



ԵԱՀԿ ՈՒՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**STATEMENT**

**as delivered by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia  
at the 1035<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation  
Security Dialogue on "The OSCE Code of Conduct"**

*08 February, 2023*

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to join my colleagues and express deep condolences to the families of the victims of the devastating earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye and wish speedy recovery to those injured.

The Delegation of Armenia commends the FSC Chair for holding this Security Dialogue on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and thanks the keynote speakers for their insightful presentations.

The Code of Conduct remains one of the most important tools of the politico-military dimension which encompasses the norms and principles of democratic and accountable security sector, as well as security rights and obligations of participating States.

We believe, that discussions on this topic, in particular, full implementation of the provisions of the Code of Conduct become even more urgent, amidst the blatant violations of the OSCE core principles, in particular, the massive use of force, accompanied by heinous war crimes and gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law during the recent years, as well as the warmongering rhetoric and hate propaganda that pose a serious security threat to our region.

Esteemed colleagues, the Code of Conduct committed all participating States to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and not to strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other States. However, during only the last 3 years, Azerbaijan blatantly violated these core principles by launching large scale war

of aggression in 2020 against Artsakh and in 2022 against sovereign territories of Armenia, which resulted in the ethnic cleansing of around 200 Armenian communities in Nagorno-Karabakh and illegal occupation of more than 140 square kilometers of the sovereign territories of Armenia. Currently, the armed forces of Azerbaijan are entrenched deep into the sovereign territory of Armenia and continue the fortifications and military build-ups in the Armenia proper.

Mr. Chair,

The Code committed the participating States to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. However, Azerbaijan transferred and used foreign terrorist fighters against its unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Artsakh back in the 1990s, as well as in 2020.

The Code of Conduct also lays out the responsibilities of participating States to ensure that their armed forces act in accordance with international humanitarian law, the rules, conventions and obligations governing armed conflict. We recall that during the wars of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh and its people in 2016 and 2020, as well as the recent aggression of September 13, 2022 against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia, Azerbaijan's armed forces committed numerous egregious atrocities and mass violations of IHL both against civilians and military personnel, such as arbitrary killings, mutilation and desecration of dead bodies. We regret to note that to date no single serviceman, from commanders to their subordinates has been held accountable in Azerbaijan. The commission of such barbaric acts was and is condoned by the politico-military leadership of Azerbaijan, hence they bear full responsibility for those heinous crimes.

Furthermore, The OSCE participating States have also committed, in the event of armed conflict, to seek to facilitate the effective cessation of hostilities and to create conditions favorable to the political solution of the conflict, as well as to co-operate in support of humanitarian assistance to alleviate suffering among the civilian population. However, in clear violation of this provision, as well as open defiance of the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020, as well as the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Azerbaijan continues to illegally detain at least 33 Armenian POWs and civilians, subjecting them to torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, as well as mock-trials staged by the leadership of Azerbaijan.

Esteemed colleagues,

Under the Code of Conduct, the participating States confirmed the continuing validity of their comprehensive concept of security, as initiated in the Final Act, which relates the maintenance of peace to the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Despite this, for almost two months, Azerbaijan under the disguise of bogus "environmental concerns", but in fact, with the involvement of its special forces and government financed and operated NGOs, has been effectively blocking the Lachin corridor, the only lifeline connecting Artsakh with Armenia and the rest of the world.

This act constitutes an infliction of a collective punishment upon the 120 000 people of Nagorno-Karabakh. In order to increase the suffering of the people of Artsakh, Azerbaijan has disrupted the normal operation of the critical energy infrastructure of Artsakh during cold winter conditions, by cutting off the gas and electricity supply to Artsakh, coming from Armenia through the territories fallen under the control of Azerbaijan. Obstruction of provision of food and other essential goods, including indispensable medicine are still in place.

Thus, the humanitarian crisis illegally imposed by Azerbaijan, has created complex and persistent infringements of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Artsakh, such as the right to freedom of movement, the rights to education and to health and healthcare. Moreover, “willfully impeding relief supplies” as part of the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is a war crime in international armed conflicts.

We believe that only concerted responses and measurable steps by the OSCE community can ensure meaningful implementation of the provisions of the Code and alleviate suffering among the civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, and as a whole to protect the OSCE common and indivisible security concept in the entire area of responsibility of the OSCE, without classification and prioritization based on political or other considerations.

Thank you.

### **Right of reply to the delegation of Azerbaijan**

The representative of the Azerbaijani delegation has made far-fetched allegations of an epic scale which do not stand up to the scantest of scrutiny. Therefore, I am not going to refer to each of them. However, I would like to draw your attention to some important points:

First, in his speech the representative of the Azerbaijani delegation mentioned about his country's adherence to the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants, military targets and civilian objects. Then how could he explain the massive devastations of civilian objects and residential buildings caused by Azerbaijan's aggression unleashed against Artsakh in 2016 and 2020, as well as against the sovereign territories of Armenia in 2022? What about the 81 killed and 163 wounded civilians during the 44-day war in 2020?

Second, what about the incitement of hatred towards Armenians, that has become a state policy, led and fueled by the authorities of Azerbaijan, which is another violation of the Code of Conduct? For nearly two decades, we have continuously drawn the attention of our international partners, in particular the OSCE, to the issue of hate speech and Armenophobia in Azerbaijan, including in the public discourse of political leaders, as well as in school and preschool curricula, which has led to the cultivation

and subsequent glorification of hate crimes against Armenians. And the President of Azerbaijan, who has been ruling the country since 2003 very recently has boasted about that, stating that: “The younger generation has grown up with (...) hatred for the enemy, and this young generation has liberated our lands .... the absolute majority of those across the battlefields have been the people who were children when I came to power in 2003.”

Third, I would like to emphasize that the Armenian delegation has been referring to Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), which has exercised its right to self-determination in full compliance with the UN Charter and the international law and the then existing legislation. In fact Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) has never been part of independent Azerbaijan. This is a fact, Mr. Chair, which we believe should be well known to the Azerbaijani delegation as well.

As a final note, Azerbaijan must abandon its policy of creeping occupation of the sovereign territories of Armenia, and acts of intimidation of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and engage in a good faith into peaceful negotiations with Armenia and the people of Artsakh to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region, including the final settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Thank you.