



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 1048th Meeting
of the Forum for Security Co-operation
Security Dialogue on OSCE Code of Conduct on
Politico-Military Aspects of Security**

7 June 2023

Distinguished colleagues,

We resolutely reject all the far-fetched and groundless accusations of the delegation of Azerbaijan. In an attempt to conceal the appalling litany of its violations of IHL and to mislead the international community, Azerbaijan yet another time recycles fake narratives, blaming Armenia for exactly the same wrongdoings and crimes that it has committed against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, reported by international media and well documented also by international organizations.

Against the backdrop of this sustained onslaught of disinformation, suffice it to consider what at least the recent years have demonstrated. Encouraged by the impunity that it enjoys in this organization, Azerbaijan has simply become a destabilizing factor in the region and a malicious violator, trampling over almost all the areas covered by IHL, IHRL and the provisions of the Code of Conduct: starting from the massive use of force against peaceful people and engagement of foreign terrorist fighters as mercenaries in its war of aggression, strengthening its security at the expense of the security of another State, to incitement of hatred towards entire nation, misappropriation of cultural heritage, continued illegal detention of captured civilians and servicemen, open declaration of renewed aggression and new atrocities.

In this regard, the very recent statement of the President of Azerbaijan from 28 May 2023 is a case in point. While Armenia acts constructively for establishing lasting peace, and active negotiations are underway for normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, President Aliyev has come up with clear threats to the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Armenia and the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to live in security and with dignity in their homeland. In his speech the President of Azerbaijan set the tone for the new wave of anti-Armenian hatred. When referring to Armenians, 6 times used the word enemy, with such qualifiers as hated, contemptible, loathsome, thus grossly violating the

provisional measure ordered by the International Court of Justice on 7 December 2021 to “take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred and discrimination, including by its officials and public institutions, targeted at persons of Armenian national or ethnic origin”.

President Aliyev's speech also contains clear threats of new aggressive actions against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and intentions to settle scores with the leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh with criminal prosecutions. The mere reason for such a stance is that those people, the President, members of parliament and other officials are the only democratically elected representatives whom the people of Artsakh have delegated and endowed with the right to lead the country during the difficult times of restrictions and isolation imposed by Azerbaijan for almost 30 years. These are the democratically elected authorities who continue to lead the path chosen by the people of Artsakh to develop and strengthen a democratic statehood in Nagorno-Karabakh, amidst the continued security threats, imposed illegal siege and regular terrorist attacks by Azerbaijan. A path and achievements that for many years have been confirmed by many international institutions, such as the Freedom House, which in its annual “Freedom in the World” rating has for many consecutive years given Nagorno-Karabakh a much higher rating than to Azerbaijan. Thus, rejecting the existence of Nagorno-Karabakh and its authorities whom Azerbaijan has recognised in the OSCE documents and assumed commitments to resolve the conflict through direct contacts, delays the resolution indefinitely.

Dear colleagues,

On June 1, just four days after the warmongering speech of the President of Azerbaijan, with new territorial claims, new aggressive actions against the people of Artsakh and in particular, its elected authorities, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan disseminated a press-release, which reads that the Defense Minister brought to the attention of the commanders of various units of the Azerbaijan Army the statements of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, made on May 28, and stressed the need "to fulfill in the shortest possible terms the tasks facing the Azerbaijani Army, arising from the speech of the President of Azerbaijan".

Following this official press-release of the Ministry of Defense the Azerbaijani army resorted to a series of violations of the ceasefire regime in Nagorno-Karabakh on a daily basis, also confirmed by the peacekeepers. The violations are accompanied by the disinformation campaign putting forward false but well-known claims about the existence of detachments of the armed forces of Armenia in NK. This has been the pattern of behavior of Azerbaijan on the eve of any attack, which proves that with high probability Azerbaijan is preparing grounds for a new aggression in Nagorno-Karabakh.