

Chairmanship: Germany

957th PLENARY MEETING OF THE FORUM

1. Date: Wednesday, 7 October 2020 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.

Closed: 12.20 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador G. Bräutigam

Prior to taking up the agenda, the Chairperson reminded the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) of the modalities for the present FSC meeting, to be conducted in a “blended” format in view of the health and safety measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in FSC.GAL/96/20.

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: DECISION ON THE DATES AND VENUE OF THE THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT MEETING

Chairperson

Decision: The FSC adopted Decision No. 5/20 (FSC.DEC/5/20) on the dates and venue of the thirty-first Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting, the text of which is appended to this journal.

Agenda item 2: GENERAL STATEMENTS

- (a) *Situation in and around Ukraine*: Ukraine (FSC.DEL/229/20) (FSC.DEL/229/20/Add.1), Germany-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (FSC.DEL/233/20), United Kingdom (FSC.DEL/234/20 OSCE+), Canada, United States of America (Annex 1), Russian Federation (Annex 2)

- (b) *Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control in accordance with Annex I-B, Article IV, to the Dayton Agreement: Bosnia and Herzegovina (also on behalf of Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia), Germany (also on behalf of France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) (Annex 3), United States of America (Annex 4), Russian Federation (Annex 5), Chairperson, Turkey*
- (c) *On the situation in the South Caucasus: Armenia (Annex 6), Azerbaijan (Annex 7), Turkey, United States of America, Germany-European Union*

Agenda item 3: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Military exercise “Interoperability 2020”, being conducted from 5 to 11 October 2020: Serbia*
- (b) *Matters of protocol: Sweden*

4. Next meeting:

Wednesday, 21 October 2020, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



957th Plenary Meeting
FSC Journal No. 963, Agenda item 2(a)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Madam Chairperson,

The United States would like to exercise its right of reply to the Russian Federation's written statement issued last week under general statements. This statement made several factual errors that we wish to correct.

First, the Russian Federation claimed that it is not a combatant in this conflict despite ample evidence of its troops and military equipment on Ukrainian territory, including from the social media accounts of its own soldiers and from the lips of its president. Let me be clear: when Ukraine and its allies speak of removing foreign troops and military equipment from Ukraine, we mean Russian troops and military equipment.

Second, Russia claims that its actions are somehow justified by an anti-constitutional coup orchestrated, funded, and organized from abroad. Such claims devalue the sacrifices of those brave Ukrainian citizens who took to the streets in 2013 to denounce their government's capitulation to Russian economic blackmail, four months before Russia's illegal military intervention. Their protests on the Maidan, and the Yanukovich government's heavy-handed and Russian-backed response, led to the Revolution of Dignity – not a phantom coup from abroad. The United States is proud to have supported Ukraine's people during that difficult time, as we transparently support them today. While some participating States may attempt to plan and execute anti-constitutional coups in the OSCE area, rest assured the United States is not among them.

Third, Russia claimed that that US military assistance to Ukraine is “provocative” and “destabilizing.” On the contrary, our military support for Ukraine is transparent, defensive in nature, and in line with international law, in contrast to Russia's covert and illegal support to its proxies in eastern Ukraine. Our training missions in September were a demonstration of support for our allies, missions necessitated by Russia's provocative actions against its neighbours.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/963

7 October 2020

Annex 2

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

957th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 963, Agenda item 2(a)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Madam Chairperson,

Our position regarding the internal Ukrainian conflict remains unchanged – there needs to be full implementation of the Minsk Package of Measures of 12 February 2015 through direct dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk. The Russian Federation, as a mediator alongside the OSCE, France and Germany, stands ready to facilitate this in every possible way.

We regret that the current momentum of the negotiation process in the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) is discouraging, and the situation on the ground remains volatile. In more than six years of confrontation in Donbas, a sustainable truce has still not been reached. Despite the additional measures that came into effect on 27 July to strengthen the ceasefire regime, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has recorded over 1,300 violations of the “silence regime” during that period.

While the Government of Ukraine tries in its statements to an international audience to take the credit for any achievements with regard to a peaceful settlement, the Ukrainian military is stepping up its attacks on certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions – an almost threefold increase in armed provocations by the Ukrainian military was observed in the second half of September. Given the election campaign that is currently under way in Ukraine, it cannot be ruled out that the order for the Ukrainian military to resume hostilities may come at any moment.

Against this background, the comment by the Ukrainian leader in a recent interview with “Politico Europe” that he comes up with possible dates for the end of the armed conflict in Donbas out of thin air, as it were, simply to provide moral support for his fellow citizens, sends a shudder down one’s spine. What signal does this send to the inhabitants of Ukraine? That the Ukrainian Government really does not intend to seriously pursue a peaceful settlement? How long will the inhabitants of Donbas have to pay with their lives for disagreeing with the course of the politicians who came to power almost seven years ago after the anti-constitutional coup d’état in Ukraine?

In view of the obstructionist position taken by the Ukrainian Government during the TCG meeting held via videoconference on 29 and 30 September, it proved impossible to make progress on any of the agenda items. All of the proposals submitted by the representatives of Donbas on improving co-ordination and on monitoring observance of the ceasefire regime were blocked and the agreements reached earlier on joint inspections by representatives of Ukraine and Donbas were undermined. There is still no progress in reaching an agreement on the draft Addendum to the Framework Decision on Disengagement of Forces and Hardware or as regards mine action. Moreover, the Ukrainian Government refuses to record any agreements reached within the framework of the TCG, as if it knows in advance that it will not honour them.

In these circumstances, one cannot but be outraged by the pronouncements made by a number of Western OSCE participating States about the Ukrainian Government's "constructive" approach to the fulfilment of its commitments within the framework of a peaceful settlement and the alleged "military restraint" it displays. It is time at long last for our partners to stop closing their eyes to the suffering of the civilian population in Donbas and distorting reality, and for the international mediators, namely France and Germany, to demand a constructive and responsible attitude from the Ukrainian authorities to achieving peace in the internal political conflict in south-eastern Ukraine – no ifs or buts about it.

As a co-mediator in the peace process, Russia emphasizes that any further prolongation of the violence in eastern Ukraine is unacceptable. The Ukrainian Government should put an immediate stop to the punitive operation against the civilian population of Donbas, withdraw its weapons and move them to the designated storage sites, disarm all illegal groups, and pull foreign military equipment and mercenaries out of Ukraine. The inhumane socio-economic blockade of Donbas should be lifted and the region itself granted special status as a matter of urgency. All of Ukraine's obligations under the Minsk agreements must be fulfilled. Political and security measures are closely interlinked and should be implemented simultaneously. Without resolving the political issues, a comprehensive settlement of the crisis in Ukraine is impossible. We emphasize the direct responsibility of the Ukrainian Government for the practical implementation of all aspects of the Minsk Package of Measures and the instructions issued at the "Normandy format" summit held in Paris.

Ukraine's contemptuous attitude towards the fulfilment of its commitments under OSCE politico-military instruments is deeply troubling. There is copious evidence of violations by the Ukrainian Government of provisions of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Military activities are conducted in the south-east of the country that at various times have involved troop strengths in the order of 70,000 personnel along with large quantities of heavy equipment. What is more, the Ukrainian Government does not provide the notifications required by the Vienna Document 2011 and does not invite observers to that area. We would recall that voluntary transparency measures are no substitute for the implementation of mandatory Vienna Document provisions.

Madam Chairperson,

The continuing crisis in Ukraine is the result of the February 2014 coup d'état, which was orchestrated, funded and organized from abroad and has led to the armed confrontation

in Donbas and the suffering of millions of Ukrainian civilians. For more than six years now, the Ukrainian Government's Western partners have not really sought to promote a real cessation of hostilities and a political settlement of the crisis. On the contrary, they are in fact giving the Ukrainian Government the green light to commit war crimes in eastern Ukraine and inciting it to further armed violence; they are training the Ukrainian army and beefing it up with weapons and equipment, which then end up in the zone of armed confrontation. Such actions contravene the letter and the spirit of the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons; they also run counter to the CSCE Principles Governing Conventional Arms Transfers. We urge our partners to fulfil their obligations fully and responsibly, something they themselves regularly advocate.

We have noticed a provocative increase in the intensity of military flights by NATO States over Ukraine, which must inevitably ratchet up military tensions. The apogee of US military flight activity over Ukraine came on 23 September when two B-52H bombers entered its airspace once more; at the same time, the US Embassy in Ukraine cynically exhorted the inhabitants of Kyiv to "come wave" at the US tiltrotor military aircraft (CV-22B Ospreys) overflying the capital. Meanwhile, other US military aircraft (MC-130J tankers) could be seen in the sky over other Ukrainian cities, namely Kherson, Zaporizhia, Dnipro, Poltava and Cherkasy. It is worth recalling, too, that in early September three US strategic bombers (B-52s), which are capable of carrying nuclear weapons and which were operating out of the Royal Air Force base in Fairford, United Kingdom, flew into potential combat zone airspace over the western part of the Sea of Azov.

One may legitimately ask what the purpose of all this demonstrative sabre-rattling is. And how do these actions square with the pronouncements by the delegation of the United States about it being prepared to contribute to the promotion of stability in Ukraine?

We would point out once more that participating States that provide military assistance in any form to Ukraine are thereby supporting the "war party" in Kyiv and share responsibility with the Ukrainian military for the casualties among the civilian population and for further destruction in Donbas. We call on the OSCE, our international partners and Ukraine's external "minders" to bring their influence to bear on the Ukrainian leadership in order to induce it to take practical steps with a view to achieving swift implementation of the provisions of the Package of Measures (endorsed by the United Nations Security Council) in a full and co-ordinated manner on the basis of direct and sustainable dialogue between the Ukrainian Government and the authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk.

One final point. References to Crimea in the context of a discussion about the crisis in Ukraine are inappropriate. The Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol have full status as constituent entities of the Russian Federation. This is not up for discussion. They were incorporated into our country in accordance with the will of their multi-ethnic peoples and with the norms of international law. That decision is fully in keeping with Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations, which proclaims "respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". Russia legally and in accordance with its Constitution exercises State sovereignty over the Crimean peninsula, including measures to strengthen the country's defence capability and conscription. We consider any attempts to call into question the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation to be absolutely unacceptable. We would suggest not wasting time on futile discussions. The choice made by

the Crimean people to unite with Russia is completely legitimate and simply has to be accepted.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/963
7 October 2020
Annex 3

Original: ENGLISH

957th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 963, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF GERMANY (ALSO ON BEHALF OF FRANCE,
ITALY, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA)**

Dear Mr. Chairperson,

Germany, also speaking on behalf of the United States of America, France, the United Kingdom and Italy would like to thank Ambassador Brahic for his intervention today on behalf of the Dayton Parties, in particular, given the Sub-Regional Consultative Commission currently taking place.

We would like to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Agreement on 21 November 1995, the Paris Agreement on 14 December 1995 and the Florence Agreement on 14 June 1996.

The Dayton framework agreement restored peace, security and stability after the end of the conflict.

In the following years the countries party to the agreement made remarkable achievements.

This culminated in the complete transfer of ownership for implementation of the Florence Agreement to the States Parties. Since then the States party to the agreement, with the active participation of the Contact Group and also by inviting guest observers, continue their successful endeavour.

We want to take the opportunity to thank the Parties for these positive developments and we wish them much success for the future.

I request this statement to be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/963

7 October 2020

Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

957th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 963, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Madam Chairperson,
Ambassador Brahic,

While we fully subscribe to the Contact Group statement, allow me to add a few words in a national capacity. The United States warmly congratulates the Parties to the Dayton Peace Agreement on this auspicious anniversary. The commitment of the Parties to the successful implementation of the Agreement shows the priority they place on maintaining peace in the region. Both the inspections and the exchange of military information provided for in the Article IV or Florence Agreement have significantly improved the security climate for the people of the region. Thanks in part to this Agreement, South Eastern Europe has undergone sweeping demilitarization. Its implementation over the course of 25 years has built a secure environment for the whole of South Eastern Europe. The States Parties to this agreement – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Croatia – should be proud of their accomplishments, which indeed serve as a model for other regions. The United States looks forward to continued and steadfast support of the Parties, including through conventional weapons destruction and humanitarian de-mining programmes.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.JOUR/963

7 October 2020

Annex 5

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

957th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 963, Agenda item 2(b)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Madam Chairperson,

We are grateful to the distinguished Ambassador Brahic for his statement in connection with the 25th anniversary of the Dayton Accords.

The concluding of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina of 21 November 1995 was a truly momentous event that put an end to the crisis of 1992 to 1995.

Russia has always advocated compliance with the Dayton Agreement's basic principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, ensuring broad powers for the two entities (the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), and also equal rights for the three constituent peoples – the Bosniaks, the Croats and the Serbs.

Overall, the process of post-conflict normalization in the former Yugoslavia is making progress. Good neighbourly inter-State relations are being built, albeit not without problems, and the system of multilateral co-operation on the basis of common economic interests is being strengthened. We welcome the fact that most endeavours are initiated by the Balkan States themselves.

We note the unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council on 5 November 2019 of a resolution to extend the mandate of the European Union's Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a further year. We note with approval the balanced language of the document and the absence of elements that could exacerbate differences within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We attach great importance to the practical implementation of Article V of Annex 1-B to the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Last year, we chaired the Article V Commission. With a view to strengthening the viability of that format and giving greater practical value to the Commission's meetings, we should like to urge the States Parties to be more active in providing information on the implementation of the provisions of the Concluding Document in their entirety. We welcome the Serbian

Chairmanship of the Commission and should like to assure our esteemed Serbian colleagues of our support during the meeting in November.

As a guarantor country of the Dayton Agreement, Russia will continue to advocate its strict implementation.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



957th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 963, Agenda item 2(c)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

As of 7 October, the counter-terrorism operation being conducted by the Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Army in response to the aggression of the Turkish-backed Azerbaijani regime continues.

The Azerbaijani armed forces, reinforced by foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists recruited by Turkey in Syria and Libya, carried out further missile attacks on Stepanakert, the capital of the Republic of Artsakh, and on other civilian settlements and infrastructure in Nagorno-Karabakh, including schools and kindergartens. As of 6 October, the confirmed number of casualties caused by these attacks was 21 civilians killed and more than 80 wounded. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlBjJqAliZE&feature=emb_title)

From the very first day, the defence army of Artsakh has been undertaking relevant measures and countermeasures to thwart the military aggression of Azerbaijan, which is clearly also aimed at inflicting enormous damage on the civilian population and infrastructure. Long-range artillery, multiple rocket launchers and unmanned combat aerial vehicles are being used indiscriminately by the Azerbaijani armed forces in blatant violation of the norms of international humanitarian law.

We have already spoken about the involvement of Turkish warplanes in the aerial attacks against the civilian settlements and population of Artsakh. Similarly, we have already pointed out how these Turkish fighter jets, which had remained stationed in Azerbaijan after the joint Turkish-Azerbaijani military exercise conducted in July and August, were deployed at the military airport in Ganja, from where they carried out operations to provide air support for the Azerbaijani ground forces.

The defence army of Artsakh accordingly took the necessary measures to destroy that military airport. Moreover, the President of the Republic of Artsakh reiterated, during his press conference after that operation, that the defence army targets only military objects and never the civilian population. That being said, there is video footage which proves that Azerbaijani heavy military hardware is stationed within civilian settlements. We can provide a link to that footage for those interested. (<https://twitter.com/ArmenianUnified/status/1310974139642019842?s=20>)

On 6 October, just a few hours after the Foreign Ministers of the Co-Chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group had called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, the

Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan ordered the military operation to continue. As a result, the Azerbaijani armed forces resumed their shelling of Stepanakert and Shushi, which is the second-largest city in Artsakh. Several Smerch rockets fired by the Azerbaijani armed forces landed and exploded next to the Stepanakert office of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The aggression against Artsakh by Azerbaijan with the support of Turkey and the involvement of foreign terrorist fighters and jihadists is accompanied by a campaign of fake news and disinformation regarding the alleged shelling of Azerbaijani settlements by Armenia. The aim of this disinformation campaign is to cover up Azerbaijan's massive shelling of large civilian settlements in Artsakh since the first day of its offensive. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence of Armenia have vigorously refuted such fake news, which Azerbaijan is using to pave the way for continuing its criminal policy and expanding the geographical scope of the conflict. The following video makes it clear why it is impossible for Armenia to have conducted missile attacks against Azerbaijani cities. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-i6p3NgiXMk>)

Azerbaijan's large-scale disinformation campaign is calculated to mislead the international community and public opinion, and again it is being supported by Turkey. This has been acknowledged by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, himself during his recent visit to Baku, where he said that Turkish embassies around the world are working jointly with Azerbaijani diplomats to promote the Turkish-Azerbaijani narrative of the conflict. We can also clearly see that the disinformation campaign is intensifying at the same time as the offensive on the front line is doing so, too.

Madam Chairperson,

Last week, we had several opportunities to present facts concerning Turkey's involvement in the Azerbaijani aggression against the Republic of Artsakh. Turkish military experts and troops are advising and fighting side by side with the Azerbaijani armed forces, which are using Turkish-made military equipment, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and warplanes. Turkey is providing, at the highest level of its leadership, full political and propaganda support to Azerbaijan.

On 29 September, an F-16 fighter jet from the Turkish Air Force, based at the Azerbaijan military airport of Ganja, shot down an Armenian SU-25 fighter jet that had been patrolling the airspace of Armenia in order to repel Azerbaijan's attacks on military and civilian targets in the Vardenis region in eastern Armenia. Major Valeri Danelin, an Armenian Air Force pilot, was killed.

Furthermore, on 30 September, Azerbaijan entrusted the Turkish Air Force with the command of an offensive air operation against the Republic of Artsakh. At 10 a.m. (local time) on that day, two Turkish F-16 fighter jets together with Azerbaijani SU-25 fighter jets and Turkish Bayraktar UAVs took off from the Kyurdamir air base in Azerbaijan. Operating at a high altitude, they bombarded civilian settlements and infrastructure in the Hadrut and Martuni regions of Artsakh. This operation was controlled by a Turkish E7-T remote air command post located in an area near the cities of Erzurum and Kars in Turkey. (<https://twitter.com/ShStepanyan/status/1311402559089897474?s=20>)

Madam Chairperson,

Our delegation has already pointed out how Turkey's involvement in military operations against Artsakh is part of that country's broader foreign policy goal of reviving the Ottoman Empire. This interpretation of the situation and of Turkey's goals is widely shared by the international community. One is inevitably reminded of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by Turkey in 1915. Turkey's current ambitions to expand into the South Caucasus and – as an integral part of those ambitions – its unconditional support for the Azerbaijani leadership's military adventurism are the direct continuation of that genocidal policy.

We once again call on the OSCE participating States to urge Turkey to withdraw from the South Caucasus, since its imperialistic aspirations undermine regional peace and security, aggravate the humanitarian situation and may well cause the ongoing hostilities to spill over into neighbouring regions.

I wish to conclude by quoting the Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, who in a recent interview with the France 24 news channel said the following: "Let no one think that this is too far from Europe. This is not that far from Europe, and that is why I say Armenia and Karabakh are at the forefront of a civilizational confrontation, and if Turkey succeeds here with its imperialistic policy, you will have to meet them halfway in Vienna." End of quote.

Today the defence army of Artsakh and the people of Artsakh are battling against the spread of international terrorism into new regions.

Thank you.



957th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 963, Agenda item 2(c)

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Azerbaijan would like to update the Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC) on recent developments relating to Armenia's ongoing aggression against Azerbaijan and on the consequences of the Armenian armed forces' indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population and infrastructure in Azerbaijan.

As we already informed the Forum last week, the Armenian armed forces, in blatant violation of the ceasefire regime, launched another aggression against Azerbaijan on 27 September 2020, intensively attacking the positions of the Azerbaijani armed forces along the front line, as well as deliberately and indiscriminately shelling densely populated civilian areas and infrastructure in Azerbaijan.

Over the following days, the Armenian armed forces have continued to target the civilian population, houses and other civilian infrastructure in residential areas both along the front line and farther away from the zone of hostilities. Shamkir, Beylagan, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Goranboy, Tartar, Barda, Goygol, Yevlax, Aghjabadi, Mingachevir, Ganja, Khizi and Absheron districts and cities have been subjected to indiscriminate heavy bombardment by artillery fire, rockets, other large-calibre weaponry, and mid-range and tactical ballistic missiles. Civilian facilities, such as hospitals, medical centres, school buildings, kindergartens and markets, have been targeted deliberately. The Armenian armed forces' attacks on densely populated areas are being launched both from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and from the territory of Armenia, including the towns of Berd, Goris, Jermuk, Sisian and Vardenis.

To date, as a result of Armenia's ongoing aggression, 28 civilians, including children and elderly people, have been killed, 144 civilians have been hospitalized with various injuries, and 427 houses and 66 civilian facilities have been destroyed or damaged.

According to information provided by the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan, Tochka-U tactical ballistic missiles, multiple rocket launcher systems (including Smerch, Uragan and Grad systems), Scud missiles and other kinds of heavy artillery are being used by the Armenian armed forces in their indiscriminate targeting of residential areas and civilian objects on the territory of Azerbaijan.

Only yesterday, on 6 October, at around 9 p.m., Armenia fired a cluster rocket at the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline near the Yevlakh district. The largest strategic project in the region, this pipeline carries oil from the Caspian to the Mediterranean Sea and plays an important role in European energy security. Fortunately, the attack has been prevented and the pipeline has not been damaged. More than 300 cluster bomblets were ejected around by the rocket.

Ganja, which is Azerbaijan's second-largest city with a population of over 331,000 and is located 60 kilometres away from the front line, has been subjected to indiscriminate shelling with missiles for two days in a row from 4 October. As a result of Armenia's armed attacks on the city, serious damage has been inflicted on civilians and their property, and also on civilian infrastructure, including historical buildings, an international hospital, a school, a furniture factory and the city's central market. The attack left one dead and 32 wounded among the civilian population.

On 4 October, Mingachevir – Azerbaijan's fourth-largest city and an important industrial centre, with a population of 106,000 and located around 100 kilometres away from the theatre of hostilities – was hit by three rockets fired from a Smerch multiple rocket launcher system. One rocket landed without exploding in front of the Azerbaijan thermal power plant, which is located within the Mingachevir hydropower complex. Another rocket landed without exploding in front of a civilian house. The third rocket, however, did reach its target, causing serious damage to a house and injuring five civilians.

The Mingachevir hydropower complex is the largest dam of its kind in the entire Caucasus region, with an overall surface area of 605 square kilometres. It generates electricity for over forty cities and districts in Azerbaijan, including the capital city Baku and the second-largest city Ganja. According to the National Centre of Environmental Forecasting, the consequences of a strike on the Mingachevir reservoir could be catastrophic for Azerbaijan and the entire region. The water from the destroyed dam could inundate a vast swathe of the country stretching over 240 kilometres from the centre towards Baku in the east. Such an inundation would be an environmental and humanitarian disaster and could claim countless lives. Around half of Azerbaijan's population could suffer massive power outages, while strategic transport and energy routes would be seriously disrupted.

Khizi, which is located around 200 kilometres away from the front line and about 80 kilometres from Baku, has been targeted by Scud tactical ballistic missiles, with one missile exploding in the village of Turkoba in the Khizi district. Scud missiles have also been fired at Absheron, which is located around 250 kilometres away from the front line and some 15 kilometres from Baku. One missile hit the village of Pirishikul in the Absheron district.

As seen from the information I have just provided, the Armenian armed forces are expanding the scope of their bombardment and have even started to launch tactical ballistic missiles against major Azerbaijani cities that are densely populated and host critical civilian infrastructure of great regional importance. This is clearly a desperate and futile attempt to widen the zone of hostilities, aggravate the situation on the ground and draw third parties into the conflict.

In committing the aforementioned ignoble acts, Armenia has been disregarding the key principle of distinguishing between combatants and civilians, which is at the heart of *jus*

in bello and generally, international humanitarian law. The deliberate, systematic and indiscriminate targeting of civilians and civilian objects by the Armenian armed forces thus constitutes a clear and gross violation of international humanitarian law – including the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols – and qualifies as a war crime.

Madam Chairperson,

As we reminded the FSC last week, the delegation of Azerbaijan has continuously been drawing the Forum's attention to blatant and deliberate violations by Armenia of our shared fundamental norms and principles that underpin – and indeed constitute the very essence of – confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) in the politico-military dimension. We have presented on multiple occasions undeniable facts of Armenia's egregious violations of the letter and the spirit of OSCE politico-military instruments – specifically by illegally deploying its armed forces in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, by taking advantage of the fragmentation of the zone of application of CSBM regimes to conceal its military potential from these arms control mechanisms, and by engaging in illegal massive military build-up in these territories. We have repeatedly warned against the adverse effects of Armenia's outright disregard of its commitments and obligations. As we speak, the detrimental consequences of these gross violations are manifesting themselves along the front line, as Armenia continues its unabated aggression against the territory and people of Azerbaijan.

In response to this latest offensive against Azerbaijan and to the continuous aggression and occupation of its territories by Armenia, the Azerbaijani armed forces are continuing to take proportionate counteroffensive measures necessary to repel Armenia's act of aggression, averting the imminent threat to Azerbaijan's civilian population and defending our country's territorial integrity and our people. Azerbaijan is exercising its inherent right to self-defence in full accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and customary international law. The measures taken by the Azerbaijani armed forces are also in full compliance with international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols.

The political and military leadership of the Republic of Azerbaijan has declared on numerous occasions since the start of the counteroffensive operations that only military objects will be targeted and that neither civilians living in the occupied territories nor civilian infrastructure there will be targeted under any circumstances. On 4 October, the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan issued an official appeal to the civilian population residing in the occupied territories, calling them to stay away from the conflict zone, especially from firing points and military facilities and infrastructure of the Armenian armed forces. The Ministry, moreover, stated that appropriate conditions would be created for the evacuation of civilians from the conflict zone and that all their rights would be protected. Further to this, the political and military authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan have issued several statements reiterating that our country is not pursuing any military targets on the territory of Armenia.

We would also like to inform the Forum that, as a result of the counteroffensive operation by the Azerbaijani armed forces, part of the occupied territories has already been liberated from Armenian occupation. This operation will continue until Armenia ceases to engage in internationally wrongful conduct, namely its illegal occupation of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan.

To conclude, we reiterate that military occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan does not represent a solution and will never produce a political outcome desired by Armenia. Resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the norms and principles of international law, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, in full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. We wish further to stress that Armenia can prevent further senseless casualties and become a partner in peace by putting an end to its occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and surrounding regions of Azerbaijan, as demanded by the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Forum for Security Co-operation**

FSC.DEC/5/20
7 October 2020

Original: ENGLISH

957th Plenary Meeting

FSC Journal No. 963, Agenda item 1

**DECISION No. 5/20
DATES AND VENUE OF THE THIRTY-FIRST
ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT MEETING**

The Forum for Security Co-operation (FSC),

Decides that the thirty-first Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM) will be held on 2 and 3 March 2021 in Vienna.