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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement**  
**on "The aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia**  
**with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters"**  
**as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan**  
**at the 1407<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council**

*19 January, 2023*

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to start by expressing once again our gratitude to the North Macedonian Chairmanship for convening the Special PC meeting on 17 January. We appreciate your efforts to equally address all the conflicts in the OSCE area from the very outset of the Chairmanship.

I will be rather short today, since my Minister comprehensively presented the situation around the blockade of the Lachin Corridor, as well as the overall assessment of the Armenian government of the security situation in the South Caucasus and of the process of normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

My intention is to brief delegations on the developments that occurred on the ground since then.

As my Minister informed in his closing remarks, on 17 January Azerbaijan once again cut the supply of natural gas from Armenia to Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) by closing the valve on the section of the pipeline which passes through the territory under Azerbaijani control. The gas supply has not resumed as of now.

The high-voltage power line, feeding electricity from Armenia to Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), has been damaged, again in the section, which passes through the territories under Azerbaijani control. This caused shortages in power supplies, including for heating of residential houses in freezing winter conditions, which compounded the already dire humanitarian crisis.

As I already mentioned, all the damages to the mentioned infrastructure occurred in the sections passing through territories that are now under control of Azerbaijan, and since the latter does not allow any reparation work, the supply of natural gas, electricity as well as operation of the internet remains disrupted. This is not an unhappy coincidence. These are carefully government planned actions aimed to force out the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) from their homeland.

In fact, Azerbaijan is using the energy resources as a tool of choice for warfare and as a means to achieve its political and military goals. This is not something new. In the beginning of the 90s, when Azerbaijan with the help of Soviet troops started the ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, the same energy warfare tactics was employed not only against Nagorno-Karabakh but against Armenia as well. Azerbaijan cut not only the gas pipeline supplying energy to Armenia, but also the railway communication, which connected Armenia with the rest of the world.

So now, when Azerbaijan vehemently pushes for the reopening of transport communications in our region, one should remember that the said communications were disrupted by Azerbaijan itself.

Mr. Chairperson,

Apart from targeting the critical infrastructure and impeding the supply of natural gas, electricity and connectivity for Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), Azerbaijani side has also engaged in psychological warfare directed at the people of Artsakh and aimed at terrorizing and intimidating the civilian population, including through directly targeting the minors.

The most recent abhorrent case occurred on 17 January 2023, when the vehicle transporting 19 children, who were separated from their families because of the blockade and were stranded in Armenia, to their homes in Artsakh was stopped by the Azerbaijani agents blockading the Lachin Corridor. Up to 15 persons in balaclava masks and with cameras entered the vehicle, unlawfully filmed and intimidated children, as a result of which one child fainted. After filming the children for the APA state TV channel of Azerbaijan, in clear infringement of all rights of the child, including the right to privacy, the vehicle was allowed to move on under the terrorizing shout-outs of agents blocking the Lachin Corridor. One should be morally corrupt to terrorise children. It should be highlighted that this was the first attempt to transfer civilians through the blocked Lachin Corridor. It was only possible through the mediation of Russian Peacekeepers by their vehicles. What ensued is a vivid demonstration of how Azerbaijan is treating people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The blockade of the Lachin Corridor has resulted inter alia in violations of rights of children protected by number of international treaties, such as International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, European Convention on Human Rights and most particularly the Convention on the Rights of Children. Azerbaijan has ratified all these treaties, thus undertaking all the corresponding obligations deriving from them.

The rights to family and parental care, safety, physical and mental health, education and dozens of other rights of children guaranteed under the abovementioned and other international legal instruments are being continuously violated on a daily basis.

In order to demonstrate the mentioned violations, it is to be recalled that 270 children, about 70 of them without any parental care, have been unable to travel back for more than a month and have thus been provided temporary accommodations in Armenia.

In parallel, approximately 50 children are deprived from parental care in Artsakh and among them are minor children who are left completely alone at home. For instance, in the Msmna village of Artsakh, two kids aged 11 and 13 are left without a guardian, because their parents had travelled to Armenia before the road was blocked to attend the funeral of a relative. They should have gone back home the same day but have not been able to return to this day. In another case, an 8-months-old child has been separated from her mother.

Besides the above mentioned violations of the fundamental right of the prohibition of separation of the children from their families, right to education of the children and students have also been heavily affected by the illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor.

In particular, on 9 January, kindergartens, pre-schools and groups of primary schools and schools working with extended hours were obliged to stop their operation as a result of the shortage of food and heating. Therefore, 41 kindergartens, 56 pre-schools, and 20 all-day education institutions are currently closed down, depriving around seven thousand children of their right to care and education.

The detailed information about violations of fundamental human rights of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), including the rights of the child, are provided in the Joint Ad Hoc Reports of the Ombudspersons of Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), which are regularly updated and the last updated version was distributed to the delegations on 18 January.

Mr. Chairperson,

All those actions clearly demonstrate that the only goal of the illegal blockade of Lachin Corridor is to impose a collective punishment on the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) for their peaceful and democratic aspiration to live in their homeland free from oppression. This also shows that Azerbaijan has engaged in a hybrid war against the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) in order to achieve their forced deportation in violation of all norms and principles of international law.

Emboldened by impunity, Azerbaijan does not shy away from openly revealing its goal, as in the televised interview of 12 January the President of Azerbaijan suggested the deportation of those Armenians of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) who do not want to become citizens of Azerbaijan once again proving that the ultimate intention of the Azerbaijani authorities is the ethnic cleansing and collective punishment.

In order to avert the unfolding humanitarian disaster and prevent further escalation with detrimental impact on the prospects of peace and stability in our region, the international community should urgently take unambiguous stance and targeted actions to condemn and punish Azerbaijan in order to prevent the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh of its native Armenian people and their eventual extermination.

Mr. Chairman,

I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

I thank you.