



ԵԱՀԿ-ՈՒՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

delivered by the Delegation of Armenia at the 2021 Annual Security Review Conference

Working session I: Conflicts and crises in the OSCE area – building security and confidence

31 August 2021

Madame Moderator,

At the outset, I would like to thank the keynote speakers - Amb. Annika Söder, Amb. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Amb. Andrzej Kasprzyk and Mr. Andrew Schofer for their presentations and ideas on different aspects of some of the existing conflicts and crises in the OSCE area.

On a general note, it should be emphasized that the underlying root causes of most of the conflicts in the OSCE area of responsibility are, in one way or another, related to disrespect, systematic and violent suppression and violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Since last year, the use of force has been promoted by some participating States as a means of resolving conflicts and disputes. This is an extremely dangerous development, and if we fail to adequately respond and condemn such approaches to resolving international conflicts and disputes, including by bringing to account those responsible for unleashing aggression, then we will inevitably witness a recurrence of new cases of violence and massive human rights violations.

Another dangerous development is the recruitment, transfer and use, including by OSCE participating States, of foreign terrorist and jihadist fighters in conflicts in the OSCE region, as we have seen it last year in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Madame Moderator,

Undoubtedly, Amb. Kasprzyk and Mr. Schofer are well aware of the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the root causes and different stages of the conflict, but let me emphasize again for those who are less familiar with the conflict that it is not a territorial dispute as the Azerbaijani side has been trying to present for many years. It is, first of all, about the right of the people of Artsakh to live freely in their homeland, and to determine freely and without coercion their future and their political status. It was the use of force that became the main reason that the political problem of Nagorno-Karabakh grew into a full-fledged war in late 1980s - early 1990s. It should not be forgotten that in response to the peaceful demands of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to ensure their political and social rights, the Azerbaijani authorities first resorted to pogroms and massacres of the Armenian population of Azerbaijan, which was followed by a large-scale military aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh.

Dear colleagues,

In a few weeks, we will mark the first anniversary of the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh. Almost one year after unleashing the war against Artsakh, during which the Azerbaijani military committed numerous war crimes and human rights violations, in fact, there is no lack of evidence and facts confirming that it was Azerbaijan who started the war. This was confirmed, inter alia, in a number of interviews and addresses of the President of Azerbaijan. The latest revelation was his interview with CNN Turk, in which the President of Azerbaijan, referring to the 44-day war openly stated that Azerbaijan had started a “war of salvation” thereby confirming that it was Azerbaijan who resorted to the use of force in an attempt to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, contrary to its commitments and international obligations for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The international community must not turn a blind eye to these facts.

The war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh last year, with the support and direct involvement of Turkey and Turkish-backed foreign terrorist fighters, led to the occupation of a large part of the territory of Artsakh, ethnic cleansing and numerous war crimes. Another war of Azerbaijan against Artsakh did not bring the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict any closer. It only brought immense suffering to the people of the region and further exacerbated the conflict and the enmity between the two peoples.

In addition, it once again proved that the people of Artsakh cannot be under the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan. This is evidenced by numerous cases of brutal attacks on and killings of

Armenian civilians, including women, children and elderly people, ethnic cleansing, destruction of the Armenian historical and religious heritage in the territories currently controlled by the Azerbaijani armed formations. Even today, Azerbaijan does not hide its intention to expel or exterminate the people of Artsakh as the only effective and desirable way to resolve the conflict. This has been repeatedly voiced by various high-ranking Azerbaijani officials, including in recent days. The latest such statement came from a member of the Azerbaijani parliament from the ruling New Azerbaijan Party, who said that “either they (the Armenians of Artsakh) will leave or they will be exterminated”.

Madame Moderator,

The trilateral ceasefire statement signed on 9 November 2020 by the leaders of the Russian Federation, Armenia and Azerbaijan put an end to the fighting and the bloodshed. However, almost ten months after the signing of the trilateral statement, which Azerbaijan likes to refer to with such diligence, many of its provisions are continuously violated by the latter almost with the same degree of diligence. In particular, in violation of the commitments undertaken in the trilateral statement, Azerbaijan still refuses to return the Armenian POWs and civilian captives, as well as continues to hide information about the whereabouts of many other Armenian detainees, which clearly leads to their enforced disappearance. The Azerbaijani authorities are also organizing mock trials on trumped-up charges against Armenian POWs and other detainees.

In addition to this, since 12 May this year, Azerbaijan has undertaken a number of provocative actions and encroachments into the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, trying to create new spots of tension, thus further undermining regional peace and security.

Azerbaijan openly acts against the logic and the letter of the trilateral statement. Another evidence of this is the recent blocking of the Kapan-Goris interstate highway and the Kapan-Vorotan intercommunal road by the armed forces of Azerbaijan, despite the provision of the trilateral statement on the unblocking of all economic and transport links in the region. Instead of opening closed roads, Azerbaijan aims to close the open ones.

Dear colleagues,

These flagrant violations of the trilateral ceasefire statement of 9 November 2020, are a logical continuation of the aggressive posturing and the hostile policy of the Azerbaijani authorities. The Azerbaijani leadership does not shy away from openly stating its claims to the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia.

By constantly raising the level of tension, including by armed provocations on the line of contact in Artsakh and on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, the Azerbaijani leadership seeks to postpone indefinitely the resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process and, ultimately, the final and comprehensive settlement of the conflict. We reiterate that

only the resumption of the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs can create conditions for achieving lasting peace in the region.

Armenia is ready to engage in good faith in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process and will continue to act consistently in support of the realization of the Artsakh people's right to self-determination, regardless of Azerbaijan's efforts to remove this issue from the international agenda. The international community must reject this approach of Azerbaijan in the strongest possible terms.

Madame Chairperson,

The current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is the result of a flagrant violation by Azerbaijan of several core principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely refraining from the threat or use of force, peaceful settlement of disputes, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. There should be no illusion that the results of the use of force, accompanied by war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law, can ever become the basis for a lasting and sustainable peace. Durable and sustainable peace in the region can only be achieved through a comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which must include the determination of the status of Artsakh on the basis of the realization by the people of Artsakh of their inalienable right to self-determination, ensuring the safe and dignified return of the recently displaced population to their homes and preservation of the historical, cultural and religious heritage of the region.

Thank you.