



**ARMENIA - AZERBAIJAN
CIVIL PEACE PLATFORM**

Statement

Of the I General Assembly of the “Armenia-Azerbaijan Civil Peace Platform”

**Tbilisi
30 October 2017**

The ineffectiveness of the measures taken towards the peaceful settlement of the bloodiest conflict in the region, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, continues to be distressing both in the public of the two countries and in the international arena. Failure to resolve the conflict constantly reminds itself as a source of potential war for decades and causes a great threat to the entire region by making the parties arm themselves. The March 2008, August 2014 and April 2016 fights, major losses, and serious damaged peace hopes have once again demonstrated how the transition from a temporary and fragile ceasefire to a large-scale bloody war is close and real. There is no other means besides peace in the hands of the human being to shed the light and drain the tears of the mothers of young people who lost their lives in the armed clashes. Therefore, the search for a peaceful way that will completely exclude the war is an urgent, sacred duty of the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan, who lived in good neighborhood for the centuries.

The Peace Platform, established in December 2016, is the initiative of the citizens of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the civic institutions they represent, who want to contribute to the peaceful settlement of the conflict. This is the voice of simple Armenian and Azerbaijani people who, after the April clashes, started to better understand the reactionary, anti-humanistic essence of the war and who have been condemned to experience the bloody horrors of the war in their own homes and to understand the eternal inevitability of peace. These people realize that even though they do not have the power to solve the conflict immediately, the steps to restore the close neighborliness, peace-building and cooperation traditions between the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples is also an important step. Over the past years, the Peace Platform has fulfilled its commitments by starting preparations for the dialogue. The Platform was joined by prominent people from both countries, war resisters living in different countries around the world and trying to resolve this conflict. These self-sacrificing people have faced many different threats and pressures. Someone did not endure this pressure and left this noble mission halfway. But the vast majority did not hesitate even for a moment and stayed on the path for the restoration of peace between the two nations.

To raise the effectiveness of peace initiatives, there was a need for expansion and reorganization of the Platform. That is why we are taking concrete steps today in Tbilisi to make the Armenia-Azerbaijan Civil Peace Platform a flexible organization. The direct support of the OSCE Minsk Group’s co-chairs who work on the resolution of the

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is very remarkable and encouraging. The establishment of a more effective form of the organization, the adoption of the new Charter, the election of the Steering Committee, the Control-Inspection Commission, the Experts Council and the establishment of the co-ordinating institute, representing all the countries participating in the Minsk Group along with the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, are essential for enhancing the Platform's strength and effectiveness. Undoubtedly, the organization will provide its practical support to the civil society in the Minsk Group's mediation mission. This increases hopes for achieving real results as a new stage in the difficult peacebuilding process.

Conduction of the first General Assembly of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Civil Peace Platform in the beautiful Tbilisi city which is remarkable for geographical and spiritual closeness to both countries, where the national independence flags of these states were raised a hundred years ago, embodies the symbolical meaning of new activities.

In order to bring peace calls to real results, the organization considers it essential that the peacekeepers in both countries act in a unified position. Based on the traditions of historical neighborhood between the two nations, the organization sees all the friends and supporters of these countries in the international arena as its partners. To this end, it calls on the spiritual leaders of the millions of people, who bring peace and mercy to the world – the Supreme Religious Leader of the Caucasus Muslims – Allahshukur Pashazade and to the Catholicos of all Armenians Karekin II, to call to live together in peace and harmony and closely co-operate. Besides that, the Armenian-Azerbaijani Civil Peace Platform calls on the Armenian and Azerbaijani diaspora organizations to give new impetus to their activity and peace initiatives. Because every day that hinders the peace in the conflict zone, as well as the intense continuation of the sounds of gunshots on the contact line of the troops become the reason of the death of soldiers, as well as the death of peaceful population at the nearby areas and the settlements. Among them there are innocent babies, women and older people. Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples have no right to ignore this brutality for decades.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan Civil Peace Platform addresses all the peace-seekers, socio-political figures, intellectuals, women, and all public organizations of the two countries for their support to peace calls, for sacrifice and determination to put an end to the thirty-year war aiming to destroy everything delicate and beautiful existing between Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples.