



Intervention by the Delegation of Azerbaijan at the Permanent Council Meeting 1035

*In response to the speech delivered by the Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance,
Sir Andrew Burns,*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan joins previous speakers in warmly welcoming Mr. Andrew Burns to the Permanent Council and thanking him for such a comprehensive briefing.

We appreciate the efforts of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance on an unprecedented crime against humanity such as the Holocaust with a view to promoting tolerance and non-discrimination around the world. The Alliance pursues a noble mission of researching, remembering and educating the truth about the wrongdoings of the past, which is, indeed essential for creating a safer world for future generations. As racism, xenophobia, ethnic and religious intolerance threaten the security and stability of the OSCE area as a whole, we should redouble our efforts to combat these evils. In this regard, the activities of the Alliance may, of course have significant contribution.

The firm position of the international community with regard to condemnation of Holocaust and bringing its perpetrators to justice is exemplary for current efforts of strengthening and promoting the rule of law in international relations. This practice can obviously benefit other efforts to pursue post-conflict justice, especially in those situations where the prevailing culture of impunity for serious crimes, such as acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing represents a considerable obstacle to peace and security.

Azerbaijan firmly believes in necessity of properly addressing the egregious violations of international law, including the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law and providing effective and adequate reparation to their victims. Institutional action to prevent the recurrence of such violations is undeniable prerequisite for maintenance of international peace and security. We proceed from the understanding that the protection and vindication of rights of the victims, as well as securing international accountability contribute to peace and security.

It is also essential that peace efforts strongly reject *fait accompli* situations and never encourage the acceptance of situations achieved by the unlawful use of force and other egregious violations of international law, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

In situations of protracted armed conflict, the lack of agreement on political issues cannot be used as a pretext for not addressing problems caused by continued and deliberate disrespect for international humanitarian and human rights law. Particular consideration must be given to implications for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts aggravated by population displacements and foreign military occupation. The impact of conflicts on housing, land and property, as well as discrimination on ethnic grounds and forced demographic changes in such situations, require a more consistent approach in order to put an end to illegal practices and policies of settlements in the territories under occupation and to ensure the safe and dignified return of displaced populations to their homes.

In this regard, combatting impunity is important not only for the purpose of prosecuting crimes and bringing those responsible to justice, but also to ensure sustainable peace and reconciliation. This should guide our discussions within the OSCE on the issues related to building trust and confidence among the participating States and should be duly taken into account by the relevant structures and formats in their efforts of finding durable solution to the conflict situations.

With that, I would like to conclude by renewing our appreciation for Sir Andrew Burns for his comprehensive presentation on an extremely important issue.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson!