



ԵԱՀԿ-ՈՒՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Right of Reply

**by the Delegation of Armenia to the Delegation of Azerbaijan
at the 1045th Meeting
of the Forum for Security Co-operation
Security Dialogue on
“Capacity Development in Humanitarian Mine Action”**

17 May 2023

I am not going to reply to all those worn out accusations voiced by the delegation of Azerbaijan against my country. While resolutely rejecting all the ungrounded allegations, allow me to make some remarks:

First, since the end of the First Nagorno-Karabakh War Azerbaijan has been consistently rejecting any proposal of cooperation by Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) on humanitarian demining issues. Despite this, after the signing of the Trilateral Statement of November 2020, Armenia unilaterally provided all the maps of minefields at its possession to Azerbaijan as a goodwill humanitarian gesture, which, in response, came up with claims, as if those maps were not accurate.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan blatantly violating its obligations under the Trilateral Statement and IHL, in particular the Geneva Conventions, continues to illegally hold in captivity at least 33 Armenian POWs and civilians, a number, which has been confirmed by the Azerbaijani authorities.

Second, Armenia has officially stated on numerous occasions, including at the highest level and I would like to reiterate that Armenia has no military personnel in Nagorno-Karabakh and has not transferred any military personnel or equipment to Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). The Defense Army of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is under the command and control of the elected authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh, is the military force, which was created during the first Nagorno-Karabakh war to defend its people from the Azerbaijani aggression.

Azerbaijan, by branding the Defense Army of Nagorno-Karabakh as Armed forces of Armenia and pushing for their removal, pursues the goal of removing the last defensive

capacity of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), thus paving the way for unhindered and complete ethnic cleansing of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Here let me recall that Armenia officially has proposed to send an international fact-finding mission to Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh, which would monitor the situation on the ground and would serve as a reliable and unbiased source of information and a useful instrument to diffuse the tensions thus contributing to the creation of the atmosphere of trust.

Third, Azerbaijani delegation is making attempts to portray its country as a peace loving one, however, regrettably, realities on the ground prove just the opposite. I would like to elaborate on the recent continuous provocative and aggressive actions by Azerbaijan against the sovereign territory of Armenia. The latest attack was launched on 11 May 2023 when the Azerbaijani armed forces attacked the Armenian Armed forces positions near the Sotk village of Gegharkunik province of Armenia, using artillery, mortars and combat UAVs, as a result of which one Armenian serviceman was killed and 6 were wounded.

This provocation and aggression came immediately after the 1st to 4th May intensive negotiations between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Washington, and also immediately before the meeting of the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan in Brussels, and the planned meeting in Chisinau on 1 June.

In addition, today, just around two hours ago the Azerbaijani armed forces again opened fire in the direction of the Armenian armed forces positions near the Sotk village of the Gegharkunik province of Armenia, as a result of which an Armenian conscript soldier was wounded, who later died of the life-threatening injuries. Moreover, the Azerbaijani armed forces targeted the ambulance, transporting the wounded soldier, as a result, the accompanying paramedic was also wounded.

We once again call on the military-political leadership of Azerbaijan to stop the groundless, unjustified and shameful attempts aimed at disrupting the negotiation process by using force and thereby exerting pressure on Armenia.