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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement
Another aggressive and provocative action of Azerbaijan
against the sovereign territory of Armenia
as delivered by Ambassador Armen Papikyan
at the 1422nd meeting of the Permanent Council

11 May 2023

Mr. Chairman,

We have brought this current issue to the agenda of today's Permanent Council meeting to inform the participating states of the new provocation and aggression against the sovereign territory of Armenia by Azerbaijan today, on 11 May 2023.

According to the information by the Ministry of Defence of Armenia, today at 6 a.m. local time, Azerbaijani armed forces started firing at the Armenian positions in border Sotk village of Gegharqunik province of Armenia, using artillery and mortars. Once again Azerbaijan, resorting to provocative and aggressive actions, opened fire on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia.

There are four wounded servicemen on the Armenian side. Azerbaijani armed forces, in violation of all norms of international humanitarian law, targeted also the ambulance, which was transporting the wounded soldiers.

Between 11:00 and 13:00 local time, the Azerbaijani armed forces regularly fired in the direction of Sotk village. As of now the situation on the border remains tense.

Mr. Chairman,
Colleagues,

The repeated violation by Azerbaijan of one of the fundamental principles of international law - the non-use of force or the threat of force - demonstrates contempt of the Azerbaijani side for the international law, for agreements reached and any commitments undertaken, starting from the 9 November 2020 statement and numerous statements since then.

This provocation and aggression come immediately after the 1st to 4th May intensive negotiations between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Washington, and also immediately before the upcoming meetings of the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan this weekend in Brussels, and the planned meeting in Chisinau on 1 June.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to welcome the continued engagement and commitment of our international partners to the efforts towards establishing a lasting and sustainable peace and security in the South Caucasus.

It is obvious that these actions of Azerbaijan, which are aimed at destabilising the situation and creating pretexts for new large-scale aggressions, are an open disregard for the efforts made by international partners interested in stability and peace in the South Caucasus, the meetings and negotiations held in Washington, as well as meetings planned in Brussels, Moscow, Chisinau, which are aimed at the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

We have already talked about the pattern of Azerbaijani actions usually preceding and following any negotiations, and this latest provocation and aggression, accompanied with the disinformation spread by the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry, perfectly fits into that pattern of actions. Azerbaijan resorts to violence following negotiations or meetings, especially if agreements are reached, in an obvious attempt to nullify the results, to discredit the negotiations, discredit mediators, and renege on any commitment it has agreed to.

Such unprovoked and unjustified acts of aggression against Armenia aimed at disrupting the negotiation process and by using force exert pressure on Armenia.

With its actions Azerbaijan jeopardizes and violates the fundamental agreements reached during the meeting in Prague on 6 October 2022 and in Sochi on 31 October 2022.

We have continuously stated and would like to reiterate once again that only robust international guaranties and their vigorous enforcement would constrain Azerbaijan and compel its authorities to respect and implement its own commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

I would also like to take this opportunity to bring once again to the attention of the participating States the situation in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and the Lachin Corridor.

For five months already Azerbaijan blockades the Lachin Corridor thus effectively putting Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) under siege and cutting communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia and the rest of the world.

The blockade, the fact of which has been acknowledged by the highest international court, the International Court of Justice in the Hague, is a criminal, illegal act, premeditated, carefully planned and executed effort with the intent to completely destroy the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) by inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part or to achieve its forced displacement which is a crime, punishable under international law.

After installation of an illegal check-point, Azerbaijan has disrupted also the humanitarian work of the ICRC. We highly appreciate the efforts of the ICRC to assist the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and somewhat alleviate the dire humanitarian conditions that they are facing and urge it to continue its efforts to restore its humanitarian work.

This new wave of provocations and aggressive actions pursue also the aim of diverting the attention of the international community to the ongoing blockade of the Lachin Corridor and the resulting humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh. Therefore, sending an international fact-finding mission to the Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh, which would monitor the situation on the ground and serve as a reliable and unbiased source of information, is becoming more and more urgent.

As we have stated on numerous occasions, the rights and the security of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) has been and remain one of the major issues that shall be addressed through the international mechanism. We maintain this position and in light of the continuous Azerbaijani aggressive policies makes this legitimate approach vital.

Mr. Chairman,

The destabilizing actions of Azerbaijan and the ongoing blockade of the Lachin Corridor – the only humanitarian lifeline connecting Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) to the outer world – accompanied by territorial claims against Armenia, military provocations, aggressions, use of force or threat of force, spreading of disinformation, as well as continuous incendiary and hate rhetoric against Armenia and the Armenian people, undermine the efforts aimed at de-escalating the situation and finding lasting solutions for a sustainable peace and security in the region.

The Republic of Armenia remains committed to the peace and will continue its efforts to work toward finding lasting resolution of the conflict and normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan in pursuit of its goal to bring peace and security to the South Caucasus.

I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

I thank you.