



ԵԱՀԿ-ՈՒՄ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄՇՏԱԿԱՆ ՆԵՐԿԱՅԱՑՈՒՑՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**of the Delegation of Armenia at the 1042nd Meeting
of the Forum for Security Co-operation**

26 April, 2023

Madame Chair,

We warmly welcome Bulgaria's assumption of the Chairpersonship of the Forum for Security Cooperation at such a critical juncture, as the erosion of the OSCE concept of comprehensive and co-operative security has generated complex security challenges.

We thank you for the comprehensive presentation of the priorities of the Bulgarian FSC Chairpersonship and for sharing your perspective on the security challenges in the OSCE area. Armenia has taken good note of the work programme of the Bulgarian FSC Chairpersonship. These topics are highly pertinent against the backdrop of the blatant violations of the OSCE commitments and core principles by Azerbaijan during recent years, in particular the unapologetic use of force against Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia in 2020, 2021 and 2022, accompanied by heinous war crimes and gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, against civilians and military personnel, including women and girls, as well as the continued occupation of sovereign territories of the Republic of Armenia and constant military provocations on the border zone and on the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh.

We stand ready to constructively engage and contribute to the discussions and work on the proposed priorities and other issues of the FSC agenda, with a hope, Madame Chair, that your Chairpersonship will be marked by balanced, even-handed and inclusive approach to all the security challenges in the OSCE area, and will prevent any attempts to misuse the FSC platform for political manipulations and abuse of its mechanisms in search of justifications of the use of force. Thus we expect that the Bulgarian FSC Chairpersonship will show vigilance and responsibility to refrain from steps and activities which could further undermine the work of the FSC and credibility of the OSCE.

Dear colleagues,

Unfortunately, the security situation in our region continues to further deteriorate.

On 11 April, around 4:00 p.m., the Azerbaijani armed forces initiated another provocation against the territorial integrity of Armenia in the territory near the Tegh village of Syunik province of the Republic of Armenia, which resulted in four casualties and six injured from the Armenian side, including high level officers.

In the beginning of April two Azerbaijani soldiers, by illegally crossing the Armenian border from Nakhijevan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, infiltrated the Syunik province of Armenia and were soon apprehended by local residents, and later these two servicemen were handed over to the law enforcement bodies, who initiated relevant criminal proceedings.

In the process of preliminary investigation, it was further revealed that one of those servicemen, Husein Akhundov murdered Mr. Hayrapet Meliksetyan guard of the local copper mining company, who was found dead with multiple gunshots.

The Armenian delegation has already distributed detailed information on this case under the reference number PC.DEL/529/23.

Esteemed colleagues,

I would also like to refer to the continued illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan, in clear breach of its international commitments and the legally binding Orders of the International Court of Justice.

On April 23, 2023, after keeping the 120 000 people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) under inhumane blockade for more than 4 months by its agents posing as so-called "eco-activists" under fabricated environmental pretexts, the authorities of Azerbaijan have officially announced about blocking the Lachin Corridor, taking steps to install a checkpoint in the corridor in the area of responsibility of the Russian peacekeeping contingent.

This illegal action is in gross violation of the paragraph 6 of the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020, signed by the leaders of Armenia, Russian Federation and Azerbaijan, under which the President of Azerbaijan himself expressed an unequivocal consent of the state of Azerbaijan to transfer exclusive control over the Lachin Corridor to the Russian peacekeeping forces.

By establishing a checkpoint on the entrance from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan is trying to give new impetus to its policy of ethnic cleansing of Artsakh in an environment of complete impunity and permissiveness.

This, as well as the previous similar actions of Azerbaijan, combined with continuous Armenophobic and threatening rhetoric by the highest leadership of Azerbaijan, are aimed at undermining the international efforts to establish peace in the South Caucasus region and scuttling the negotiations on the document on the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Madame Chair,

Armenia appreciates the targeted positions of those OSCE participating States, and other international partners, who unequivocally condemned this illegal action, reiterated calls on Azerbaijan to comply with its obligations under the Order of the International Court of Justice

of 22 February, by restoring safe movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo in both directions along the Lachin Corridor and refrain from further provocations and hostile actions.

We once again encourage the OSCE participating States to further increase the pressure on Azerbaijan through targeted actions for it to unconditionally comply with its own commitments and obligations.

We reiterate the need to launch the international mechanism for the prevention of genocides, and send an international fact-finding mission to the Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh, in order to prevent the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) of its native Armenian people and their eventual extermination.

The Armenian government remains committed and is willing to continue engaging in peace process. We reiterate our call on Azerbaijan, to show constructive approach and engage in peaceful negotiations on normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as solving all the outstanding issues related to and resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the ultimate objective of the establishment of a lasting and comprehensive peace and security in the region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bosnia and Herzegovina for responsible chairmanship of the FSC and effective cooperation. We also welcome Canada as a new Troika member and reiterate our readiness for close cooperation with the Bulgarian Chairpersonship, FSC Troika and all the colleagues.

Thank you.