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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Right of Reply
by the Delegation of Armenia
in response to the Delegation of Azerbaijan
at the 1388th (special) meeting of the Permanent Council**

14 September 2022

Mr. Chairman,

I will try to be brief, but let me reflect on some of the points raised by the representative of Azerbaijan.

As I said it in my statement – what Azerbaijan does and what Azerbaijan says never coincide. We just heard a lengthy statement full of disinformation and outright lies. I regret to say this, but that's the sad reality.

At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the representative of Azerbaijan for his lengthy but self-revealing intervention, in which while blaming Armenia for not following the “good advice of Azerbaijan” he nevertheless literally admitted that the aggression against the sovereign territory of Armenia is connected with the demands of Azerbaijan.

The representative of Azerbaijan has just said the overall context in the run-up to this military escalation was some of the actions or steps taken by Armenia. This is very much typical and symptomatic of authoritarian countries, where the philosophy of “my way or no way” prevails over the law, including international law, and common sense.

What is also interesting, the Azerbaijani representative took the liberty to refer to the Ministry of Health of Armenia and assert that there were no civilian casualties as a result of their aggression. But in reality, the press release of the Armenian Ministry of Health said that three civilians were wounded, including one in a serious condition. This is just an example, which shows that everything Azerbaijan says needs to be checked against the facts, since these statements are highly questionable.

Regarding the hostages, it is indicative that the implementation of the requirements of the Geneva Convention is presented by Azerbaijan as a goodwill gesture. As of today, there are at least 33 Armenian prisoners of war detained in Azerbaijan, in clear violation of the Geneva Convention and its protocol.

As for the alleged non-withdrawal of the Armenian Armed Forces from Nagorno-Karabakh, it would be useful to recall paragraph 4 of the Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020, which refers to the withdrawal of Armenian troops concurrently with the deployment of the peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation. In this regard, I would like to once again and officially state that there are Armenian troops stationed on the territory of Artsakh.

The Azerbaijani representative's statement regarding their 5-point proposal, again, is very much in the same logic of "my way or no way". The Government of Armenia has declared its policy of establishing an era of peace in our region. In this context, the Armenian authorities stated that there was nothing unacceptable for Armenia in the "five points" proposed by Azerbaijan, and that Armenia would not object to them. At the same time, my Government has also stressed that those proposals were not comprehensive and did not cover the whole spectrum of issues, the solution of which is a prerequisite for sustainable peace in the region. Therefore, my Government forwarded to Azerbaijan its "six-point proposal". The fact that the sides disagree on certain points or issues, does not give Azerbaijan the right to launch a military attack. The problem is that today, Azerbaijan feels privileged and quite comfortable violating almost all the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, including those relating to human rights, the peaceful settlement of disputes, refraining from the threat or use of force, co-operation among states and good neighbourly relations, and many others. It feels privileged, perhaps, because of certain services that it can provide to some partners. This allows Azerbaijan to act aggressively, attack anyone who dares to criticise, bribe foreign officials, spread lies and disinformation, and portray Azerbaijan as a peace-loving country, which is not the case.

But the purpose of today's meeting was and is to show what Azerbaijan does in reality, what the Azerbaijani armed forces are doing now in the sovereign territory of Armenia. The purpose was to discuss what we should do about Azerbaijan's violations of the basic principles of this Organization, whether we are capable of holding Azerbaijan accountable for its violations of principles of the Helsinki Final Act, is this Organization able to stand up for its principles and values, are there double standards in this Organization and what measures must be taken to stop Azerbaijan's aggression.

Since 12 May 2021, Azerbaijan has occupied 48 square kilometres of the internationally recognized territory of Armenia. After almost a year and a half, Azerbaijan launched a

new attack on Armenia from the positions it has been occupying since May 2021. And they are confident that they will continue to enjoy impunity as it has been for the past two years. These are the issues that we should discuss, how to stop the aggression, how to force Azerbaijan to withdraw its troops from the sovereign territory of Armenia, and what are the mechanisms for this.

Thank you.