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PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement
In response to the Chair of
the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance
as delivered by Ms. Lilit Grigoryan, Deputy Head of Mission
at the 1459th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
01 February 2024

Madame Chairperson,

The Delegation of Armenia warmly welcomes the 2024 Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance to the Permanent Council and thanks for an interesting and thought-provoking address.

In observing International Holocaust Remembrance Day, we fulfil our duty to the memory and dignity of the victims of the Holocaust by standing up for the truth.

We should be mindful that truth holds universal appeal and application. Thus, while paying tribute to the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, we should also reassert our commitment to the human rights and fundamental freedoms of members of racial, religious, ethnic, and national communities, which are identified as groups of protection under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Convention, which marked its 75th anniversary, recognises that genocide occurs both in times of peace and in times of war, and, thus, the collapse of the international security system during the world wars cannot be invoked as justification for genocides.

Moreover, the intentional manipulation and distortion of the truth indeed represent the ultimate manifestation of genocide—a double killing, as Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel articulated—because if victims of genocide are allowed to be forgotten, “the dead will be killed a second time.”

Madame Chairperson,

Armenia stands at the forefront of international efforts of the prevention of genocide. The link between remembrance and prevention is well captured in the very name of the UN International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime established upon the initiative of Armenia in 2015. It should be recalled that on a number of occasions, Armenia came up with initiatives, both at the level of the OSCE Ministerial and Permanent Council, aimed at raising awareness of the key legal instruments and international efforts of genocide prevention. This year, during the upcoming HRC 55th Session, Armenia will table a biennial resolution on Prevention of Genocide.

Madame Chairperson,

We should remember that all genocides, including the Holocaust, could have been prevented. The only thing it takes is to be mindful of the alarm bells ringing and reminding us of the crimes that could lead to genocide. Mass atrocities and genocides are usually pre-planned and carried out by targeting the civilian population, destroying cultural and religious heritage, and spreading extreme hatred. All these actions were also carried out during the 2020 war of aggression.

Unfortunately, the world was deaf to the bells; thus, the impunity led to yet another large-scale military offensive on September 19, 2023, which resulted in the mass forced displacement of the indigenous population of Nagorno-Karabakh, who have already been suffering under the more than 9-month illegal blockade and siege. It is important to recall that the first Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Luis Moreno Ocampo, characterised these actions as “the archetype of genocide through the imposition of conditions of life designed to bring about a group’s destruction.”

By paying tribute to the memory of Holocaust victims, we should reaffirm our determination to prevent such crimes from happening again anywhere and to anyone, and if we all succeed, only then will the pledge “Never again” become reality.

Thank you.