In this regard, Armenia spares no effort to encourage nationals of foreign countries, including parliamentarians, mass media representatives and tourists to visit the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan and in almost all such cases, introduces these visits as allegedly reflecting the "growing international reputation and recognition" of this separatist entity. In many cases, persons visiting Armenia were transported to these territories by deception and without knowledge of the final destination.

In this regard, the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan declares that whatever the purpose, reason and circumstances, any visits by third-country nationals to the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan without prior consent of the Azerbaijani authorities constitute a violation of the legislation of Azerbaijan, in particular the Law on the State Border of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Accordingly, third-country nationals visiting the occupied territories of Azerbaijan are included in the list of those, whose entry to Azerbaijan is denied. The list is available at the web-site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. These visitors run a risk of facing appropriate legal proceedings, including in the form of administrative or criminal prosecution.

Moreover, those visiting the occupied territories of Azerbaijan expose their personal safety and security to serious risk, as despite a formal ceasefire, the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan represent a zone of ongoing hostilities, with active terrorist and related organized criminal activity and heavily mined areas.

In the light of the above-mentioned the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan requests the Governments of the OSCE participating States to take effective measures to prevent their nationals from visiting the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, including through issuing special instructions, guidance and travel warnings to that effect at their respective Foreign Ministries' web-sites.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.