



Presentation by Mr. George Kocharian, Head of the Department of International Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia
OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation
Security Dialogue on UNSCR 1540
05 May 2021

Mr. Chairman,

Excellences,

Distinguished Colleagues,

I am honored to be part of today's discussion dedicated to one of serious challenges to international security. Today we live in a world where growing transnational challenges and threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction undermine global security and stability like never before. No state can alone confront the threats that do not respect national borders. They demand coordinated and co-operative responses. Today's meeting provides good opportunity to discuss the synergies between the UN and the OSCE and how these organizations contribute to the efforts of the OSCE participating States to achieve common objectives in the fight against proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction.

The proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery has been one of the most alarming challenges for the entire international community in the last decades. This is an evolving threat that can be tackled only by multilateral efforts through effective, flexible and mutually reinforcing international mechanisms. In today's challenging security environment and grave socio-economic situation affected by COVID-19 pandemic, we must continue to take relevant measures to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime.

It's been already almost 2 decades since the UN SC adopted the Resolution 1540. In this period the Resolution has become one of the bedrocks of the global security architecture. It reconfirmed the commitment of the international community to the main goals of the Resolution: to preserve the future generations from the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and misuse of those weapons by terrorists.

It created an action-oriented framework for the cooperation amongst states aimed at the developing effective national capacities to prevent the proliferation of WMD. Together with its follow up resolution 2325 (2016), it has contributed to the effective implementation of the existing disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

Mr. Chairman,

Armenia attaches great importance to the comprehensive implementation of the provisions of the Resolution 1540. We believe that consistent efforts at the national level are needed in order to achieve full implementation of Resolution 1540. Guided by this understanding relevant legislative reforms have been undertaken to increase the compliance of our legal system with the requirements of the Resolution, as well as other non-proliferation international instruments. Another important area is the export control of dual use and military items. Armenia is not a member of the international export control regimes, but in spite of this fact, Armenia strongly adheres to the goals and principles of these regimes. On May 16, 2012 Armenia officially applied for membership in the Wassenaar Arrangement. Unfortunately, due to the objection of one member-state on purely political reasons the process of Armenian application has been suspended. However, Armenia voluntarily took the Wassenaar's export control list as a basis for that of the national one, which is periodically being updated with the assistance of our foreign partners and brought to conformity with the latest version of Wassenaar's list. As a country which has an operating Nuclear Power Plant (NPP), Armenia attaches great importance to the establishment of robust national legislation related to physical protection and security of Armenian NPP and nuclear materials and rules on physical protection of nuclear installations and nuclear materials. The Government of Armenia is undertaking necessary measures to enhance and maintain nuclear and radiation safety. We greatly value the role of the IAEA and ongoing support to Armenia in ensuring the highest safety standards of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant. We are also actively participating in counter-proliferation initiatives such as Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and Proliferation Security Initiative.

In 2015, with solid assistance of experts of 1540 Committee and the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center, the Government of Armenia adopted and submitted to the 1540 Committee the Armenian National Action Plan for 2015-2020. The document took stock and outlined a series of concrete steps ranging from reviewing already implemented national measures to the coordination of ongoing and anticipated activities. It underlined Armenia's activities and law regulations in nuclear, chemical and biological spheres as well as the export control and border security spheres.

A wide range of activities were embraced in the Road Map of the Action Plan. It detailed the actions of relevant governmental agencies aimed at the enhancement of the national export control system and border security.

These included:

- Analysis and updating of national export control legislation in order to tailor it to contemporary international requirements and advanced national practices,
- Establishment of a system to train export control professionals to work in the state agencies that comprise the national export control system,
- Increasing the effectiveness of companies' in-house export control systems as an important factor in the early prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,
- Building border capacity,
- Enhancing the legal and regulatory framework in nuclear, chemical and biological fields and
- National capacity-building and expansion of international cooperation to prevent the spread of potentially dangerous materials and infectious diseases.

We are confident, that the implementation of the National Action Plan has significantly stimulated interagency cooperation, giving an additional impetus for co-operation both domestically and internationally. It made an important step aimed at fulfilling the international commitments of the Republic of Armenia.

The Armenian Government is currently in the process of assessment of the NAP implementation by relevant bodies, and based on the assessment new recommendations regarding the implementation of the NAP for the new term will be submitted to the 1540 Committee.

International cooperation is of paramount importance for the full and effective implementation of resolution 1540. In this vein we would like to emphasize the role of the OSCE as a regional platform for interaction, exchange of experience and assistance in the implementation of resolution 1540. We commend the OSCE's activities in organizing Points of Contact meetings. This innovative mechanism which brings together relevant experts from the OSCE family invests in our endeavors in disarmament and non-proliferation area.

We welcome also the activities of the 1540 Committee and its group of experts aimed at facilitation of the international cooperation and exchange of the best practices between member states. We stand ready to actively engage with Committee in the review process and

hope that the activities within the framework of the comprehensive review of the resolution will be as productive as possible and will identify the most urgent challenges and, wherever possible, will provide recommendation to address them.

The cooperation with the IAEA, OPCW, CTBTO, BWC Implementation Support Unit and UNODA, as well as with the Russian Federation, USA, EU and with other bilateral partners also contributes to the implementation of the Resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the adoption of Resolution 1540 visible progress has been achieved towards its implementation. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure that WMD and its related materials will never fall into wrong hands. In view of the current international security situation, especially the developments in the field of non-proliferation, primary attention for the achievement of the goal of the Resolution in the following areas is needed.

First, the universal application of the main disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, such as the NPT, the IAEA safeguard system, the CWC, the BWC, 1925 Geneva protocol, entering into force of the CTBT, has yet to be achieved. We need to uphold the existing arms control regimes and prevent their erosion. The membership in export control regimes should be inclusive and should not be politicized by any of its members.

Second, more attention should be paid to the proliferation risks brought about by emerging technologies. New technologies such as artificial intelligence, 3D printing, gene editing and synthetic biology may be used for the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery. We must ensure that technological progress contributes to the achievement of a safer, more secure and prosper world minimizing and eventually excluding the possibilities of its misuse by terrorist groups.

Third, we need to further strengthen assistance mechanisms to states in need of capacity building and technical assistance, including with tailored approach that responds to regional and national particularities.

Fourth, there is an evidence of the use of WMD by terrorist groups in recent years in conflict situations. Therefore, the involvement of terrorists in conflict zones should be our common concern. In this respect I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the OSCE region is currently under the intense risk to become a safe haven for possible WMD transfer, given the fact of involvement of the foreign terrorist fighters from Middle East, affiliated with ISIS, Jabhat an-Nusra and others, in our region. As those fighters still remain in our region and their

sponsors, recruiters, transporters and exploiters are neither held responsible, nor even condemned internationally, we assess the risk of such transfer high. The OSCE participating States have to realize that the threat is real and the consequences of a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction would be devastating in the OSCE area of responsibility. It is of utmost importance to set up an effective mechanism to address this issue.

I would like to conclude, by once again emphasizing the importance of resolution 1540 and its full implementation and reiterate Armenia`s commitment to that end.