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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement  
On Commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

**as delivered by Mr. Arman Hovhannisyan, Deputy Permanent Representative of  
Armenia at the 1257<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
January 30, 2020**

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation thanks Ambassador Georges Santer, Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for his address. Today, we are once again fulfilling our duty to the memory and dignity of the victims of the Holocaust. However, commemoration is not only a moral duty, but it also has a very important educational meaning for future generations, especially that the generation of survivors is passing away. Moreover, commemoration is not only a sad reminder about the darkest pages of the history of mankind, but first and foremost it is an indispensable part of prevention. Prevention starts from recognition and remembrance. Without recognition and remembrance there can be no prevention. Therefore, while honouring the victims and survivors of the Holocaust, we also ensure the minimum conditions for the prevention of the Crime of Genocide.

Since Raphael Lemkin coined the term of Genocide back in 1944, which was shortly translated into a Convention, genocide scholars elaborated the subsequent stages of this heinous Crime. Genocides do not start and do not end merely by annihilation. They start with classification, transcend through dehumanization, ending up with extermination. One may think that this is the final stage of Genocide. It is not. Denial of genocide is recognized as its ultimate stage. The Convention also recognizes that genocide occurs both in time of peace and war and, thus, referring to the calamities of war is sophisticated way of denial or justification of genocide. Equally, the absence or collapse of the international security system cannot be invoked as justification or trivialization of Genocide.

We should remember that all genocides, including the Holocaust could have been prevented. It is exactly for this reason that as a nation that went through the horrors of Genocide, Armenia became one of the strongest advocates for the prevention of the crime of genocide, presenting resolutions relating to Genocide, starting from 1998. Armenia has also initiated the resolution on the “International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of Prevention of This Crime”, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on September 11, 2015.

Today, not only do we honour and pay tribute to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and other Genocides, but we also remember the Righteous people, whose

courage and humanism gave another chance not only to those at the risk of extermination but also to the humanity as such. Prominent Israeli professor Yair Auron said, "There is no neutral side when it comes to genocides and crimes against humanity, by not taking side with victims one takes side with criminals".

While paying tribute to the memory of the six million victims of the Holocaust, we also mark the 75th anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Leaders of the world, including the president of Armenia, gathered at the Forum in Yad Vashem, at the memorial dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust to send a strong message that antisemitism, xenophobia, racism, and intolerance have no place in the contemporary world and to deliver on our pledge of "Never Again".

Thank you.