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16.11.2018

PRESS RELEASE

The statement by the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan on condemning Bako Sahakyan's illegal visit to France

We, the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, strongly condemn and express our indignation on the illegal visit to France by Bako Sahakyan, the so-called "representative" of the puppet regime established in the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia.

Despite the obligations of France as one of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs, no action has been taken to prevent this illegal visit. Lack of effective actions by the French Government to prevent such repeated unlawful acts and its passive observer attitude are totally unacceptable.

While not allowing individuals from South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Crimea and Transnistria regions to enter its territory, France grants particular favors towards the so-called representatives of the illegal regime established in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Likewise, while being fully aware of the consequences of the ethnic cleansing and gross violations of fundamental human rights that the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region has been subjected to, the Government of France turns a blind eye to unilateral and separatist actions and violates the principles of indivisibility and equality of the human rights. In this regard, France is pursuing a policy based on discrimination and favoritism.

As the citizens of Azerbaijan face difficulties and bureaucratic procrastination in obtaining a visa from the French Embassy, the war criminal Bako Sahakyan easily enters the territory of France using forged documents, thus violating the Schengen visa rules. The realization of this illegal visit not only prevents the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through negotiation but also serves to promote the so-called regime established in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Finally, the French side should be aware that these kinds of biased and non-objective actions not only undermine France's reputation in the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, as a whole, seriously damage the reputation of France in the public opinion of Azerbaijan.

If France really wishes to contribute to the resolution of the conflict, it should ensure its impartial position as the Co-Chair country of the OSCE Minsk Group, by redoubling its efforts to ensure the withdrawal of the Armenian troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan as demanded in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. France should also invite the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh together to Paris in order to support the ethnic reconciliation and dialogue between the two communities on an equal basis.

France has to realize that the establishment of lasting and just peace in the region is possible only through the return of the Azerbaijanis, who have been subjected to ethnic cleansing and banishment, to their native lands.