



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna
May 25, 2021

The United States welcomes Foreign Minister Bayramov's personal engagement in this forum. As a Minsk Group Co-Chair, the United States is committed to helping the sides negotiate a long-term political settlement to the conflict.

Recent developments along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border underscore that only a comprehensive agreement that addresses all outstanding issues can lead to reconciliation and the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and allow the people of both countries to live together peacefully. We urge Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage with the Co-Chairs as soon as possible to review their proposals and decide jointly upon a structured agenda, reflecting the priorities of the sides.

The United States calls on the sides to strengthen the ceasefire by expediting the return of all PoWs and detainees; exchanging all data necessary to conduct effective demining of conflict regions; and lifting restrictions on access to Nagorno Karabakh for international humanitarian organizations. We urge both sides to avoid fueling hatred through escalatory or dehumanizing rhetoric and to investigate alleged human rights violations or abuses, or violations of international humanitarian law, and to hold accountable those found responsible. These actions are integral to stability, justice, and accountability.

As we emphasized at the May 19 Forum for Security Cooperation, we encourage the sides to be transparent when undertaking any military activities. Military movements in disputed territories are unnecessarily provocative. We expect Azerbaijan to pull back all forces and call on both sides to begin immediately negotiations to demarcate their shared international borders.

The United States believes the work of the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office to monitor the situation adds valuable transparency to this process and is of value to the entire OSCE community, particularly Azerbaijan and Armenia. We call on Azerbaijan and Armenia to support his work, including by joining consensus on the Chair's Unified Budget. It is essential to achieve consensus on the Unified Budget as soon as possible; we are already late. The OSCE's wide-ranging and important work is weakened without an approved Unified Budget.

The need for a comprehensive and long-term political settlement to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is clear. The engagement of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Personal Representative of the CiO, including their full and unimpeded access throughout the region, will help to defuse tension and prevent future violence. We urge the sides to return to substantive high-level negotiations, without preconditions, under the auspices of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs as soon as possible. The United States welcomes ideas on how the OSCE can help to foster peace, stability, and prosperity throughout the Caucasus region.

Thank you, Madam Chair.