



ԵԱՀԿ-ՈՒՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

## Statement

### **In Response to the Addresses by the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination**

**as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan, Permanent Representative of  
Armenia, at the 1295<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

*10 December 2020*

Mr. Chairman,

We join others in welcoming the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Prof. Regina Polak, Rabbi Andrew Baker and Ambassador Mehmet Pacaci and thank them for their appearance at the Permanent Council.

Our dialogue today is taking place against the backdrop of the dire consequences of the war unleashed by Azerbaijan and its allies against the people of Artsakh. The growing anti-Armenian hatred, xenophobia and intolerance, which have been cultivated for decades in Azerbaijan and promoted at the highest political level, which we have spoken about for many years, and which were never properly addressed by this Organization, have now “borne fruit”. The hate-inducing narratives towards Armenians instilled in the hearts and minds of Azerbaijanis, especially the younger generation, were applied in practice during the war and, unfortunately, continue to be applied even now.

During our last meeting, my delegation drew attention to the mass atrocities, extrajudicial killings, destruction and illegal expropriation of churches, cemeteries and religious symbols of minority groups in the OSCE neighbourhood. Today, the same is happening to the Armenians already in the OSCE area, in the territories of Artsakh recently occupied by the armed forces of Azerbaijan.

There is ample evidence of the horrific crimes committed by Azerbaijani soldiers in the territory of Artsakh. Extremely disturbing videos are circulating on social networks, including the recent one, showing the brutal beheading of an elderly Armenian man by a member of the Azerbaijani armed forces.

Mr Chairman,

The above-mentioned crimes did not occur overnight. We have been witnessing an ever-increasing level of anti-Armenian hatred and xenophobia in Azerbaijan, which was directed by the political leadership of this country to create an image of the enemy and to dehumanize Armenians. My delegation has persistently voiced Armenia's concern about these alarming trends, when we protested the release and glorification of Ramil Safarov by Azerbaijani authorities, when we raised the issue of war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani military during the April war in 2016. What we are witnessing today, is the continuation of the same practice, on an even larger scale and more openly, without fear of prosecution and punishment.

In fact, Ramil Safarov, who murdered the sleeping Armenian officer during the NATO training course in Hungary, set the tone and environment for such hate crimes. Not only this heinous crime remained unpunished, but the culprit was glorified and declared a hero in Azerbaijan. His crime was praised as worthy of emulation, as manifestation of patriotism by the official propaganda of Azerbaijan, including by the Ombudsperson of this country. He became a hero for schoolchildren and preschoolers in Azerbaijan back in 2004. And it is exactly this generation that, following the example of Ramil Safarov, is committing war crimes today, both against the military personnel and the peaceful population of Artsakh.

Against this backdrop, the tacit indifference of the OSCE, individual participating States, and the international community as a whole is perceived as a sign of weakness or connivance, and unfortunately will lead to new hate crimes, both in the South Caucasus and beyond.

Mr Chairman,

The anti-Armenian hatred and intolerance cultivated in Azerbaijan for many years have already led to the complete, barbaric destruction of Armenian cultural heritage and historical monuments, especially in Nakhijevan. After the war against Artsakh, the ongoing and well-documented policy of Azerbaijan aimed at the willful destruction and vandalism of the Armenian cultural heritage in the occupied territories of Artsakh, clearly and unequivocally demonstrates that the official assurances by the Azerbaijani authorities of protection of the Christian heritage and respect for international law should not be taken at face value .

These assurances are intended to mislead the international community. After the publicly announced promise by the President of Azerbaijan to protect the "Christian monuments" in the occupied territory of Artsakh, Azerbaijan's tactics were slightly modified and is now aimed at appropriating the Armenian cultural heritage by attributing it to the so-called Caucasian Albania. I call on the distinguished Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office to take up this issue and monitor the developments in this regard.

Artsakh is an integral and inseparable part of the Armenian cultural heritage landscape. Therefore, Armenia has legitimate concerns about the fate of the rich Armenian historical and cultural heritage, around 4000 monuments, which are now under the control of Azerbaijan. This concern is based on the fact that for decades Azerbaijan has been responsible for a systematic cultural genocide, aimed at destroying any trace of the civilizational presence of Armenians in the territories that are currently under the occupation.

In conclusion, let me once again thank you for your appearance and express hope that the issues raised by my delegation will be duly considered and that you will redouble your efforts to deliver on your mandate. And this delegation stands ready to support you to that end.

Thank you.