



## STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

### 1048th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council April 23, 2015

*in response to the Delegations of EU, US, Canada and Norway  
on the case of Rasul Jafarov*

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

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

From the outset I wish to stress that we do not share the concerns expressed by these Delegations on the conviction and imprisonment of Mr. Rasul Jafarov, co-founder and chair of “*The Human Rights Club*”, on the charges of *Misappropriation and squander in large amounts; Illegal entrepreneurship in large amounts with the extraction of income; Taxes evasion; Abuse of office and Fraud* on April 16 and see no alleged relation of his imprisonment to his political activity. On the contrary these statements constitute clear indication of interference into internal affairs of Azerbaijan.

We consider the statement by the Delegation of the US: “*that his conviction is a further setback to Azerbaijan’s democratic developments*” as a demonstration of a narrow approach and indication of a lack of proper understanding of political processes taking place in Azerbaijan.

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

It is of concern that the noble cause of protection of human rights is abused by some countries in an attempt 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.

As for the call of the Delegation of EU *“to ensure that Rasul Jafarov is given the opportunity to appeal this verdict in a fair and unbiased process”* we deem important to note that rule of law, fair administration of justice and protection of independence of judicial processes guaranteed in Azerbaijan provides ample opportunities to contest the decision of the court in the higher instances.

In conclusion, we call on the EU, US, Canada and Norway who demonstrate such an enthusiasm over the case of one individual to extend more balanced approach both within the OSCE human dimension and its comprehensive security concept. In particular in case of Azerbaijan, to close to a million of refugees and IDPs and to their inherent rights to return to their lands of origin and restore their right on property; as well as 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 PC when we address this issue, especially to the fate of these Azerbaijani civilians and for Azerbaijani society such a stance is a clear demonstration of double standards.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.