



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
TO THE OSCE

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Statement

101st Joint Meeting of the Permanent Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security: Conflict-Related Human Rights Violations

Delivered by Ambassador Andranik Hovhannisyan

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Mr. Chair,

The Delegation of Armenia commends the Swiss OSCE Chairpersonship and the Georgian Chairpersonship of the Forum for Security Co-operation for convening this joint meeting.

The OSCE participating States affirmed in the Astana Commemorative Declaration that the inherent dignity of the individual lies at the core of comprehensive security, that human rights and fundamental freedoms are inalienable, and that their protection and promotion constitute our first responsibility. These principles apply in times of peace as well as in times of armed conflict.

International human rights law and international humanitarian law provide complementary and mutually reinforcing protection to persons affected by armed conflict, whether civilians, persons who are no longer directly participating in hostilities, or those actively engaged in them. Both bodies of law are grounded in the fundamental principles of respect for life, human dignity, and the well-being of every individual.

Violations of international human rights law during peacetime undermine the international legal order and erode our shared normative framework. During armed conflict, however, such violations may have even graver consequences, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Certain violations may also fall within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court under the Rome Statute. As the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal famously observed, "Crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can the provisions of international law be enforced."

At the same time, individual criminal responsibility does not absolve a State of its responsibility under international law. State responsibility for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law remains a cornerstone of the international legal order.

States have the obligation to investigate alleged violations, prosecute and punish those responsible in accordance with the law, ensure that amnesties are not granted for the most serious international crimes, and provide effective remedies and appropriate reparations to victims and their families.

In this regard, international judicial mechanisms, including the International Court of Justice, can contribute to accountability and, where appropriate, reparations by establishing state responsibility for violations committed during armed conflicts.

Yet, despite these legal obligations, accountability remains far too often elusive. Grave violations, including torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, extrajudicial and summary executions continue to occur with impunity.

We would like to draw particular attention to conflict-related human rights violations that persist long after active hostilities have ceased. The plight of conflict-related detainees, the fate of missing persons, and cases of enforced disappearance require comprehensive attention. Genuine reconciliation warrants addressing humanitarian consequences of the conflict, as unresolved suffering risks perpetuating grievances.

Armenia underscores the indispensable role of international organizations, in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross, in addressing humanitarian issues. This includes the monitoring of detention conditions, facilitating communication between detainees and their families, supporting repatriation processes, and clarifying the fate of missing persons. Full, safe and unhindered access for relevant international humanitarian actors must be ensured. Humanitarian issues should never be politicized or weaponized.

Finally, conflict-related human rights violations are not confined to the period of active hostilities. The unlawful use of force is often preceded by hate speech, incitement to violence, propaganda for war, and statements by political leaders or public figures promoting ethnic, racial or religious superiority, spreading hostility and prejudice, or condoning violence against particular groups. Such rhetoric frequently continues even after the cessation of hostilities, undermining efforts to reconciliation.

The OSCE has developed a comprehensive toolbox for the early warning and prevention of precisely such situations. Human rights violations are among the clearest indicators of emerging security threats. They must therefore be addressed with the utmost seriousness and urgency to prevent further escalation and build lasting peace.

Thank you.