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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement
on Azerbaijan's armed aggression against the
sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan
at the 1388th (special) meeting of the Permanent Council

13 September 2022

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank the Polish OSCE Chairmanship for convening this special meeting of the Permanent Council and for the opportunity to draw the attention of the participating States to the latest military attack and aggression perpetrated by Azerbaijan against the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia.

As you may already know, on 13 September 2022, at 00:05 local time, the Azerbaijani armed forces attacked the positions of the Armenian armed forces in several directions of the eastern and south-eastern part of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border */you can see the directions of the attack on the screen inf/*. In addition, the Azerbaijani armed forces, using a wide range of heavy weapons, including artillery and attack UAVs, subjected to intensive and indiscriminate shelling a number of Armenian settlements, including the cities of Goris, Jermuk, Vardenis, Kapan, Martuni, as well as Sotk, Kut, Norabak, Verishen, Akner and other nearby villages. Some of these settlements are located 40 or more kilometers from the internationally recognized border of Armenia.

In blatant violation of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions, Azerbaijan also fired on medical facilities and ambulances. According to currently

available information, as a result of Azerbaijan's aggression, 49 Armenian servicemen were killed, several civilians were injured, a number of civilian infrastructure facilities and residential buildings were damaged or destroyed. As of 14:00, the situation remained extremely tense, with fierce fighting continuing in all directions.

In this context, we expect Madame Secretary General to inform the Permanent Council of the steps that are being taken or will be taken by the relevant structures of the OSCE Secretariat in light of this large-scale military aggression against Armenia, which constitutes a flagrant violation of fundamental principles and commitments of the OSCE, and, most importantly, the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

We believe that the Secretariat, under the leadership of the Secretary General, must be guided by respective OSCE decisions, in particular, the 2011 Vilnius Ministerial Council decision on the Elements of the Conflict Cycle, and the OSCE, as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and primary organization for the peaceful settlement of disputes within its region, should act as a key instrument for early warning and conflict prevention.

I would like to thank all our partners who in no uncertain terms condemned the aggression of Azerbaijan and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and respect for the territorial integrity of Armenia.

I should also inform you that Armenia has formally requested to convene an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council on this issue and we wait for the answer to our request.

Furthermore, the Republic of Armenia formally invoked the relevant provisions of its bilateral Treaty with the Russian Federation on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, as well as applied to the Collective Security Treaty Organization to take all the necessary steps following the armed attack on one of its member States.

Dear colleagues,

Just yesterday, the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the OSCE distributed a Note Verbale expressing its deep concern over the imminent threat of military escalation and deterioration of the security situation in the region.

We drew the attention of the OSCE and its participating States to the constant flow of disinformation coming from the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan about so-called “provocations by Armenia”, noting that this is a fairly recognizable pattern of behaviour of that country in preparation to launching an armed aggression. A similar series of actions has been played out prior to the 2020 war of aggression against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and before each and every escalation since then.

The Armenian Defence Ministry has officially denied all these allegations and disinformation by Azerbaijan, which were nothing more than an attempt to prepare the ground for the impending attack on Armenia.

This latest unjustified and unprovoked large-scale attack on Armenia is another flagrant violation by Azerbaijan of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020 signed by the leaders of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan.

The attack came less than two weeks after the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders met in Brussels with the EU Council President Charles Michel, where they agreed to have further meetings at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of the Committees dealing with border and communication issues.

Moreover, the attack takes place when the US and Russian Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group are visiting the region to discuss ways of improving the security environment in the South Caucasus. Thus, the attack of Azerbaijan is also a demonstration of clear disrespect for these efforts.

We have continuously called on our partners to look at what Azerbaijan does and not what Azerbaijan says. It is obvious that Azerbaijan has been preparing for this military offensive for a long time, since such large-scale military actions require a lot of preparation.

As it was the case in 2020, the use of force was preceded by credible reports of increased military cargo flights in recent days transferring military equipment and ammunition to Azerbaijan from several locations, including Türkiye. In addition, from 5 to 9 September 2022, Azerbaijani and Turkish Air Forces conducted joint tactical flight exercises "TurAz Qartalı - 2022" in Azerbaijan, with the declared purpose of assessing the capabilities "to destroy the air and ground targets of a mock enemy".

On 10 September 2022, the Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan, at a meeting at the Central Command Post, "ordered to be ready for the immediate and decisive suppression of any provocation". This is a well-known pattern of Azerbaijan's behaviour when preparing for an armed aggression against Armenia or Artsakh. As I have stated earlier, similar series of actions were played out by Azerbaijan just before the 2020 war of aggression against Artsakh and each next escalation since then, including the last one in early August this year.

The fact that the attacks were also launched from those territories, which were transferred to Azerbaijan on 25 August 2022, clearly shows that by accelerating this process in clear violation of the Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020, Azerbaijan sought to obtain convenient positions for its attack against Armenia. The head of the press service of the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry confirmed that after taking control of these territories, they "began to clarify positions" in those territories, preparing strongholds for strikes against the sovereign territory of Armenia, which we saw last night. All this clearly testifies to the fabricated nature of Azerbaijan's claims. But above all, it shows the true face of Azerbaijan.

The events of the past month clearly indicate that Azerbaijan is looking for a pretext to attack Armenia. Following the logic of Azerbaijan, any disagreements that may arise in the negotiation process give Azerbaijan the "right" to attack the sovereign territory of Armenia. To put it simply, Azerbaijan's negotiating position is, "Give me what I want or I'll take it by force".

Such actions by Azerbaijan are unacceptable and undermine the implementation of the Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020.

Azerbaijan's reckless attack on Armenia is a deliberate escalation of the situation caused by the lack of effective deterrence, strong condemnation and appropriate

actions by the international community, which would force Azerbaijan to renounce its aggressive policy in the South Caucasus. False parity and expressions of concern are no longer sufficient. Continuing to turn a blind eye to the ongoing aggression of Azerbaijan will lead to further erosion of the European security architecture and will seriously undermine the founding principles of this Organization, pushing them into oblivion.

Therefore, the OSCE and its participating States must clearly and unambiguously condemn Azerbaijan's attack on Armenia, and they should send a strong signal to Azerbaijan that any aggression or attack by Azerbaijan, which may further escalate the already fragile situation in the region is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, and Azerbaijan will face consequences for its use of force and violation of the Helsinki Final Act principles. Only such an adequate assessment of the aggressive actions of Azerbaijan and targeted reaction, including relevant sanctions by the international community, can ward off a new war in the region.

Further use or threat of force will undermine the ongoing processes in the region aimed at establishing peace and security in the South Caucasus and the settlement of all issues related to and resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Republic of Armenia reaffirms its commitment to the agenda of establishing peace and stability in the region, and calls on the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to intensify efforts to resume the work of this internationally mandated negotiation format. Peace cannot be achieved through the threat or the use of force.

I request to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

I thank you.

