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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement  
on "The aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia  
with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters"  
as delivered by the Delegation of Armenia  
at the 1376<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council**

*02 June 2022*

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to inform the participating States of another gross violation of the ceasefire by Azerbaijan since the last meeting of the Permanent Council. As a result of fire opened by Azerbaijani units in the south-eastern direction of Armenia's border area on May 28, Davit Vardanyan, a serviceman of the Armed Forces of Armenia, was killed.

Following its usual practice and in order to avoid responsibility, the Azerbaijani side first denied the violation, and then tried to shift the blame, claiming that the Armenian soldiers fired at each other. We strongly denounce these insinuations and resolutely condemn the violations of the ceasefire by Azerbaijan, which result in the loss of human lives.

This latest violation of the ceasefire and the killing of an Armenian soldier occurred in the aftermath of the high-level trilateral meeting held in Brussels on 22 May between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, mediated by the President of the European Council. Furthermore, we recall that on the eve of the meeting in Brussels, the Azerbaijani side committed another provocation, wounding Armenian serviceman Gor Gyulsaryan.

Given that the joint commission on delimitation and border security between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which had been agreed upon by the leaders of the two countries, has already started its work, this incident should also be investigated and assessed within the framework of the joint commission.

Mr. Chairman,

It is highly regrettable that we have not heard words of condemnation or empathy either from the leadership of this Organization or from the participating States, which, in similar cases elsewhere, are very prompt and clear in their assessments.

Such provocations send a loud message about the true intentions of Azerbaijan and its ability and willingness to engage in a genuine process to normalize relations, as well as to address the root causes of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and all other issues related to it.

After each and every provocation, Azerbaijan tries to portray itself, especially to an international audience, as a peace-loving and constructive actor, while in reality its actions on the ground and the rhetoric of its leadership when addressing an internal audience, reveal its true colours.

We expect our international partners, in particular the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the European Union, to duly condemn these gross violations by Azerbaijan and demand an appropriate investigation.

Dear colleagues,

The continued war-mongering rhetoric of the Azerbaijani leadership, its non-constructive approach, arbitrary and false interpretation of agreements, territorial claims against the Republic of Armenia, statements about the readiness to use military force to resolve disputes, disregard for the fundamental principles of international law - these are all the elements and evidence of the continuous aggressive and war-mongering policy of Azerbaijan, which seriously question the sincerity of Azerbaijan's statements on achieving peace in the region.

On 27 May, the Azerbaijani president made another such statement during a visit to the occupied territories of Artsakh. The statement contained undisguised claims to the sovereign territories of Armenia, as well as derogatory remarks about Armenia and its people, which could further instigate aggressive nationalism and hatred towards Armenia.

We would like to draw the attention of this Council to certain parts of the Azerbaijani President's self-revealing statement, which are in stark contradiction with the principles and values of this Organisation and may possibly be of interest to the leadership of the OSCE and its executive structures.

In particular, in his speech, he challenged the right of the Armenian state to exist, claiming that, and I quote, "Armenia cannot be considered a military, political, economic power, or even a mediocre state". He went on to say that, and I quote, "I said that international law does not work. We must not deceive ourselves. We must be more robust. We must gather strength. If necessary, we must force the enemy out of our lands. I said it, and I did it. The power factor will continue to dominate the world. Recent history shows this too".

These statements indicate that whatever Azerbaijani representatives say in multilateral and bilateral fora, including here at the Permanent Council, about Azerbaijan's adherence and commitment to international law, cannot claim any credibility and cannot be considered as trustworthy, since it is not a true reflection of the political thinking and pattern of behaviour of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chairperson,

Despite all the efforts, Azerbaijan continues the illegal detention of the Armenian prisoners of war and other captives, in total disregard for its international commitments and obligations, not least on account of the lack of a robust and strong response from the international community, including the OSCE. It also continues to sentence Armenian POWs to lengthy prison terms based on the outcomes of mock trials and confessions obtained under duress. The number of Armenian prisoners of war and civilian hostages confirmed by the Azerbaijani authorities currently stands at 38. In addition, the fate of another 119 prisoners of war and captives still remains unknown, even though the capture of dozens of them by Azerbaijani forces is supported by video and/or other evidence.

In this context, we are seriously puzzled by ODIHR's continued indifference to our appeals to conduct monitoring of trials and to uphold the right of Armenian POWs to a fair trial. Instead, the ODIHR, which has always enjoyed the unwavering support and cooperativeness of the Armenian authorities, is engaged in questionable initiatives, which may be construed as legitimizing the use of force and war crimes. The same applies to other OSCE structures.

Azerbaijan also continues the deliberate and systematic destruction of Armenian cultural heritage. In addition to the recent cases of destruction, desecration and vandalism by the Azerbaijani armed forces in the occupied village of Togh and the city of Hadrut, new proofs of the destruction of monuments to heroes of the Great Patriotic War in the occupied Armenian village of Avetaranots, as well as in the village of Mets Tagher of the Hadrut region have emerged. The monument and house-museum of Marshall of Aviation, Hero of the Soviet Union Armenak Khampheryants were demolished and vandalized.

Dear colleagues,

The comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in line with the mandate of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, including the determination of the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh through the realization by the people of Artsakh of its right to self-determination, guaranteeing the security of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh and respecting their rights and freedoms, as well as addressing the remaining humanitarian issues, in particular the issue of the release of the Armenian POWs and other detainees, the protection of Armenian cultural heritage, is a fundamental element of any normalization process aimed at establishing peace and stability in the region.

These issues were at the core of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict back in 1990's and they continue to remain unresolved. The 44-day war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan did not solve those issues but worsened the overall security situation causing new suffering. Ignoring these issues simply means postponing a genuine resolution of the conflict and delaying the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Armenia reiterates its principled position that the negotiations on the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan should be based on the proposals of both sides, and should address the whole spectrum of issues, including the final settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The shortest path to building confidence and creating an environment conducive to peace is the full and unconditional implementation by Azerbaijan of its international obligations and other commitments, denouncement of the use or threat of force as a means of resolving the conflict, as well as genuine engagement in negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

In closing, let me reiterate that the Government of Armenia is committed to all efforts to bring peace and prosperity to the region. To this end, it has adopted a strategy of opening an era of peaceful development in the region and is resolutely taking the necessary steps in this direction. Achieving sustainable and lasting peace in the region remains one of its highest priorities.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.