



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
*1094<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of the Permanent Council,*  
*05 April 2016***

Mr. Chairperson,

We join previous speakers in thanking the German Chairmanship for convening this meeting and in welcoming Ambassadors Kasprzyk and Warlick to the Permanent Council.

The Azerbaijani side deeply regrets a serious deterioration of the situation in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict zone. Regretfully, the Armenian side openly disregarded calls of the international community, including the Chairperson-in-Office, co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group and the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office for restraint during observation of Novruz and Easter and resorted to continued provocations along the Line of Contact. Unlike the Armenian-controlled side of the LoC, on our side of the residential areas are in close vicinity to LoC and civilian population has been increasingly targeted by Armenia.

Over the last ten days residential areas of Terter, Aghdam and Fuzuli were deliberately attacked with high-caliber weapons. Armenian provocations especially intensified on the night of April 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> and continued until today. As the result of the Armenian offensive, we have many casualties and injuries among the civilian population. One primary school, numerous houses, facilities and manufacturing plants were shot by artillery, and many vehicles and high voltage power lines were damaged. Considerable damage was inflicted upon the private and public properties.

It is not for the first time that Armenia attempts to take advantage of this vulnerability to heavily bombard residential areas close to the LoC. However, this time the Armenian provocation received a powerful blow from the Azerbaijani Army. To counter the provocation and to ensure safety of civilian population, the Armed Forces Command of the Republic of Azerbaijan had decided to take response measures in directions of Aghdere-Terter-Aghdam and Khojavand-Fuzuli. As a result of taken counter-measures, the Azerbaijani forces did not only stop provocation, but also significantly advanced forward and seized many strategically important heights in the occupied territories. Currently, new reinforcements are being carried out, new trenches and fortifications are being installed along the new defense line. All actions of the Azerbaijani armed forces are taken within the framework of their constitutional duties to protect the people of Azerbaijan from the Armenian attacks within the internationally recognized territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On April 3, in response to numerous appeals of international community and as a sign of its commitment to a political settlement, the Azerbaijani side announced unilateral cessation of all counter-measures in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict zone. Regretfully, Armenia did not reciprocate the unilateral good will gesture of the Azerbaijani side and shelling of civilian and military positions of Azerbaijan continued until today.

Mr. Chairperson,

For the first time since the establishment of the cease-fire in 1994, Armenia received such a devastating blow to its military and they have only themselves to blame. The Armenian leaders are trying to mislead a public opinion and conceal their losses, and we regret that the current Armenian regime is trying to deceive its own people. Nowadays, the Armenian side uses all its possibilities, including Diaspora organizations, their powerful patrons and corrupt politicians to pin the blame on Azerbaijan.

But, we are not guilty, since we did not break the cease-fire. First of all, we have responded to the provocation and rightly so. If more provocations are attempted against us, Armenia will be punished again. Secondly, the Azerbaijani Army is defending its own people on its own land. We did not occupy Armenian land. Nor are we fighting with Armenia in some neutral territory.

Thirdly, I wish to emphasize that the Armenian occupying force already for a long time are not considered a rival by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces. Nevertheless, the President of Azerbaijan and our Government remain committed to resolve the conflict peacefully. For more than 20 years under the cease-fire Azerbaijan has exercised restraint, showed patience and demonstrated a constructive approach in the negotiations. And what we have seen in return. Armenia continued violating all international norms. Armenia for more than 20 years ignored the demands of the UN Security Council resolutions. Armenia barbarously destroyed all buildings, historical, cultural and religious monuments on the occupied lands. Our mosques, graves, monuments and museums lie in ruins and our natural resources are illegally exploited. Despite the data and reports presented by the Azerbaijani side, the OSCE Minsk Group remains silent and Co-Chairmen prevent other international organizations to do their job. In spite of the appeals of Presidents of the Co-Chairs countries that the status quo is not acceptable and sustainable and must be changed, Armenia pursues a consistent policy to consolidate the results of its continued occupation of our territories and strengthening the status quo.

It is enough. Azerbaijani will no more tolerate such situation, which can be hardly called a political settlement of the conflict. I wish to reiterate that Azerbaijan do not want war with Armenia. We do not want to shed blood. We do not want young soldiers and peaceful civilians to die. We do not want Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples live in hatred and animosity for another decade. We want peaceful solution to the conflict, but we want what is rightly ours, what belongs to us in accordance with international law, OSCE Helsinki Final Act and UNSC resolutions.

Azerbaijan is not interested in negotiations which are just imitating the process and not resolving the conflict. We do not intend to participate in an endless process just to create a resemblance of talks. President Aliyev and Foreign Minister Mammadyarov said this to the mediators and the Armenian

leadership is aware of that. There is no other option for negotiations to proceed. If the Armenian leadership cares about the future of its people, then it must withdraw its military forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan peacefully. This is the only road to peace. We could hardly prevent future escalation of the conflict, until the Armenian troops are withdrawn. Calls for cessation of hostilities must be accompanied by pressure on Armenia to liberate the territories immediately and unconditionally as demanded by relevant UNSC resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The current situation demands firm actions on the part of the OSCE and Azerbaijan would like to suggest the following.

Firstly, Azerbaijan unilaterally announced introduction of a cease-fire, but we will be forced to respond to the provocations of the Armenia side. Couple of hours ago, the Armenian media reported that the Armenian side declared a ceasefire. We wish to believe that ceasefire would be respected by the Armenian side and they will not misuse time for resuming provocation. We call on the OSCE participating States to persuade Armenia to maintain a cease-fire and to denounce immoral practice of attacking civilian population of Azerbaijan.

Secondly, Azerbaijan is ready for effective negotiations on the basis of principles, which have been so far elaborated and which are aimed at eliminating the impediments to political solution of the conflict on stage-by-stage basis. In this context, the Armenian troops at the initial stage must withdraw from five occupied regions of Azerbaijan, namely Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrail, Zangilan and Gubadly, and railroad communication and transport lines must be restored. At the second stage, the occupying forces must withdraw from two remaining Lachin and Kalbajar regions and allow the return of all expelled Azerbaijani population to their places of origin in safety and dignity. Such a sequence of events will provide the Nagorno Karabakh region with an interim status within Azerbaijan. The interim status provided within the internationally recognized boundaries of Azerbaijan will offer both Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the region necessary security guarantees and opportunities for normalization of their living conditions. The territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall not be a subject of negotiation or an element of compromise. The third stage foresees negotiations on restoration of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and definition of a final status of the Nagorno Karabakh region. The negotiations on definition of a final status of the Nagorno Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which will grant to both communities equal rights and opportunities for normal life must be preceded by elimination of impediments and consequences of the conflict. These stages of resolution can be elaborated in detail and implemented within the Minsk Group format and with the support of international community. Such support will include deployment of OSCE multinational peacekeeping contingent, which is centered on police and civil observation components and based on impartiality and objectivity. As a matter of fact, stage-by-stage solution of the conflict and these elements of OSCE peacekeeping were approved by the OSCE Budapest Summit Decision of 1994. This decision has tasked the Co-chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group to conduct speedy negotiations for the conclusion of a political agreement, the implementation of which will eliminate major consequences of the conflict and permit the convening of the Minsk Conference. In the meantime, the decision established the High-Level

Planning Group of the OSCE and tasked it to elaborate the mandate of OSCE peacekeeping operation.

Thirdly, we urge the German OSCE Chairmanship to revitalize regular meetings of the OSCE Minsk Group in full format in Vienna without further delay. We once again call on the members of the Minsk Group, which have been side-lined for many years, to demonstrate the common will of international community vested in your countries and to start playing an active role in the conflict settlement process. An experience of the past has proved that blind reliance on and support to the Co-chairs cannot substitute an effective Minsk Group-owned process of negotiations based on the Budapest Decision of 1994. Azerbaijan invites the Minsk Group members to visit Baku and expects that Armenia will demonstrate a similar readiness to host them. Azerbaijan is ready to work with members of the Minsk Group to explore new opportunities to revive the negotiations. In the current situation the only way forward is to respect the ceasefire and to immediately re-launch effective negotiations in the Minsk Group format.

Azerbaijan calls upon the OSCE participating States and its Minsk Group to persuade Armenia to comply with the norms and principles of international law, relevant resolutions of UN Security Council and to engage in good faith in negotiations in accordance with the OSCE Budapest Summit Decision of 1994.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.