



Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1158th Meeting of the Permanent Council,
29 September 2017

*Special PC on “Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization
that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT)”*

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Azerbaijan thanks Minister Sebastian Kurz, *OSCE Chairperson-in-Office*, for his opening remarks and appreciates efforts of the Austrian Chairmanship for devoting special attention to security concerns emanating from terrorism and radicalization leading to violence, particularly among the youth.

We also join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for presenting the updates on OSCE activities to counter VERLT.

We express our gratitude to Prof. Peter Neumann, *Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism*, for preparing the Report on VERLT. We will submit our detailed comments on the report, as we are not in a position to do so at this stage due to late distribution of the Report.

As a country that has repeatedly been a target of terrorist attacks, Azerbaijan strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We consider that all terrorist acts, regardless of their motivation constitute serious crimes and must be unequivocally condemned and prosecuted.

Priority should be given to continued implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in an integrated manner and in all its aspects, as well as to the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Despite the fact that, international community channels significant efforts to countering terrorism, it still continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security, as well as to the political independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and social and economic development of States.

An increasing trend of terrorist attacks attests to the need for strengthened and coordinated international response and preventive actions. At the same time, expanding convergence of discourses of terrorism, radicalization and extremism in recent years proves that exclusive use of traditional military and law enforcement responses to mitigate the threat of terrorism are neither sufficient nor effective. Any measure to counter and prevent this menace requires a comprehensive approach that should identify and address the root causes.

OSCE is well placed to play a crucial role in this regard, complementing efforts of relevant international institutions that have direct mandate to deal with terrorism. For that aim, OSCE’s mandate for conflict resolution should be fully utilized. It is with this understanding that we share the view of distinguished speakers on necessity of investing more efforts for resolving the conflicts in the OSCE area. Promotion of peaceful co-existence, re-integration of territories and societies torn by existing conflicts can significantly mitigate threats posed by radicalization. On the contrary, notorious idea of ethnic incompatibility cherished at the highest political level, which resulted in

mass expulsion of indigenous people from their homes and led to creation of mono-ethnic society, should be resolutely rejected as a factor contributing to violence in the OSCE area.

In this regard, we recall the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism (2001), which underlines connection between various social, economic, political and other factors, including violent separatism and extremism, which engender conditions that lead to terrorism. In particular, separatist groups widely resort to terrorist acts during armed conflicts.

It is crucial for the OSCE to work towards developing comprehensive strategies to combat terrorism and eradicate conditions conducive to it, including violent extremism and separatism.

Last but not least, combating terrorism cannot and must not be used to target any religion or culture. That principle must be part of any counter-terrorism strategy. All States should be united in supporting various initiatives on intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Strengthening cooperation within those initiatives will serve to prevent misconceptions, defamatory manifestations and deliberate labeling religions and contribute to the efficiency of counterterrorism efforts.

Azerbaijan strongly supports promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We remain determined to continue our cooperation with international and regional organizations and are ready to share our best practices and experiences in this field.

Thank you.