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PERMANENT MISSION OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF  
ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement**  
**The situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh**  
**as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan**  
**at the 1449<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**  
**09 November 2023**

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Armenia raised this current issue to update the OSCE participating States on the situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh following the military aggression launched by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh on September 19.

But, before going into the details, it should be recalled that, three years ago, on November 9, November, to halt the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan on September 27, 2020, against Artsakh, the Trilateral Statement on complete ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh was signed, resulting in the deployment of peacekeeping forces of Russia in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The 44-day war of aggression, which was accompanied by mass war crimes, violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and deliberate targeting of civilian population, was just a part of Azerbaijan's planned policy of subjecting Nagorno-Karabakh to complete ethnic cleansing.

In the last three years, despite numerous calls and efforts to resolve all issues related to and resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan, with impunity, has continued to resort to the use of force, rejecting constructive dialogue on the rights and security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh under international mechanisms.

The lack of condemnation of the use of force and targeted calls from the international community three years ago and the ineffectiveness of the security guarantees created after the 44-day war encouraged Azerbaijan not only to continue its actions and policy of Armenophobia but to resort to the use of force to reach its goal—to complete the ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh from its indigenous Armenian population.

Mr. Chair,

After holding Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh under blockade, inducing starvation for more than ten months, accompanied by obstruction of essential supplies and complete disruption of electricity and gas on September 19, Azerbaijan subjected them to massive heavy bombardment and renewed unprovoked military aggression against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. During the following week, Armenia received more than 106 thousand Armenians who fled their homes. Most of them were unable to take

even the basic necessities and documents with them. Many refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, among them children, have serious health problems, including psychological trauma and oppression due to the lack of access to medical care for months, malnutrition, and the fear of violence, detention, and duress—in short, living in a coercive environment created by Azerbaijan, which is nothing but a crime under international law.

I believe that it is hard to refer to any case in the OSCE area of responsibility when more than 106 thousand refugees enter a country in a few days and that country accepts all of them without setting up refugee camps. The Government of Armenia has already allocated more than 100 million USD to support the people forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. However, mid-term solutions are still required to ensure sustainable livelihoods, accommodation, education, employment, and other issues.

In this context, it is important that the refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh feel that they are not alone and abandoned. It is important that they feel international support and solidarity. In this regard, I would like to once again express our appreciation to all those countries that have already provided financial support and announced additional financial assistance to address the needs of the forcibly displaced.

Distinguished Colleagues,

I would also like to bring to your attention the data on the number of people killed, wounded, and tortured as a result of the recent large-scale military aggression. The investigative committee of the Republic of Armenia published data according to which, as a result of 19 September Azerbaijani aggression, over 300 Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh were wounded, among them 231 servicemen and 80 civilians; over 200 were killed, among them nine civilians and three children; 14 were tortured, among them women and children; and 64 people died during the forced displacement on their way from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia due to malnutrition, lack of medication, and medical care.

During the previous Permanent Council meetings, I referred to the reports and eyewitness accounts of atrocity crimes, including the execution of civilians and children. In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that 14 bodies that have been transferred to Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh have been marked by signs of violence, torture, and mutilations—faces were burned and bodies dismembered. This is the true face of Azerbaijan. Out of the fourteen tortured bodies, four were children aged twelve and younger, three older persons, one woman, and five men. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia, in the preliminary ad hoc report, referred to these cases. Since the brutality of violence and torture against these people goes beyond the norms of the civilised world, let alone international humanitarian law, the report censored photos for the public.

Mr. Chair,

The realities created as a result of the use of force by Azerbaijan against Artsakh and its people cannot be a basis for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Now Azerbaijan claims that, as a result of the use of force, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Nagorno-Karabakh itself do not exist in the international arena any more. In fact, we have been consistently drawing the attention of our partners that, at least for three years, Azerbaijan has been engaged in delegitimising all the principles and

commitments of this organisation, instead legitimising the use and threat of force. Not only has Azerbaijan failed to comply with the legally binding orders of the International Court of Justice, but it has directed its efforts towards creating manipulative and distorted narratives trampling not only the basics of jurisprudence but also common sense.

It has become a malicious serial offender of international law and justice. The sham trials and proceedings against Armenian prisoners of war, civilians, and the former leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh under bogus charges are stark points in case.

We categorically reject the approach of resolving issues through the use of force.

Esteemed colleagues,

I would like to emphasise that today Armenia seeks international protection and assistance for Nagorno-Karabakh refugees. The long-term solution includes the implementation of their right to a voluntary return to Nagorno-Karabakh in safety and dignity under a viable international presence and guarantees. Their cultural and property rights must also be guaranteed. We call upon the international community to take relevant steps in this direction.

Robust actions by the international community are equally required to further prevent the recurrence of the use of force in our region. To this end, we urge the international community to take relevant steps, including, but not limited:

to hold the aggressor state accountable for the atrocities and crimes committed against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh,

to withdraw Azerbaijani troops from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia.

to release all PoWs and other detainees, irrespective of the charges.

to implement targeted sanctions against Azerbaijan and its authorities, who are responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity,

to ensure unhindered access of the UN specialised bodies to Nagorno-Karabakh and dispatch a UNESCO fact-finding mission to monitor the Armenian cultural heritage that is being demolished to erase the trace of Armenians.

Mr. Chairman,

The recent aggression of Azerbaijan is aimed at nullifying the efforts for just, durable, and dignified peace in our region.

Against this background, Armenia is still committed to normalising relations with Azerbaijan and establishing lasting peace in the region. As you may be aware, Azerbaijan declined to attend the meeting in Granada and then declined to attend the meeting in Brussels. The meeting was envisaged to take place between the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan under the auspices of the EU, but at the last moment, the President of Azerbaijan refused to participate in the meeting, putting forward another lame excuse. As you see, it is a clear indication that Azerbaijan

is not interested in establishing peace and intends to widen the geography of hostilities into our sovereign territories.

However, the Government of Armenia is steadfast in its commitment to turn the territory of Armenia into a “Crossroad of Peace”. The “Crossroad of Peace” project is an integral part of Armenia's peace agenda. The essence of that project is the development of communications between Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and the Islamic Republic of Iran by means of renovating, building, and operating roads, railways, pipelines, cables, and electricity lines. We are confident that our territory can turn into a crossroads of peace that will bring economic benefits not only to our immediate region or to our neighbours but also beyond.

This means first the unblocking of all regional communications on the basis of sovereignty, national jurisdiction, equality, and reciprocity. We call upon all our neighbours, particularly those who impose the three-decade-long blockade on Armenia as part of a well-established policy of economic coercion, to ensure the unblocking of all regional communications and genuinely engage in this process based on the above-mentioned principles.

Second, Armenia stands ready for delimitation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani interstate borders based on the latest available maps from 1975, in accordance with the Almaty 1991 declaration.

The territorial integrity of all countries must be respected and reciprocated without preconditions. So far, Azerbaijan has failed to do that by putting forward different pretexts. I would like to take this opportunity to once again emphasise that, obviously, our region, the South Caucasus, needs peace, and Armenia stands ready to genuinely engage in that process. Mr. Chairman,

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

I thank you.