



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1128th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
19 January 2017**

*Continued violation by Armenia of its obligations
under international humanitarian law
by refusing to return the body of the deceased Azerbaijani serviceman*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan would like to once again draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the continued violation by Armenia of its obligations under international law by refusing to return the body of the Azerbaijani serviceman.

The serviceman of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chingiz Gurbanov was killed by the armed forces of Armenia on 29 December 2016 while halting an attempt of Armenian subversive group to violate the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border and his body was then taken to the Armenian side. Contrary to norms of the international humanitarian law, the Republic of Armenia refuses to return the body of the serviceman and continue its notorious practice of abusing this humanitarian issue to gain political dividends. This inhumane policy by Armenia has already manifested itself in previous cases, when Armenia humiliated and vandalized dead bodies of the Azerbaijani servicemen, resorted to dirty propaganda and misinformation through sharing their photos in the media.

Such an overt disregard of international humanitarian law, as reflected in 1949 Geneva Conventions, as well as provisions of the Joint Astrakhan Statement of the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation of 2010, necessitates urgent steps by the international community to stop Armenia to further undermine perspectives of a peaceful solution of the conflict.

It is of particular regret of the Azerbaijani side that Armenia's open disrespect to its international obligations has not thus far received adequate response by the OSCE participating States, as well as the OSCE Chairmanship. In light of statements made representatives of other prominent international organizations, silence and ignorance by the OSCE, which is the only regional organization mandated for the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, is beyond comprehension and unacceptable.

Armenia's continued attempts since the beginning of 2017 to escalate the situation in the conflict zone, in particular, along the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border, is a grim manifestation that such an appeasing policy taken by the OSCE feeds culture of impunity in the leadership of Armenia and further aggravates the already difficult situation in the Minsk Process, which is on the edge of another failure to materialize whatever positive momentum emerged as a result of last year's high-level meetings.

Azerbaijan reiterates its call on the OSCE participating States, in particular the OSCE Chairmanship and the members of the OSCE Minsk Group, to urge Armenia to return the body of the Azerbaijani serviceman without further delay. Failure to do so will be a serious blow on the very credibility of this Organization and further erode trust to the core shared values of the OSCE.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.