



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
TO THE OSCE

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**Address by H.E. Mr. Robert Abisoghomonian,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
at the 1513th Special Meeting of the Permanent Council**

26 March 2025

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Finnish Chairmanship for convening this Special PC meeting.

It is my distinct pleasure to be back to the OSCE, especially for this important occasion - to inform the OSCE participating States that the text of the "Agreement on Peace and Establishment of Interstate Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan" has been agreed upon and that the negotiations on the draft agreement have been finalized.

As a result of almost 3 years of intensive negotiations, on 13 March 2025 Armenia agreed on the last version of the Agreement and informed about this decision the Azerbaijani side.

The finalization of the document is a huge breakthrough and a milestone that represents a defining moment in the decades-long conflict, offering a historic opportunity to pave the way for regional peace. Needless to say, this process required genuine commitment to the peace agenda, tireless efforts and strategic patience to find solutions on a number of sensitive issues and overcome initial differences. So, after all these efforts we have finalized the draft text and now we stand ready to start discussions on determining the date and place for its formal signature. On March 20, 2025 the Prime Minister of Armenia proposed to the President of Azerbaijan to start joint consultations on the signing of the agreed draft Peace Agreement.

A number of our international partners welcomed these positive developments and encouraged parties to continue constructive engagement towards swift signing of the Peace Agreement and achieving positive results on other tracks of the peace agenda. In this regard, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those states, including around this table that have genuinely supported the negotiations, that hosted the discussions, that

welcomed the finalization of the Agreement, that have contributed to this achievement, and that continue to stand firm in favor of durable and lasting peace and stability in our region.

Excellencies,

To our deep surprise the reaction of and subsequent actions by Azerbaijan are both disappointing and alarming. In its unilateral statement Azerbaijan, while accepting the fact of finalization of the negotiations on the text of the Peace Agreement, simultaneously put forward artificial preconditions.

Armenia has always stated that resolving all outstanding issues which have been accumulated throughout decades of hostility in a single agreement is impossible. It is obvious. However, the signing of the Peace Agreement will create a conducive environment and pave the way for addressing and resolving all outstanding issues.

As a unilateral proof of the constructiveness of Armenia, Azerbaijan demands the termination of the Minsk Process structures, despite the fact that throughout the negotiations the Armenian side on numerous occasions has shown its constructive approach. They also demand constitutional amendments in Armenia, claiming that the Armenian Declaration of Independence to which there is a reference in the Preamble part of our constitution, contains territorial claims against Azerbaijan.

The Republic of Armenia has already expressed its position at the highest levels: we are ready to consider the dissolution of the structures of the OSCE Minsk Process. However, it is crucial to guarantee that this step corresponds to both the factual and legal conclusion of the conflict. There would not be a need for further activities of Minsk Process structures once the signing of the Peace Agreement will formally and institutionally mark the conclusion of the conflict. Otherwise, it would mean putting the cart before the horse. If Azerbaijan is willing to put an end to the existence of this structure, then signing the Agreement is the most logical and legitimate shortcut.

As for the Armenian Constitution, I would like to inform the participating States that on September 26, 2024 within the framework of the ratification of the regulation on the joint activities of the border commissions, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia adopted a decision, confirming that the Regulation, including the delimitation of the borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration, is in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, which means that the mutual recognition of territorial integrity within the borders existing at the time of dissolution of the USSR, which is also enshrined in the Agreement, fully complies with the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, and Armenia has no territorial claims against Azerbaijan. In other words, the shortest way to allay Azerbaijan's concerns is again signing the Agreement.

Moreover, the Constitutional Court noted that only those provisions of the Armenian Declaration of Independence that are literally articulated in the articles of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia carry constitutional authority, while those provisions of the Declaration that are not directly incorporated into the articles of the Constitution cannot have any legal force.

So, once again, the Constitutional Court's decision states that the Republic of Armenia's Constitution does not contain any provision that would imply a territorial claim against any third country.

In fact, it is Azerbaijan's own constitution that raises concerns, as it contains provisions that imply territorial claims against Armenia. The preamble of the Azerbaijani Constitution contains a reference to the Constitutional Act adopted by the Azerbaijani Parliament on 18 October 1991. In turn, the Constitutional Act refers to the Declaration of Independence of the First Republic of Azerbaijan adopted in 1918, which declares that the First Republic of Azerbaijan includes Eastern and Southern Transcaucasia. In November 1919, the Republic of Azerbaijan presented to the Entente its administrative map, in which around 60 percent of the territory of the current day Republic of Armenia was included in the territory of Azerbaijan. Thus, the Constitution of Azerbaijan contains territorial demands against the Republic of Armenia.

But why in that case we are not raising an issue of changing the Constitution of Azerbaijan? The Peace Agreement contains an article which stipulates that the parties cannot refer to their internal legislation to justify the failure of implementation of the Agreement. Another article says that the parties recognize each other's territorial integrity, do not have territorial claims against each other and will not raise such claims in the future. Moreover, both Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other's territorial integrity within the borders of the former Soviet republics.

Consequently, once the Peace Agreement is signed by Armenia and Azerbaijan, receives the conclusion on compliance with the Constitution by the Constitutional Courts and is ratified, it will acquire a legal authority superior to that of any domestic law.

In this regard, bringing forward any other issue as a precondition for the signing of the document means delaying the establishment of peace, to say the least.

Excellencies,

Let me also address Azerbaijan's disinformation campaign regarding alleged ceasefire violations along the border. Why should Armenia prepare to use force? What issue on the agenda of the Republic of Armenia would imply the use of force?

As you may know, more than 200 square kilometers of Armenia's sovereign territory is under occupation by Azerbaijan. However, Armenia on the highest level has explicitly stated that it does not seek to resolve this issue through military means. The ongoing border delimitation process, along with the finalized text of the Peace Agreement, provide all necessary mechanisms for addressing this matter peacefully and legally. Thus, Armenia remains fully committed to the peace agenda and continues to act in accordance with these principles.

In line with this, the Ministry of Defense of Armenia is investigating the alleged ceasefire violations. At the same time, being genuinely interested in confidence and trust in the region, we have proposed to the Azerbaijani side to establish a joint mechanism to investigate the ceasefire violations, as well as other measures, such as mirror distancing of the troops from border areas and mutual arms control and verification mechanism. Regrettably, the

mentioned proposals have not been constructively reciprocated by Azerbaijan, which raises questions about the genuine intentions of these repetitive allegations.

The allegations of Azerbaijan are not isolated incidents; there is a clear and established pattern in which Azerbaijan increases its disinformation campaign regarding alleged ceasefire violations, using this as a pretext to justify further escalation in the region. In 2020 and 2023 the Armenian side on numerous occasions brought to the attention of the OSCE participating States similar tactics. My call is to pay careful attention to this pattern of actions. The deliberate spread of false information and the unfounded accusations of ceasefire violations are not just an attempt to distort the truth; they are a troubling precursor to military escalation. We must remain vigilant against these tactics, doubling our efforts for establishment of peace and stability in the region.

The recent escalation in rhetoric and growing threats against Armenia also follow the same troubling pattern reminiscent of previous military escalations. We firmly believe that peace requires a commitment to restraint and constructive dialogue. Creating conditions conducive to lasting peace must be an integral part of the process, one that is built upon good faith engagement, and genuine cooperation, not threats or blame games.

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished colleagues,

Despite the mentioned challenges, let me reaffirm Armenia's unwavering dedication to the peace agenda. We remain steadfast in our commitment to establishing lasting peace in the South Caucasus. Our commitment to a peaceful and stable region is not just a political stance, it is a strategic choice for the future of our region and our people. However, the realization of this vision requires genuine engagement from all parties.

It is high time to abandon the policy of artificial delays and procrastination, to refrain from introducing baseless pretexts that only serve to obstruct the signing of the Peace Agreement. Mutual blame games and endless obsession with putting forward new preconditions could lead us to a well-known nowhere, which could pose a real danger for future escalations. Instead, the path, that we suggest, is a genuine commitment to peace and engagement in the finalization of this process in good faith.

The resolution of this conflict remains essential for ensuring long-term security and stability in one of the most sensitive and volatile regions within the OSCE's area of responsibility. It should be in the interest of all to ensure that peace prevails over war, diplomacy over confrontation, and stability over uncertainty.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the Armenian side is ready to sign the Peace Agreement and proposes the Azerbaijani side to start consultations on the date and place of signing the document. We are heading to peace, not war.

Thank you.