



STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

1064h Special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council August 19, 2015

in response to the Delegations of US, EU, Canada and Norway

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

We took note of the statements delivered by the United States, Luxembourg on behalf of European Union and aligned states Montenegro, Iceland and Norway, Canada and Norway. Their content will be communicated to the capital.

At the outset I would like to underline that our Delegation cannot comprehend timeliness and relevance of the current agenda item raised by the Delegation of United States at this Special Permanent Council meeting. We expected to hear some new substantiated arguments and facts supporting the interventions of the Delegations of United States, EU, Canada and Norway. However, the comments we heard are pretty much the same and our Delegation responded to them in previous interventions in the OSCE as well as in press-releases.

Therefore, I wish to reiterate that our Delegation rejects the allegations made by the US, EU, Canada and Norway with respect to the situation with human rights in Azerbaijan and find such statement as undermining our bilateral relations with these countries.

Azerbaijan condemns the attempts to deliberately politicize and misinterpret ongoing legal cases against some individuals in our country. Azerbaijan calls on US, EU, its member states, EU officials and institutions concerned, Canada and Norway to respect the decisions of justice system in Azerbaijan and to refrain from interfering into ongoing legal cases. We consider the references made in the statements to some anonymous international monitor's observations in courts as seriously flawed and designed with a view to exert pressure on administration of justice.

Every person in Azerbaijan is equal before the law and bears equal responsibility for his or her deeds. Being a human rights defender or a journalist does not grant immunity or discharge from liability before the law. Advocating otherwise would be tantamount to promoting lawlessness that is unacceptable for and in Azerbaijan.

It is of concern that the noble cause of protection of human rights is abused in an attempt to create a fifth column and to destabilize a society. It is equally troubling to see commercialization of the human rights protection and turning it into a sort of business with huge amounts of money transferred to personal bank accounts without accountability. It is beyond comprehension that these countries who among others helped Azerbaijan to build an effective system to counter money laundering and other illicit financial transactions are now questioning the Government for taking measures to address suspicious financial flows and other illegal acts, including tax evasion, which is a serious crime not only in Azerbaijan. Therefore we reject such a biased approach.

In conclusion, we call on the US, EU, Canada and Norway who demonstrate such an enthusiasm over the case of few individuals in our country to extend a similarly caring approach to the fate of a million of Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs and to their inherent right to return to their lands of origin and restore their right on property. Azerbaijan encourages these Delegations to demonstrate a principled approach to the destiny of two Azerbaijani civilians Mr. Dilgam Askerov and Mr. Shahbaz Guliyev who were taken hostage in the occupied Kalbajar region of Azerbaijan, subjected to torture and inhuman treatment since July 2014, went through an illegitimate trial process and convicted to life imprisonment and 22 years of jail. Regretfully, US, EU, Canada and Norway remain silent in Permanent Council when we repeatedly addressed this issue. For Azerbaijani society such a stance of these Delegations is a clear demonstration of double standards.

Thank you.