

Warsaw, 26 September 2016

Tolerance and non-discrimination towards the people of Artsakh

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I suggest considering the issue of intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination, not only in terms of human rights violations in inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations, but also as a direct threat to peace and security.

Over the past several years, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia have repeatedly attracted the attention of the international community to the propagated cult of intolerance in Azerbaijan to all Armenian. The fact that the situation has reached a critical point is indicated by the following:

- Armenians of the world officially, at the presidential level, have been declared the main enemy of Azerbaijan.
- Over the past few years, an Azerbaijani officer who committed a hate crime, killing a fellow Armenian student during NATO language courses in Budapest, has been a role model in Azerbaijan.
- People who speak of Armenians without hatred, are persecuted in Azerbaijan, as it has happened with famous Azerbaijani writer Akram Aylisli.
- Any person with an Armenian name, regardless of age or nationality, is barred from entering Azerbaijan. In May this year, there was an egregious case, when an eight-year-old boy, a Russian citizen, was detained at the Baku airport and expelled from the country for only one reason - he had an Armenian surname.

It is puzzling that the policy of planting armenophobia consistently pursued in Azerbaijan has been going unnoticed for the OSCE, although manifestations of extreme forms of racism and intolerance towards Armenians in Azerbaijan have been confirmed in the documents of several international organizations, in particular the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Reports on Azerbaijan adopted in 2002, 2006 and 2011 by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, and the Opinions on Azerbaijan adopted in 2003 and 2007 by the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Unfortunately, the threat to regional peace and security posed by the xenophobia implanted in Azerbaijan has been generally underestimated by the international community. In the absence of any counteraction to the growing aggression and hatred in Azerbaijan, Baku unleashed another war against Nagorno-Karabakh in April this year, during which numerous violations of



international humanitarian law, both against civilians and soldiers of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic were committed by the Azerbaijani army.

There is documented evidence of the brutal murder by Azerbaijani soldiers of three elderly members of an Armenian family in the village of Talish, followed by mutilation of their bodies. The bodies of more than two dozen soldiers of the NKR Defence Army were also subjected to desecration. At least two of them were tortured while they were still alive: their wrists and head of one of them were cut off. Azerbaijan has so far refused to hand over the severed heads of two soldiers to the Karabakhi side.

I apologize for mentioning all these facts of barbarism and medieval brutality, but they show how far the Azerbaijani side can go in their hatred towards Armenians. The fact that those actions have been encouraged by the leadership of Azerbaijan represented by its president who awarded the Azerbaijani soldiers posing with the severed heads of Armenian servicemen is also a matter of concern.

The international community must condemn in the strongest terms those atrocities, as well as their encouragement in order to prevent their recurrence in the future. Effective measures should also be taken to curb the propaganda of hatred and xenophobia, which serves as a breeding ground for such crimes.

Thank you for your attention.