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United States Mission to the OSCE

On Events in and Around Nagorno Karabakh

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 16, 2020

Thank you, France, for sharing our joint Statement from the *Minsk Group Co-Chairs*. In my national capacity I would like to note that the United States welcomed the October 10 joint statement announcing agreement on a humanitarian ceasefire. We call on the sides to take immediate steps to implement their commitments under this agreement in full. As a *Co-Chair* of the *Minsk Group*, the United States is deeply concerned by the continuing violence. We reiterate urgent calls by the *Co-Chairs* in their October 13 Statement for Armenia and Azerbaijan to take immediate steps to execute in full the obligations made on October 10 in order to prevent catastrophic consequences for the region. We are alarmed at increasing civilian casualties and deplore the loss of human life.

We extend our condolences to the families of those killed or injured. The United States condemns in the strongest terms the continuing violence along the *Line of Contact*, including attacks reportedly striking civilian populations on the territory of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

We call on the sides to observe fully their obligations under international humanitarian law, including their obligations related to protection of civilians and civilian objects. We reiterate that participation by external parties in the conflict only serves to exacerbate the situation.

We call on the sides to adhere to the humanitarian ceasefire and actively support the work of the *Co-Chairs* and the *Chair-in-Office's Personal Representative*, who together with the *International Committee of the Red Cross*, are ready to facilitate the return of prisoners of war, captives, and remains.

We also call on the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric and actions, and to urgently intensify their efforts to conclude substantive negotiations to reach a settlement based on the basic principles well known to the parties.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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