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

Statement

**In Response to France on Behalf of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairing Countries
delivered by the Delegation of Armenia at the 1152th Meeting of the OSCE
Permanent Council
July 06, 2017**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the armed provocation by the Azerbaijani armed forces.

According to the information circulated by the Ministry of Defence of Artsakh on 4 July late evening the Azerbaijani armed forces violated ceasefire regime in the southern direction of the Line of Contact between Artsakh and Azerbaijan. The positions of the Defense Army of Artsakh were shelled by TR-107 multiple rocket launch systems, as well as 82 mm calibre mortars, which were located in the Azerbaijani village of Alkhanli. The moment of shelling by TR-107 MLRS and its location were detected and well documented by the Defense Army technical devices and is available in open sources. Azerbaijani armed forces used TR-107 MLRS for the first time since last year April large scale military offensive by Azerbaijan. The Defense Army units undertook measures against the firing positions of the Azerbaijani armed forces to enforce ceasefire.

The incident provoked by the Azerbaijani side, unfortunately, led to casualties among two civilians.

This is not the first time when Azerbaijani armed forces use their civilian population as human shield. Last year we distributed information and photo materials clearly demonstrating that Azerbaijani military positions are located in close vicinity or inside civilian settlements. We strongly condemn such a practice, which is in clear violation of the international humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairperson,

Armenia has always advocated enhancing OSCE presence in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and its monitoring and verification capacities. Strong OSCE presence along the Line of Contact would help to consolidate the ceasefire regime and avoid military and civilian casualties. The Organization through its monitoring and verification capacities would provide factual information from the ground, thus enabling us to avoid blame games and what is utmost important, to alleviate human suffering and prevent relapse into large-scale military hostilities.

The participating States are fully aware of the commitment of Armenia to implement agreements reached in Vienna and Saint Petersburg summits on enhancing the PRCiO Office and creating investigative mechanism of ceasefire violations.

We regret that Azerbaijan continues to reject implementation of the above agreements and instead opts for using force. Thus the full responsibility for continued suffering of population on all sides lies with Azerbaijan and its leadership.

Thank You.