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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

**as delivered by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia
at the 87th Joint Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the
Permanent Council**

Security Dialogue on UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security

08 March, 2023

Distinguished Chairs,
Esteemed colleagues,

At the outset I would like to thank the OSCE Chairmanship of North Macedonia and the FSC Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina for making the topic of Women, peace and security as one of their priorities for 2023 and commend the initiative to organize a joint FSC-PC meeting on this very important issue.

We are also thankful for the insightful presentations delivered by the distinguished speakers.

Women, peace and security agenda is among the priorities of the Government of Armenia. The four pillars of the Resolution 1325, the participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery, are complementary and cross-cutting, and thus need a cross-dimensional approach. Armenia believes that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflicts, the delivery of relief and recovery efforts and in the forging of lasting peace. At the same time, we attach great importance to the protection of the rights of women and girls residing in conflict areas.

As a strong supporter of the promotion of human rights of women and their empowerment in various spheres of public life Armenia has adopted its 2nd National Action plan on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for the period of 2022-2024, which is based on the previous National Action Plan analysis, in particular, the achievements and lessons learnt. It also reflects the issues and challenges that have emerged for the women residing in the border regions of Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).

We would also like to inform that in October 2023, at the initiative of Mrs. Anna Hakobyan, wife of the Prime Minister of Armenia, an international conference entitled "The role of women in the promotion of democracy, peace and security" is planned to be held in Armenia, and will be jointly organized with the "Women Political Leaders" prestigious international organization.

Mr. Chair,

Today's discussion has a particular relevance against the backdrop of the unprecedented security challenges in the OSCE region, including the security threats resulting from the constant Azerbaijani military provocations in Nagorno-Karabakh and the large scale incursion of Azerbaijani armed forces into the sovereign territory of Armenia.

The Armenian Delegation has presented on numerous occasions the irrefutable facts on violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces, including against Armenian women and girls, both civilians and servicewomen, during the 4-days war against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2016 and 44-days war of aggression in 2020, as well as aggression against the sovereign territories of Armenia in September 2022.

During the 44-days war of aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh, as a result of indiscriminate shelling of residential areas 12 out of the 81 killed civilians were women. More than 90 thousand people, most of them women and children, became forcibly displaced and had to find refuge in different parts of Armenia. Those who could not leave their homes were brutally killed and maimed, among those Nina Davityan and Yelena Hakobyan, 83-year-old and 68-year-old female residents of the currently occupied Hadrut region of Nagorno-Karabakh, who were found decapitated in their houses. Many women have been captured during and after the war, some of them are still held in captivity by Azerbaijan or became victims of forced disappearance in violation of the provisions of the international humanitarian law and 9 November 2020 trilateral statement.

Unfortunately, the lack of effective deterrence, strong condemnation and appropriate actions by the international community encouraged Azerbaijan to launch an unprovoked and unjustified aggression against sovereign territories of Armenia in September 2022, accompanied by another round of war crimes and other mass atrocities both against the civilians and the military personnel of the Armenian armed forces, including servicewomen. The vivid example is the case of Ms. Susana Margaryan, a servicewoman of the Armenian armed forces, whose desecrated and dismembered body was put on display through social media platforms by Azerbaijani users.

As of today we have not heard of any perpetrators of these abhorrent crimes brought to justice, nor any condemnation by the Azerbaijani authorities. Instead, rewarding the culprits became the regular practice of the leadership of Azerbaijan.

Dear colleagues,

As we speak now, the 120 000 Armenian people, including 30 000 children and tens of thousands of women in Nagorno-Karabakh continue suffering the consequences of the ongoing illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor, imposed by Azerbaijan. The deliberate disruptions of critical infrastructure together with the food and medical supply shortages has compounded the humanitarian crisis.

Ignoring the calls and statements of many international partners and international organization, and blatantly violating the legally binding Order of the ICJ, Azerbaijan's authorities continue the effective blockade of the Lachin Corridor for almost 3 months now, aimed at either forcibly subjugating the Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh or forcing them to leave their homes, and thus to achieve their final goal – the complete ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In parallel to blocking the Lachin corridor Azerbaijan continues to terrorize the Armenians of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) by targeting civilians during agricultural works and conducting sabotage intrusions into the zone of responsibility of the Russian Peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In particular, on 5 March a sabotage group of the Azerbaijani armed forces crossed the line of contact and attacked a vehicle of the Passport and Visa Department of the Police of Nagorno-Karabakh, in the vicinity of Stepanakert, capital city of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). As a result of this deadly ambush, three police officers were killed and another was wounded. In this regard, the Human Rights Defender of Nagorno-Karabakh has issued a "Report on the Terrorist Act Carried out by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces Ambush Group On March 5, 2023", which will be circulated in due course.

This pre-planned terrorist attack is another evidence of the rejection by Azerbaijan's regime of negotiations as a means of finding solutions to any issues and of lack of willingness to undertake efforts to establish peace and security in the region. This once again proves the absolute necessity for guarantees for ensuring the rights and security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and the practical international involvement.

Armenia reiterates the urgent need to dispatch an international fact-finding mission to the Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh to assess the humanitarian and human rights situation on the ground and prevent unfolding of a humanitarian catastrophe.

Thank you.

Right of Reply to the Delegation of Azerbaijan

I am not going to respond to the far-fetched allegations of the Azerbaijani delegation while I reject all baseless allegations against my country.

Armenia will consistently raise the issue related to cases of the numerous documented war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces against the Armenian military

personnel and civilians, including women and girls, until the perpetrators and those responsible for the abhorrent crimes are brought to justice.

We once again call on Azerbaijan to cease its policy of provocations and intimidation against the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and return to meaningful negotiations within the internationally agreed format to reach the comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.