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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

**as delivered by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia at the 1028th
Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation
Security Dialogue on “Code of Conduct – Annual Discussion revisited”**

9 November 2022

At the outset, I would like to join others in thanking the speakers of today’s Security Dialogue for their insightful presentations and valuable contributions.

Mr. Chair,

Armenia remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the Code of Conduct, both in spirit and in letter. The OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, which defines the norms and principles of a democratic and accountable security sector, as well as the security rights and obligations of all participating States, is an indispensable tool to promote the concept of comprehensive and co-operative security in the OSCE region.

In these challenging times, when the European security architecture is crumbling and the values, principles and objectives that underpin the Code of Conduct are seriously undermined, discussing the main challenges and violations of the core principles of this document is of paramount importance.

To do this, first of all, we must recognize that the past years have been marked by violations of the fundamental principles of the OSCE and the Helsinki Final Act, in particular the non-use or threat of force, which has led to armed conflicts, massive violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Under the OSCE Code of Conduct, participating States committed themselves to refrain from actions aimed at strengthening their security at the expense of the security of other States, as well as to refrain from the use of armed forces to restrict the peaceful and lawful exercise of individual and collective rights.

However, despite these and other international commitments, on 13 September this year, Azerbaijan launched an unjustified and unprovoked aggression against Armenia, using heavy artillery, including multiple launch rocket systems and combat UAVs, shelling not only positions of the Armenian armed forces along the state border, but also 37 densely populated civilian settlements, residential areas and critical infrastructure, including 7 power and 5 water supply systems. As a result, at least 7,600 people, mostly women, children, elderly people and persons with disabilities, were forced to flee their homes.

This was also the case in the late 80s and early 90s of the past century, as well as during the Azerbaijani aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh in 2016 and 2020.

Mr. Chair,

Participating States also committed themselves to counter tensions that may lead to conflict, including violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and of other commitments in the human dimension, manifestations of aggressive nationalism, racism chauvinism, xenophobia and antisemitism, which also endanger peace and security. What we experience in our region today is the elevation of anti-Armenian propaganda to the rank of state policy, consistently promoted by the leadership of Azerbaijan. This decades-long policy has become a major source of flagrant human rights violations and atrocities. The image of Armenians as enemies, the ongoing anti-Armenian hatred and propaganda have become a convenient tool to consolidate the society with the ultimate goal of ensuring the continuity of the current autocratic regime.

In the Code of Conduct, participating States expressed their determination to take appropriate measures to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms. During the 44-day war of aggression in 2020, according to various sources, up to 4,000 FTFs from Northern Syria and Libya were transferred to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and used in the war against Nagorno-Karabakh and its people. Unfortunately, the hard facts about the use of FTFs in the OSCE region, widely reported and documented by independent journalists and international media and confirmed by governments and law enforcement agencies of a number of countries, did not receive an adequate response from this organization.

Dear colleagues,

The Code of Conduct also obliges participating States to ensure that their armed forces act in accordance with international humanitarian law, the rules, conventions and obligations governing armed conflict. Participating States have also committed to ensuring that such personnel are aware that they are individually accountable for their actions under national and international law. Despite this, those responsible for the brutal and arbitrary killings, mutilation and desecration of dead bodies of Armenian servicemen and civilians, as well as torture of Armenian prisoners of war were not held accountable, but were awarded by the leadership of Azerbaijan.

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, to this date, at least 33 Armenian POWs and civilians, are illegally held in Azerbaijani captivity, many of whom have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment on trumped-up charges, causing unbearable suffering not only to them, but also to their families.

Mr. Chair,

Dear colleagues,

Against the backdrop of the current security crisis, when issues of hard security prevail over human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the concept of comprehensive and indivisible security is undermined, urgent practical steps are needed to ensure that all participating States fully comply with their obligations under international law, as well as with their OSCE commitments in a good faith, including with regard to the maintenance of peace and security, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all peoples across the OSCE region.

I thank you.