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**Statement by H.E. Ararat Mirzoyan,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
at the 28th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**

Stockholm, December 2, 2021

Madam Chairperson,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to join my colleagues in thanking the OSCE Swedish Chairpersonship for steering the Organization throughout the year.

One year after the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and the conclusion of the November 9 Trilateral Statement, the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and borders between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains tense. Since May 2021 Azerbaijani armed forces have infiltrated across the borders of Armenia. Up to now, they maintain and continue strengthening their illegal presence on the sovereign territory of Armenia.

By its aggressive actions Azerbaijan is flagrantly violating the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. Needless to say, Azerbaijan's actions also violate its obligations under the trilateral statement of 9 November on the cessation of all hostilities.

Another feature of the use of force is a constant attempt of Azerbaijan not merely to hold but capture Armenian servicemen and civilians. Not only does Azerbaijan continue to ignore the calls of the international community for the immediate and unconditional release of all Armenian prisoners of war and civilian hostages, but on number of instances, most recently on 16 November, its armed forces captured more military personnel in the course of its attack on the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

No pretext can justify these violent actions. The continued presence of Azerbaijani armed forces on the territory of Armenia is a factor of destabilization in our region.

We hope that the November 26 trilateral meeting organized by the Russian Federation will pave the way for undertaking certain measures towards de-escalation of the situation in the region.

Dear Colleagues,

The use of force has never been a way to peace in general and in particular in our region. The use of force can defreeze dormant conflicts for a certain period of time but they will get frozen again once there is no negotiated and peaceful solution. War can come as a unilateral choice but peace always requires consent of all sides.

Armenia is willing to achieve lasting stability in the South Caucasus and is ready for negotiations to achieve that.

The sooner Azerbaijan embarks on the resumption of the peace process, the better will be chances to achieve comprehensive and durable settlement in our region. The definition of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh based on the realization of the right to self-determination, the safe and dignified return of the displaced Armenian population throughout the entire territory of Nagorno-Karabakh should be substantive issues of negotiations. Equally, the resolution of pending humanitarian issues such as unconditional return of all Armenian POWs and all other captives, inquiry into the cases of enforced disappearances, protection of cultural heritage necessitates the strong engagement of the OSCE and its relevant mandates.

With this in mind, Armenia will further contribute towards the resumption of a full-fledged NK peace process under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship in close cooperation with all OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries.

In closing, I would like to welcome Poland as an upcoming Chair of the OSCE and wish them every success.

Thank you.