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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**of the Delegation of Armenia at the 1050th Meeting
of the Forum for Security Co-operation
Security Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security
“Women’s leadership in times of conflict and war and their role in the armed forces,
diplomacy and beyond”**

21 June 2023

Madam Chair,

First of all, I would like to commend the Bulgarian Chairpersonship for their commitment to further the Woman, Peace and Security agenda and for the opportunity to once again focus on the importance of women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in crisis and conflict resolutions. I also thank today’s keynote speakers for sharing their insights.

In 2022, at the UNGA's 76th Session, the General Assembly by consensus declared the 24th of June to be the International Day of Women in Diplomacy, and it is my pleasure to note that Armenia is one of the main co-sponsors of this resolution.

Women make up around 51% of Armenia’s Foreign Ministry apparatus, and play a vital role in promoting our national interests, leading and inspiring us in our responsible mission.

Dear colleagues,

The landmark resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security set a normative framework for ensuring protection of women and girls in conflict situations and has been instrumental in strengthening the efforts of the international community to promote the role of women in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peace-making.

The Government of Armenia remains committed to further advancing the Women, peace and security agenda and has translated it into national actions. The second National Action Plan developed by Armenia on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for the period of 2022-2024, envisages coherent and coordinated policies for empowerment of women and enhancing their role in various spheres of public life, including in the security sector governance and reform.

The National Action Plan among others reflects the issues and challenges faced by women in the border regions of Armenia and in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) as a result of the wars of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh in 2020 and against the internationally recognized sovereign territories of Armenia in 2022. The Plan has been developed on the principle of inclusive participation, in particular, with the involvement of non-governmental organisations and women affected by the war, including those displaced from Artsakh.

Madam Chair,

UNSC 1325 Resolution calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict. The Resolution also emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls.

Against this backdrop we regret to note, that the numerous abhorrent war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces during its aggressions against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Armenia, including arbitrary killings, acts of sexual violence and mutilation of bodies of Armenian female soldiers who died defending their homeland, have not yet been properly condemned by this organization. Nor the perpetrators of these heinous crimes were brought to justice in Azerbaijan. Instead, rewarding the culprits of those crimes has become the regular practice of the leadership of Azerbaijan.

The lack of a proper and adequate reaction of the international community to the illegal use of force by Azerbaijan, including the strong condemnation of war crimes and other gross violations of IHL, largely contributed to the creation of an atmosphere of impunity and served as an incitement to the recurrence of such crimes.

Dear colleagues,

Despite the significant progress in advancing participation of women in peace processes and engagement of women in the security sector, they continue to be disproportionately affected by conflicts and complex humanitarian crises.

It has been more than six months now that Azerbaijan has blocked the Lachin Corridor, keeping 120 000 Armenians of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), under effective siege, in flagrant violation of its international obligations and fundamental norms of international law, including the legally binding Order of the International Court of Justice. On 15 June, after committing a deliberate provocation near the Hakari bridge, the Azerbaijani side completely blocked all humanitarian transport through the Lachin Corridor, already used in a limited regime, carried out by the Russian peacekeeping contingent and the ICRC.

Through its ruthless blockade Azerbaijani leadership has imposed widespread suffering on vulnerable people, including 30 000 children and 60 000 women, living in Artsakh, whose rights are manifestly violated by the blockade and the deliberate disruption of the vital infrastructure, such as gas and electricity supply, sharp shortage of hygiene items and medicines.

One of those women is 30-year-old Anush, an internally displaced person from the occupied city of Shushi, who lost her younger brother in the 44-day war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan in 2020. Anush has suffered serious psychological trauma and stress. She recently got married and at the onset of the blockade she was in the fourth month of her pregnancy. Due to the blockade, she got separated from her husband. Anush had tried to commit suicide as she had a miscarriage and lost her long-awaited firstborn due to the increased level of stress, anxiety and malnutrition, cause by the ongoing blockade.

This is the true face of Azerbaijan, a country, that happens to be a participating state to this organization, while enjoying total impunity for its abhorrent crimes and internationally wrongful acts and the needless suffering that it has been deliberately and unapologetically inflicting on the Armenian population, including 60 000 female citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh, creating unbearable living conditions, to coerce them either to leave their native land or forcibly assimilate, thus to achieve its ultimate goal - complete ethnic cleansing of the entire territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Thank you.