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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

on the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War II and 28th Anniversary of the Liberation of Shushi

**delivered by the Delegation of Armenia at the 1266th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
7 May 2019**

Right of Reply

Mr. Chair,

It was not our intention to take the floor under this agenda item since the Armenian Delegation fully aligned itself with the Statement on the 75th anniversary of the Victory in World War II made by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation on behalf of several OSCE participating States. However, the statement made by the Representative of Azerbaijan compels me to make few remarks.

I will start by once again paying tribute to the heroism and unprecedented sacrifices of those who brought freedom and prosperity to the nations of Europe and beyond. During World War II, more than 600 thousand Armenians joined the peace-loving nations of the world in the fight against the scourge of Nazism. Almost 1/7th of the Armenian population did not return from the battlefields. Armenian soldiers have been honoured for their bravery and courage. Hundreds of them have received the highest decorations by the Soviet Union, France, the United States etc.

Together with the civilized world, we are going to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Victory in the Second World War, a day that, among others, symbolises the victory over hatred, intolerance, and extreme nationalism.

Now coming back to the statement of the Azerbaijani delegation and in reaction to the claims made therein in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and in particular its military phase, let me stress that the de-occupation of the ancient Armenian city of Shushi from Azerbaijani armed forces on 9 May 1992, made it possible to ensure the safety of the civilian population of capital Stepanakert and nearby Armenian villages and prevent their complete destruction. Regardless of whether Azerbaijan likes it or not, on 9 May, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, along with the Victory Day, will also celebrate the liberation of Shushi as one of the most significant victories of life over death, and a symbol of struggle for physical survival and protection of the right to live freely in their homeland.

As a historical fact, one hundred years ago, the armed units of the first Republic of Azerbaijan attempted to resolve the Karabakh issue, which had been already on the international agenda, by using force and mass killing of the civilian population.

As a result, the Armenian town of Shushi, a major economic, spiritual and cultural center of the region, was set on a fire and destroyed. This atrocity, committed with unprecedented cruelty, was led by Khosrov bey Sultanov, who later, during the World War II, actively participated in the formation of Azerbaijani legion in the ranks of the Nazi troops.

The Azerbaijani representative mentioned the contribution of Azerbaijan in the fight against Nazism, however he regrettably failed to mention another contribution of Azerbaijan in the course of the World War II, namely the 40,000-strong Azerbaijani Legion, consisting mainly of volunteers and known as the “Aserbaidshische Legion” of the Wehrmacht.

One should not also forget notorious Mehmed Emin Resulzade, a Nazi collaborator, who is considered a national hero in Azerbaijan today and whose statutes and streets named after him can be found aplenty in Azerbaijan.

As to the figure of Garegin Nzhdeh mentioned in the statement of Azerbaijan, let me stress that Garegin Nzhdeh is a national hero for the Armenians, who courageously defended his homeland from foreign invasion in the 1920s.

With regards the claims of the Azerbaijani representative concerning the statement made by the Russian Ambassador on behalf of a group of States, we would like to note that the Delegation of Armenia has never negotiated the text of that statement with the Azerbaijani Delegation, therefore we see no need to refer to or comment on non-existing negotiations.

Mr. Chair,

By saying this, we once again firmly and unequivocally reject the unfounded and repetitive claims of the Delegation of Azerbaijan against Armenia, which by the way have nothing to do with this current issue. Azerbaijan’s attempt to hijack this current issue and use it for promoting its political agenda is a clear manifestation of disrespect for the memory of millions of victims and heroes of World War II; it is deplorable and should be rejected by all participating States.

Second Reply

Mr. Chair,

Very briefly and for the record. Once again, we believe that today, when we are paying tribute to all the victims and heroes of World War II, Azerbaijan’s attempts to use and abuse agenda item under consideration to disseminate unfounded and propaganda driven claims is deplorable. We resolutely reject all these claims and ungrounded claims.

Mr. Chair, perhaps you should once again remind our colleagues the title of the agenda under discussion and prevent the attempts to hijack.

Thank you.