



ԵԱՀԿ ՌԻՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

**as delivered by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia
at the 1033rd Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation
Security Dialogue on "SALW/SCA in South-East Europe: Achieving Security
through Cooperation"**

25 January, 2023

Mr. Chair,

The delegation of Armenia would like to thank the panelists for their interesting and thought-provoking presentations and contributions. This Security Dialogue is a good opportunity to discuss and exchange views on the implementation of commitments in the field of SALW and SCA, as well as on the application of the OSCE SALW/SCA assistance mechanism with the aim to contribute to creating an environment conducive to increasing the effectiveness of the Organization in this field.

Armenia has been consistently advocating the importance of control and management of SALW and SCA, first and foremost, as it is associated with human security. We have always been engaged constructively in the elaboration of the important set of documents in the field of SALW and SCA. Meanwhile, we believe that those documents and established commitments can best serve their purpose if implemented in good faith

refraining from the attempts to turn them into political manipulations, including to misuse the assistance mechanism.

For many years our co-operation with the OSCE in the field of SALW and SCA was apparently hindered by one participating State while our responsible and constructive behavior was taken for granted by the OSCE and its participating States and, unfortunately, led to more unwarranted and undue claims. Moreover, the work of the Organization was hindered by the same participating State.

We once again reiterate our principled position and call on the current and future FSC Chairmanships and all the OSCE structures to refrain from any actions or activities that will directly or indirectly support conflict-related projects. In this context, we would like to underline that the application of the SALW/SCA assistance mechanism projects should not in any way legitimize massive use of force, in particular in the area of OSCE responsibility.

Dear colleagues,

Another major challenge that I would like to touch upon is posed by the excessive and uncontrolled accumulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which entails certain existential threats, especially to the lives of people residing in conflict-affected or border areas. Here I would like to bring your attention to the blatant and continuous violations by Azerbaijan of its commitments, including the destabilizing accumulation of SALW that have led to the unleashing of a war of aggression in our region in 2016 and 2020 against Artsakh/ Nagorno-Karabakh and in 2022 against the sovereign territories of Armenia.

And last but not least, the proliferation and illicit trafficking of firearms and ammunition is a serious security threat with transnational implications, especially a serious violation of shared commitments of countering terrorism. Here, I would like to draw your attention to what we have experienced in our region: during the 44-day war in 2020 Azerbaijan integrated foreign terrorist fighters into the structures of its armed forces and, in particular, the Border Troops of Azerbaijan and provided with appropriate uniforms, weapons and ammunition, which is a clear example of illegal transfer of small arms and light weapons into the hands of terrorists.

In conclusion, OSCE and its participating States must take resolute actions to uphold our shared commitments and prevent their unapologetic violations, as well as clearly denounce the attempts to turn the undertaken commitments into political manipulations, including by misusing the assistance mechanism.

Mr. Chair,

In exercising my right of reply to the delegation of Azerbaijan, I am not going to comment on all the allegations or false narratives voiced by the representative of the Azerbaijani delegation, but to refer to some points.

As my delegation has already stated, currently there are no Armenian armed forces on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. As for the Artsakh Defense Army, since the peacekeepers have not been deployed along the entire contact line, which is impossible due to the small number of contingents, the units of the Artsakh Defense Army have the right and must be on their duty in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, given the continues security threats by Azerbaijan, as well as use of force and atrocities perpetrated by the Azerbaijani armed forces even after the ceasefire was established according to the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020. The people of Artsakh cannot survive in their historical homeland without the Defense Army, and the proposal of withdrawing the Defense Army from Artsakh is a proposal of expelling the Armenians of Artsakh.

The fabrications of the Azerbaijani side on possible transfer of weapons and mines through the Lachin corridor pursues a goal to cover up the ongoing illegal blockade of the Lachin corridor, the only lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, and the deliberate disruption of gas and electricity supply to the 120 000 people of Artsakh, depriving people of food, medicine supply and access to humanitarian relief. These actions are in direct contrast with the point 6 of the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020, and constitute part of the policy of Azerbaijan aimed at complete ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia deplores the misuse of issues related to landmines by Azerbaijan to whitewash its occupation policy and war crimes committed during and after the 44-day war of 2020. As for the assistance requested by Azerbaijan, my delegation has presented in detail its position on a number of occasions, which is as follows: the project proposal by Azerbaijan, which is to be implemented in the occupied territories of

Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh, is an attempt to abuse the OSCE assistance mechanism with the aim to legitimize the war of aggression and the outcome of its use of force against the people of Artsakh. Any actions or activities that will directly or indirectly support such a controversial project in conflict-related areas, as requested by Azerbaijan, will be considered as another endorsement of Azerbaijan's illegal policy, and will undermine the credibility of the OSCE and affect the cooperation between Armenia and the OSCE.

Thank you.