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

Statements

**delivered under Current Issue «On the Situation around Kesab, Syria»
by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 992nd Meeting of the OSCE
Permanent Council**

March 27, 2014

Mr. Chairman,

The Armenian delegation expresses its grave concern over the last escalation of the situation in north-western Syria, around the ancient Armenian-populated town of Kesab. In the last days Kesab was attacked from the territory of Turkey by Al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist groups. The brutal cross-border attacks, which also targeted the civilian population, resulted in evacuation of local Armenian population to safer areas. The extremist groups occupied the town and desecrated Kesab's Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Catholic three churches.

We call on Turkey to take immediate and effective measures to prevent use of its territory by the terrorist groups to conduct attacks on Kesab.

The Permanent Delegation of Armenia has on many occasions raised the issue of the urgent need for the protection of religious minorities in the OSCE neighbourhood. The Christian minorities in Syria, including the Armenian community, have found themselves in extremely vulnerable situation and become the primary targets for the attacks in Syria.

Thank You

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Mr. Chairman,

We didn't have any intention to politicize the issue. The statement of the Delegation of Armenia is based on the real and proved facts. The geography of the town and its surroundings offers no other option of penetration of terrorists. The Turkish border troops allowed them to enter into the Syrian territory, and as a result we have sufferings of the Armenian population of Kesab.

We acknowledge the role of Turkey in providing humanitarian assistance to the Syrian refugees, but in this particular case it is difficult to imagine how the people could find a shelter in the territory, from where they were attacked.

We would like to reiterate once again our position: the Delegation of Armenia calls on the Turkish side to take measures to prevent the use of its territory by the terrorist groups to conduct attacks on Kesab.

Thank you.