



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
1111<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council,  
28 July 2016**

*Situation in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

Mr. Chairperson,

Last week the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan transmitted to the OSCE participating States, OSCE Partners for Cooperation, as well as OSCE Secretariat and Institutions the report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan entitled “Illegal economic and other activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan”.

On numerous occasions the Republic of Azerbaijan has presented to the international community well-documented evidence, also confirmed by a variety of independent sources, attesting to consistent measures undertaken by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan with a view to further consolidating the current *status quo* of the occupation and to secure the annexation of these territories that it has captured by military force. Such measures include implantation of settlers from Armenia and abroad, destruction and appropriation of historical and cultural heritage, illegal economic and other activities, exploitation and pillage of and illicit trade in assets, natural resources and other forms of wealth across the occupied territories, accompanied by substantial and systematic interference with the public and private property rights.

It is particularly troubling that these activities are continued against the background of the ongoing efforts towards the earliest political settlement of the conflict. The lack of adequate international reaction to these actions of the Armenian side only contributes to its growing sense of impunity and permissiveness. The evidence shows that Armenia, directly by its own means and indirectly through the subordinate separatist regime that it created in the occupied territories and with the assistance of Armenian diaspora, not only continued, but expanded the illegal activities in these territories. The Republic of Azerbaijan brought to the attention of the international community that in a new settlement wave, Armenia encourages and facilitates resettlement of Syrian Armenians in the occupied territories. Just recently, on 24 July 2016, the agent of the subordinate separatist regime Bako Sahakyan travelled to the occupied district of Lachin of Azerbaijan with a purpose of inspecting the construction of the hydropower plant on the Zabukh river. During the visit, Sahakyan also met with so-called “representatives of regional administration” and discussed the issue of resettlement of Armenians to the occupied Lachin district.

There is evidence, contained in the above-mentioned report, pointing to the involvement, directly or indirectly, of some foreign natural and legal persons in unlawful economic, commercial and other activities.

In this regard, we wish to recall that under international law, the occupation does not entail a transfer of sovereignty over such territories where the Constitution and the laws of Azerbaijan continue to apply. The legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan provides a legal framework and requires that any foreign natural and legal person obtain formal registration with the relevant authorities of Azerbaijan and a special license to operate in regulated industries, prior to starting operations on its territory. Accordingly, foreign natural and legal persons must refrain from participating in, or facilitating in any manner, any unlawful activity that infringes upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, contravenes international humanitarian law and violates the national legislation of Azerbaijan.

The fundamental international legal requirement in that regard is that no State shall recognize as lawful the situation resulting from the occupation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and nor render aid or assistance in maintaining it. It is critical that States cooperate with a view to ending such situation that emerged as a result of serious breaches of international law.

The Republic of Azerbaijan recalls also the commitment of the OSCE participating States to encourage their business community to take into account in their activities the social, humanitarian, environmental and security needs of the participating States, as envisaged in the OSCE Maastricht Strategy Document of 2003 and Dublin Declaration on Good Governance of 2012. Furthermore, all States and natural and legal persons, entities and bodies, regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership and structure, should follow the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and to exercise due diligence to ensure that they do not contribute, directly or indirectly, to human rights violations and breaches of international law related to the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan calls upon the OSCE participating States and relevant OSCE structures, institutions and field missions, including OSCE Office in Yerevan to oblige Armenia to comply scrupulously with its international obligations and OSCE commitments, cease and reverse immediately the transfer of settlers of both Armenian and foreign nationality into the occupied territories, cease immediately and refrain in the future from any economic and commercial activities, including exploitation and pillage of and illicit trade in assets and natural resources across the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Azerbaijan also calls upon the participating States to take effective measures, including through their national legislation, that would prevent any activities on their respective territories by any natural and legal persons against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, including the participation in or facilitation any unlawful activity in these territories.

We request the relevant OSCE institutions and field missions to study the above-mentioned report and the facts contained therein and invite them to consultations with the authorities of Azerbaijan on measures that need to be undertaken to cease and reverse above-mentioned illegal activities.

In particular, we request the OSCE Secretariat, Conflict Prevention Center together with its established Mediation Support Unit to organize informal consultations with the respective participating States, whose natural and legal persons are engaged in or facilitate the illegal economic and other activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, to put an end to such activities with a view to preventing disputes between the OSCE participating States that may arise because of such illegal activities. Our Delegation will be ready to provide the list of countries and companies involved in such activities.

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan will continue holding bilateral consultations with respective OSCE participating States, whose natural and legal persons may be involved, directly or indirectly in or facilitating in any way the illegal activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. We will inform the Permanent Council regularly on the results of these consultations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.