



STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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

on excessive use of force by police in USA

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan would like to express its concerns over increase of cases of excessive use of force by police in the United States of America. We have raised this issue at previous meeting of PC earlier this year.

Although this issue has been a long standing problem in the USA recent increase of numbers of people being killed by law enforcement officers is worrisome.

To date the most reliable data on law enforcement killings in the US is the FBI statistics on homicides by law enforcement. According to it 2,102 persons were killed in the period from 2009-2013. The information provided to FBI is of a voluntary nature and may not reflect the real numbers.

The Amnesty International claims that the Department of Justice has failed to collect accurate, comprehensive national data on police use of force, including the number of people killed or injured throughout police shootings or other types of force. There are independent studies claiming that since 9/11, close to 5,000 Americans have been killed by US police officers.

This studies claim that alarming part is that only 54 police officers have been charged.

The shooting on August 9, 2014 of unarmed teenager Michael Brown by a Ferguson, Missouri police officer and the way police handled the protest that followed after brought forward nationwide discussions on race, policing and justice.

Human Rights Watch found serious problems in police response to the crisis in Ferguson, including intimidation of protesters and infringing on their rights to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and called the abuses like those of August unacceptable.

Ms. Navi Pillay, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Right commenting the situation in Ferguson stressed that *“I condemn excessive use of force by the police and call for the right of protest to be respected.”*

The aggravating factor of the incidents is due to its racial background, which runs contrary to the international obligation and OSCE commitments of the US on tolerance and non-discrimination. The UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its report on the United States of America of September 25, 2014 noted that *“While recognizing the efforts made by the State party to intensify the enforcement of relevant laws, the Committee reiterates its previous concern at the brutality and excessive use of force by law enforcement officials against members of racial and ethnic minorities, including against unarmed individuals...”*.

The United States has legal obligations and relevant OSCE commitments to ensure full respect to the right of freedom of peaceful assembly. We regret that it was not possible to have a thorough discussion on the issue of respect to the right of freedom of peaceful assembly and the ways how US Government is planning to address these concerns at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting last week, as the US delegation preferred to use the platform of this event to blame and shame certain participating States.

We call on US Government to abide by the principles it has itself invoked for many times and promptly investigate and bring all those responsible for killing of innocent people to justice.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.