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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

**Statement
On the " Recent cease-fire violation by Azerbaijan
in and around Nagorno-Karabakh "
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan
at the 1385th special meeting of the Permanent Council**

9 August 2022

Mr. Chairman,

On 3 August 2022, at about 09:00, the armed forces of Azerbaijan, in flagrant violation of the Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020, signed by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, committed another act of aggression on the Line of Contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and vicinity of Lachin corridor, within the area of responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping contingent. During this unprovoked attack on the positions of the Artsakh Defence Army, Azerbaijan used various types of large-caliber weapons, including mortars and attack UAVs, as a result of which two servicemen of the Artsakh Defence Army, Gurgen Gabrielyan and Artur Khachatryan, were killed and 19 others were wounded.

This unprovoked aggression was preceded by another attack on the positions of the Artsakh Defence Army on 2 August, during which the Azerbaijani armed forces attempted an incursion into several sections of the Line of Contact, as a result of which one Armenian serviceman was wounded.

Dear colleagues,

Despite the steps undertaken by the Armenian side to achieve peace and stability in the region, the Azerbaijani authorities/regime continue their aggressive policy of terrorizing the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, subjecting it to ethnic cleansing and creeping occupation.

We recall that the incursion of the Azerbaijani armed forces in the direction of the village of Parukh on 24 March this year, as well as the occupation of the villages of Khtsaber and Hin Tagher on 11 December 2020, both within the area of responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping contingent, are cases of similar aggression and violation of the Trilateral Statement.

Since the end of July 2022, Azerbaijan has been consistently escalating the situation along the Line of Contact. It should also be stressed that Azerbaijan has been preparing for these attacks for several weeks now. For almost two months, and nearly on a daily basis, the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry has been spreading disinformation and false reports about provocations and ceasefire violations both by the armed forces of Armenia and Artsakh. Obviously, the purpose of this disinformation campaign was to prepare the ground/set the stage for a “legitimate counter-offensive” that was meticulously planned in advance. This is also confirmed by numerous video materials and other evidence in social networks showing the movement and accumulation of troops and military equipment, including heavy weaponry along the Line of Contact and the Armenian border over the past few weeks and onward.

Azerbaijan’s desperate attempts to find various pretexts for its aggression and shift the blame to the Armenian sides proved futile - the Azerbaijani side unwittingly but officially took responsibility for this latest aggression, which is clearly reflected in the statements of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, including the references to the so-called “retaliation operation”. In addition, these violations were also recorded by the Russian peacekeeping contingent in their daily official reports.

Currently, the situation remains tense, Azerbaijan continues to violate the ceasefire in different parts of the Line of Contact and on the border with Armenia. On 6 August, private Nver Gevorgyan, a serviceman of the Armenian Armed Forces, was wounded as a result of a ceasefire violation by the Azerbaijani side.

Excellencies,

These attacks and acts of aggression are accompanied by a deliberate misinterpretation and distortion of the provisions of the Trilateral Statement by the Azerbaijani side as a basis for their unlawful use of force. Within this logic of arbitrary interpretation of the Trilateral Statement, the Azerbaijani side submitted a letter to the Russian peacekeeping contingent regarding the transfer of control over the Lachin Corridor.

This is yet another flagrant violation of the Trilateral Statement, provision 6 of which clearly states that the plan for the construction of a new route via the Lachin Corridor to provide a connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, with the subsequent redeployment of Russian peacekeepers for the protection of the route should be agreed

by the parties (i.e. Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) within the next three years, whereas there is no such plan yet, agreed in a trilateral format.

We emphasize that there is no such plan yet approved in a trilateral format, and we call on all parties to the Trilateral Statement to adhere to their commitments, and to make additional efforts to ensure the conditions established by the Trilateral Statement of November 9, including ensuring a ceasefire, opening of regional transport communications, release and repatriation of prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees whose illegal detention serves as an instrument for political pressure. Such actions clearly establish the link with the purpose and definition of hostage-taking.

Mr. Chairman,

Azerbaijan violates all the provisions of the Trilateral Statement, which require implementation on the part of Azerbaijan, whereas Armenia **has fulfilled all of its obligations – I repeat all of its obligations** - under the Trilateral Statement. Such a behaviour and disregard for its own signature demonstrates that Azerbaijan cannot be a trusted partner, and any international document can become invalid at the snap of a finger, if Azerbaijan so wishes. In fact, this pattern of Azerbaijan's behaviour is clearly seen in a number of statements by its leadership, who denounce the use of international law in international relations, instead praising the use of force.

Despite this, certain members of the international community, instead of condemning such behaviour, prefer to continue the practice of unaddressed and "toothless" appeals that have no impact and are of no value to the perpetrator.

Let us not forget that European security is indivisible and double standards are not the best remedy to pursue it under any but particularly under current circumstances. Today, we have a situation where Azerbaijan violates the Trilateral Statement and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, resorts to blackmail and threat of force, and puts forward unlawful demands.

Dear colleagues,

The Azerbaijani authorities respond to the efforts of the Armenian side to achieve peace and stability in the region with Armenophobic rhetoric, aggressive statements, threats and use of force. Clearly, Azerbaijan is aiming for complete ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh. This was confirmed by Gudrat Hasanguliyev, an Azerbaijani MP, who stated that Azerbaijan should not recognize the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to live in peace.

There are 3 key realities that are clearly reflected and defined in the Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020. These are the existence of Nagorno-Karabakh, the existence of the Line of Contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and the existence of the Lachin Corridor - guaranteeing the connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. Azerbaijan is bound by its signature under the Trilateral Statement and must respect these realities, without twisting or distorting the provisions of the Statement, as well as comply with the agreements reached at the highest political level.

Azerbaijan's attempts to destabilize the situation clearly demonstrate the need for a real and unbiased assessment of the situation by the international community, including the Chairman-in-Office and the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, which has proven to be the most balanced and sustainable format.

The Republic of Armenia reaffirms its commitment to the agenda of establishing peace and stability in the region, and calls on the international community to undertake measures to stop the destructive behaviour and aggressive actions of Azerbaijan and resume the work of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Thank you.