

Statement by the Ambassadors of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council *

The undersigned Ambassadors of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) fully support the rights of citizens throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to demonstrate and to peacefully engage in civic activities to protest about the current economic, social and political situation in the country.

The undersigned PIC Steering Board Ambassadors deplore the destruction of property during some of the protests. They also deeply regret the injuries to citizens, demonstrators, journalists and police sustained during the protests and strongly condemn the use of violence. The undersigned Ambassadors of the PIC Steering Board urge the relevant authorities and political parties to engage rapidly in a two-way dialogue with citizens and civil society about the current socio-economic and political problems in the country with an aim to develop and implement concrete actions. Leaders need to engage seriously in dialogue with the citizens and not allow the violent actions of a few to be an excuse for not addressing legitimate demands expressed peacefully.

The undersigned Ambassadors of the PIC Steering Board condemn attempts by certain political leaders to use the protests to heighten ethnic divisions. Citizens across the country and of all ethnic groups share similar concerns about corruption, high unemployment and the lack of economic opportunity. In this context all authorities and political leaders should work together to address the concerns and frustrations of the citizens.

* Those that subscribe to this statement are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States, the European Union, Turkey (representing the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation), Spain and Netherlands. The Russian Federation refrains from joining this statement and considers that the current situation in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a purely internal matter.