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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT

**as delivered by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia
at the 1032nd Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation**

18 January, 2023

I would like to warmly welcome Mr. Josip Brkić and congratulate Bosnia and Herzegovina on assuming the Chairpersonship of the Forum for Security Cooperation. We thank you Deputy Minister for outlining your priorities.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is taking up the Chairmanship at times of unprecedented crisis of European security architecture.

These challenging times require resolute action to facilitate targeted discussions and cooperation aimed at strengthening the role and the mandate of the FSC and solidifying the foundation of the OSCE with the ultimate goal to achieve peace, security and stability in our region. It requires, however, the commitment and political will of all participating States.

We believe that the priorities set up by Bosnia and Herzegovina are significant for our work, and we would like to highlight some specific issues.

Armenia remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the Code of Conduct both in its letter and spirit. The Discussions on this topic are highly pertinent, against the backdrop of the massive use of force, against Artsakh and Armenia accompanied by heinous war crimes, and tortures.

We welcome the decision to convene a joint FSC-PC on Women Peace and Security. In this regard I would like to highlight the need to ensure protection of the rights of

women, during armed conflicts. As you are aware, during the aggression of Azerbaijan against Armenia, Armenian women including servicewomen were subjected to the most horrific and unspeakable torture by the armed forces of Azerbaijan.

The long standing and principled position of the Armenian delegation is that the effectiveness of SALW and SCA firmly rests on the implementation in a good faith of undertaken commitments, refraining from the attempts to turn them into political manipulations, including to misuse the assistance mechanisms.

Mr. Chair,

Today, the concept of comprehensive and indivisible security is seriously undermined. Here, I would like to particularly refer to the current security situation in the South Caucasus region.

As a result of the aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan in September, 2022, which was the third large-scale offensive against Armenia since the signing of the Trilateral statement of 9 November, 2020, more than 140 square kilometers of the sovereign territories of Armenia are under the illegal occupation of the armed forces of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chair,

It is more than a month now, that around 120 000 people of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh have been under illegal blockade and today they are literally on the brink of a humanitarian disaster, which is the consequence of the consistent policy implemented by Azerbaijani authorities with the sole goal to achieve the complete ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh. The recent statement of the President of Azerbaijan suggesting the deportation of those Armenians who do not want to become citizens of Azerbaijan comes to prove their intention of ethnic cleansing.

We welcome the unambiguous statements of the participating States calling on Azerbaijan to lift the blockade and restore free and unimpeded movement through the Lachin Corridor. I believe that those statements should be followed by practical measures to put pressure on Azerbaijan for it to comply with its own commitments. In this context it is imperative to send an international fact-finding mission to Nagorno-Karabakh and the Lachin Corridor to assess the situation on the ground, as well as to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to Nagorno-Karabakh for relevant UN bodies, in order to prevent the looming humanitarian catastrophe in Artsakh.

Mr. Chair,

In closing, Armenia looks forward to working with the FSC Chair and I take this opportunity to thank Belgium for responsible chairmanship of the FSC and effective cooperation. I would also like to welcome Bulgaria to FSC Troika.

Thank you.