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**DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

ENGLISH only

**Statement**

**In Reply to the President of the ICRC, Peter Maurer  
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1116th Meeting of the OSCE  
Permanent Council  
October 27, 2016**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank the distinguished President of the ICRC, Mr. Peter Maurer for outlining the activities of the ICRC and sharing his ideas on better interaction between the OSCE and the ICRC.

Armenia highly values the principles of impartiality and neutrality upon which the ICRC activities have been based. The primary value of Your esteemed Organization is reaching out to the people, who are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance without any politization.

The ICRC is the only permanent international humanitarian presence in Nagorno-Karabakh. We commend the efforts of the ICRC to provide humanitarian assistance to the forcefully displaced population of Nagorno-Karabakh particularly from the settlements of Talish, Madagis and Tonashen in close cooperation with the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh in the aftermath of the April large-scale offensive of Azerbaijan. We appreciate ICRC activities aimed at strengthening ability of the affected population of Nagorno-Karabakh to meet their immediate needs and resume their livelihoods.

Another pressing issue, we would like to touch is dignified treatment of captive civilians, prisoners of war and human remains. The NK authorities have fully cooperated with the ICRC to address humanitarian consequences of the April war, including recovery of human remains and their dignified return.

The ICRC was invited to monitor and verify the cases of torture and mutilation of the bodies of servicemen of the NK Defence Army and civilians killed during the April escalation. In this regard I would like to refer to the detailed information available in number of Notes Verbale of the Foreign Ministry of Nagorno-Karabakh, the comprehensive report of the NK Ombudsman and other documents, providing factual material on the atrocities committed against the civilian population of the Talish village and torture of captive servicemen and mutilation of their bodies.

We attach highest importance to full and unrestrained access of the ICRC to places of detention and monitoring of conditions of captives in the context of the conflict. In this regard I would like to recall a number of cases of torture and killing of Armenian civilians in Azerbaijani custody, including the cases of Mamikon Khojoyan, Manvel Saribekyan and Karen Petrosyan.

Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh authorities also cooperate with ICRC on exchange of information on missing persons and render all possible assistance for unhindered implementation of its activities. We welcome the ICRC project on DNA-sample collection from the families of missing persons, which can help to clarify the fate of missing persons

There are two factors complicating the progress in this regard. First, attempts to politicize the issue and inflate the number of missing persons for purely propagandistic aims. It should be mentioned that Azerbaijan has been politicizing the issue of missing persons in all stages of NK conflict starting from the 90s when then Azerbaijani authorities used the practice of disguising military casualties and burying the killed servicemen without any identification. The head of the Azerbaijani State security service, Madat Guliyev stated in the context of recent disclosure of 127 burying sites, that on a number of occasions the Azerbaijani servicemen were buried without any identification.

Second is the refusal of Azerbaijan to cooperate at the level of relevant state commissions on missing persons both with NK and Armenia. International practice including that of number of the OSCE participating States suggests that it is not possible to embark on any meaningful and efficient cooperation without fully operationalizing these professional and non politicized frameworks.

We value close interaction of the ICRC and OSCE particularly at the level of field missions and presences. The cooperation between the ICRC mission in Stepanakert and PRCIO is good case in point. This cooperation has been essential during April events as well. In conclusion, we would like to stress our full support to the activities of the ICRC.

Mr. Chairman,

In response to the distinguished Ambassador of Azerbaijan I would like to add that Azerbaijan openly violated Geneva Conventions and did not even hide its incomppliance with them on number of occassions. Furthermore Azerbaijan did not implement humanitarian agreements reached at the highest level particularly in Astrakhan Summit. It should be remembered that Azerbaijan prevented the handling of the deceased bodies of NK helicopter crew members despite clear and unconditional international obligations in this regard. Two chopped heads of NK servicemen up to date has not been returned by Azerbaijani side.

In the meantime I would like to draw attention to full cooperation of the NK authorities with the ICRC mission in Stepanakert, which has regular access and ability to verify dignified treatment of the two Azerbaijani citizens, currently serving their prison sentences in Nagorno-Karabakh.

We call on Azerbaijan to implement its international obligations emanating from Geneva Conventions and join the family of civilized nations. Furthemore, we call on Azerbaijan to ratify Additional Protocols to Geneva Conventions.

We also call on Azerbaijan to stop refusing establishment of investigative mechanism into ceasefire violations, which will also help to identify those responsible for violations of the international humanitarian law.

Thank You.