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PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**by the Delegation of Armenia at the
1090th Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation
Security Dialogue on
Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security**

09 October 2024

The Delegation of Armenia commends the FSC Chair of Denmark for bringing up this important topic and holding this Security Dialogue on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. We also thank the distinguished speakers for their presentations.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption of this landmark document, and we believe that this Security Dialogue will provide a valuable opportunity to discuss the current state of implementation of the Code of Conduct. It will also serve as a platform to share best practices and lessons learned, particularly regarding the provisions on the individual accountability of armed forces personnel.

To this end, this discussion is extremely relevant, as security, peace, and stability in the OSCE area are being challenged as never before due to blatant violations of the principles and objectives that underpin the Code of Conduct—particularly the non-use or threat of force. These violations have led to armed conflicts, widespread human rights abuses, and infringements on fundamental freedoms - challenges that we have faced and continue to confront in our region.

Mr. Chair,

Armenia believes that after 30 years the OSCE Code of Conduct remains one of the most important documents of the OSCE which holds a crucial place within the politico-military dimension of the OSCE and provides a clear framework for all of us to follow. With its inter State and intra State elements the document has become a significant tool contributing to the comprehensive and co-operative security concept of the OSCE. It's another question whether this tool has been used to effectively address evolving security challenges in the OSCE area.

One of the key aspects of the Code of Conduct is democratic control of armed and security forces as well as their compliance with international humanitarian law as an indispensable element of stability and security - of course, provided that there is a democracy, or at least attempt to build democratic society to exercise any control of armed forces.

Having in mind these provisions, the Government of Armenia has been carrying out a large-scale security sector reform process in close co-operation with our international partners. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that in cooperation with the OSCE, an extra-budgetary project on strengthening security sector governance in Armenia has been developed and successfully implemented. In the framework of this project the multi-stakeholder Platform on Democratic Oversight of the Security Sector was established as an advisory body to the National Assembly Standing Committee on Defence and National Security.

Dear colleagues,

Under the OSCE Code of Conduct, all participating States committed themselves to respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to refrain from actions aimed at strengthening their security at the expense of the security of other States. Participating States also committed to refrain from the use of armed forces to restrict the peaceful and lawful exercise of individual and collective rights.

In blatant contravention of these commitments the recent years were marked by multiple large scale illegal use of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh which resulted in occupation of sovereign territories of Armenia and complete ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh of its indigenous Armenian population. Last year on these very days the people of Nagorno-Karabakh were forced to leave their ancestral homeland in order to escape the imminent physical extermination. The last war of aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh followed the 10 months long unlawful blockade, as a method of collective punishment, by willfully impeding relief supplies to the peaceful population, which under international law constitutes a war crime. In this regard, the legally binding orders of the ICJ still remain unexecuted.

Furthermore, up to this date more than 200 square kilometers of the Armenian sovereign territories are occupied by foreign armed forces, illegally stationed there as a result of multiple offensives. This has become a major source of threats to the security, peaceful and prosperous life of bordering communities of Armenia. This occupation is also used as a tool of political pressure, as we continue to hear repeated bellicose statements at the highest level with a clear threat of a renewed aggression against Armenia.

Mr. Chair,

The Code of Conduct embeds the fundamental principles and obligations of International Humanitarian Law and human rights law, and outlines the responsibilities of participating States to ensure that their armed forces act in compliance with these laws and are aware of their accountability for their actions.

Despite these commitments, the recent aggressions against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh were accompanied by numerous documented cases of heinous crimes, including the targeting of residential areas with multiple missile salvos, the use of Lora ballistic missiles, and internationally banned cluster and white phosphorus munitions. Documented

atrocities include mutilation, decapitation, gender-based violence, and extrajudicial executions of both civilians and servicemen.

In this vein, it is worth recalling the recent Concluding Observations by the UN Committee Against Torture, “the recording and dissemination of videos that appear to depict horrifying acts involving beheadings of live individuals, desecration and mutilation of corpses, and acknowledgment on-camera by the perpetrators of responsibility for such abuses in a manner that strongly suggests they did not fear being held accountable”. Indeed, to date, no single member of the armed forces, who committed war crimes, has been held accountable, the highest leadership instead chose to reward them.

Furthermore, in violation of the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, at least 23 Armenian POWs and civilians are unlawfully held in captivity, many of them for more than 4 years now after the end of hostilities, being regularly subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman treatment, as well as mock-trials with trumped-up charges. Yet the fates of hundreds of missing and forcibly disappeared persons remain unclarified, despite the multiple witness accounts and video footage proving their captivity.

Last but not least, under the Code of Conduct the participating States reconfirmed the continuing validity of their comprehensive concept of security, as initiated in the Helsinki Final Act, which relates the maintenance of peace to the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and links economic and environmental co-operation with peaceful inter-State relations.

Mindful of its undertaken commitments and against the very somber reality on the ground, including vis a vis our territorial integrity, illegal detention of Armenian POW's and other humanitarian issues Armenia demonstrated both political will and courage to bring peace to our region - the South Caucasus. It is with that in mind that Armenia proposed to sign the agreement on normalization of interstate relations with Azerbaijan as it stands now, taking into account that the agreed articles of the agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan actually contain internationally accepted core provisions for establishing relations.

The Republic of Armenia, demonstrating its steadfast dedication to peace and security in our region, has also put forward the "Crossroads of Peace" initiative which entails the opening of regional communications such as: railway, roads, cables, gas pipelines, electricity grids and other communication channels on the basis of sovereignty, national jurisdiction, equality, and reciprocity. The most significant aspect of this initiative is that it envisages to include not just two countries but all countries of the entire region.

Thank you.