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PERMANENT MISSION OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF  
ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement  
in response to the address of Ms. Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE PA  
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan  
at the 1460th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

*08 February 2024*

Madame Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia welcomes Ms. Pia Kauma, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, back to the Permanent Council and thanks her for her address.

Parliamentary diplomacy in general and the OSCE parliamentary dimension in particular, despite numerous setbacks, remains an important platform for an open and result-oriented dialogue on pressing security issues. Guided by this understanding, Armenia, against the backdrop of the extremely challenging security situation in our region, hosted the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's 21st Autumn Meeting in Yerevan from November 18 to 20, 2023. The session was held under the theme "OSCE in Times of Crisis: Role of the PA in Responding to Internal and External Challenges".

More than 300 participants, including nearly 200 parliamentarians from the OSCE participating States attended the Autumn Meeting. The participants emphasised the importance of reinforcing multilateralism, particularly by defending and upholding Organisation's core principles and commitments aimed at promoting sustainable peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic region.

Madame Chairperson,

Armenia has always valued the role of parliamentarians in building an environment conducive to peace in the South Caucasus. This issue has been a key topic for the discussions in the OSCE's Parliamentary setting since its creation, aimed at finding a peaceful solution and guaranteeing the safety and security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, Madame President, today there are no Armenians left in Nagorno-Karabakh. After your address to the Permanent Council last September, Azerbaijan launched a massive military offensive against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh on September 19, 2023, which resulted in the ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Regrettably, we all couldn't prevent this. Thus, the year 2023 is a testament to the OSCE's ultimate systemic failure to prevent the ethnic cleansing of 120,000 people of Nagorno-Karabakh, whose sole aspiration was to live and create peacefully and with dignity in their ancestral homeland and who have already been suffering under a 10-month illegal blockade and siege.

The complete ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh from its indigenous population has further endangered Armenian cultural heritage. The state-sponsored policy of deliberate

destruction and alteration of the identity of cultural heritage sites requires urgent efforts by the international community.

Madame President,

The Vancouver Declaration, which clearly defined the threats in the South Caucasus, also sent concrete signals to the aggressor who threatened security. It urged Azerbaijan, among other things, to withdraw its military forces from the sovereign territory of Armenia. However, we are still faced with the occupation of more than 200 sq. km of the sovereign territory of Armenia, an economic blockade, new territorial claims and the threat or use of force against Armenia. These persistent actions by Azerbaijan demonstrate a blatant disregard for international law, let alone the Vancouver Declaration. Despite the calls for peace and the clear message sent by the international community, Azerbaijan continues to violate Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is imperative for the international community to take decisive actions to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its aggression and ensure the peaceful resolution of conflict. In this context, we would like to inquire what the OSCE PA intends to do in response to the blatant disregard displayed by one of the participating States towards the Declaration adopted by the OSCE PA? In our view, the OSCE PA would have strongly condemned Azerbaijan's aggression and demanded strict adherence to the principles outlined in the mentioned Declaration. Even today, it should consider taking appropriate steps against Azerbaijan to demonstrate the seriousness of its actions and adherence to its Declaration. In our view, the non-consequential Declarations or statements issued by the OSCE PA question its credibility and willingness to stand for its values.

Madam Chairperson,

Armenia is firmly committed to establishing lasting peace and security in our region. Peace in the South Caucasus has a very precise formula: open borders, functioning transport and communication links, respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, inviolability of interstate borders. Armenia needs the support of the international community, including the OSCE PA, to make the "Crossroads of Peace" project, initiated by Armenia, a reality.

Last but not least, we believe that parliamentarians can play a positive role in addressing issues of humanitarian nature. Specifically, Azerbaijan is still illegally holding 23 Armenian prisoners of war in captivity. The faith of more than 990 Armenians remained unknown since 1990s conflict to the recent Azerbaijani military aggression in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Madame President, at this point, all I can do is encourage you to advocate for the settlement of the critical issues that I highlighted above.

Thank you.