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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

**In response to the Delegation of Azerbaijan
as delivered by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia at the 1028th Plenary
Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation**

9 November 2022

I would like to exercise my right of reply in relation to the statement and allegations of the representative of the delegation of Azerbaijan.

As my delegation has repeatedly noted, there are no Armenian armed forces in Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh. As for the Artsakh Defence Army, there is no provision in any agreed document, including the trilateral ceasefire statement, requiring the dismantling of the Defence Army. Such allegations pursue only one goal - to deprive the Armenians of Artsakh of their right to protection and self-defence, as enshrined also in the Code of Conduct, and to complete the ethnic cleansing of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Presenting quotes out of context is a distinctive pattern of the behavior of the Azerbaijani delegation, for whom it is much easier to refer to the past cases in a distorted manner rather than to address the violations of the present day - for example, yesterday's statement of the president of Azerbaijan which is a compendium of violations of the Helsinki Final Act.

I would like to bring to your attention just one illustrative example from Azerbaijan president's numerous statements, which unequivocally prove his direct leadership of propaganda of hatred, who has been leading Azerbaijan since 2003: "The younger generation has grown up with (...) hatred for the enemy, and this young generation has liberated our lands from the invaders. I said that representatives of all generations performed successfully in the liberation of our lands, but the absolute majority of those across the battlefields have been the people who were children when I came to power in 2003."

As for Nagorno-Karabakh, which the Azerbaijani delegation called an illegal entity: after decades of discrimination and infringement by the Azerbaijani Soviet Republic on their fundamental rights and freedoms during the Soviet period, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh exercised their inalienable right to self-determination and declared

independence in full compliance with then existing USSR legislature and the international law, as did the other USSR members states, including Azerbaijan. This was responded by Azerbaijan with pogroms against Armenians including in the capital city of Baku, large scale war of aggression, which resulted in mass atrocities and ethnic cleansing.

As for the current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, regardless of the international isolation and blockade consistently imposed by Azerbaijan throughout for more than 30 years, Nagorno-Karabakh, with its effectively functioning executive, legislative and judicial branches of power, has been ranked by the reputable Freedom House non-governmental organization as “Partly free”, for many years. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan has succeeded to be continuously ranked as “Not free” for the same period and to this date. Perhaps this can distinctly illustrate the incompatibility between the two systems of values: democracy on one side and autocratic regime, with notorious cases of human rights violations on the other side.

I note the efforts of the Azerbaijani delegation to present its country as peace-loving and constructive country, however these efforts prove to be futile against the backdrop of the Azerbaijan President’s yesterday statements, once again revealing his countries responsibility in launching aggression against Artsakh and the true intentions with regard to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia.

In his yesterday’s speech in the occupied city of Shushi of Artsakh the President of Azerbaijan, in particular, stated: “We are not afraid of anyone. We are not scared of anyone. If we were afraid of someone, we would never have started the second Karabakh war.” President Aliyev even went further, openly stating his true intentions, when commenting on the recent September 13 aggression against the territorial integrity of Armenia, which resulted in the occupation of the sovereign territories of Armenia: “After the 13-14 September operation, the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan were stationed at key strategic heights Armenia should understand what this means.”

Dear colleagues,

This is nothing else than an explicit threat of force, in blatant disregard for its undertaken commitments and is a deliberate disruption of the international efforts to bring stability and establish peace and security in the South Caucasus and the settlement of all issues related to and resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Such rhetoric should be taken as an outright challenge to the fundamental principles and values of the OSCE, an encroachment to the concept of collective and indivisible security, the protection of which is a collective commitment, and cannot and should not be compromised for political and economic expediency.

We reiterate that as a responsible member of the international community, Armenia rejects the approach of resolving issues through the use of force and the threat of use of force, and we reaffirm our commitment to establish peace and stability in the region through peaceful negotiations, including on comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Thank you.