



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

**Statement**

**as delivered by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia at the 1041<sup>st</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation**

*29 March 2023*

Distinguished Deputy Minister Galić,

Mr. Chairperson,

Esteemed colleagues,

At the outset, Armenia would like to commend the dedicated efforts of the able team of Bosnia and Herzegovina FSC Chairpersonship to foster dialogue and meaningful discussions on current security issues. In this context, we highlight the Security Dialogues on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and UNSCR 1325 / WPS which are relevant for our common security challenges in general, and in the South Caucasus, in particular.

Esteemed colleagues,

During the last three months we have witnessed further deterioration of the security situation in our region.

As a result of unprovoked aggression against Armenia's sovereign territory in September 2022, Azerbaijani armed forces continue occupying around 150 square kilometers of Armenia's internationally recognized territory, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. Moreover, Azerbaijani armed forces continue military fortifications and regular military provocations along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border, shelling and firing at the positions of the armed forces of Armenia, which have resulted in casualties.

Flaunting its blatant disregard for the legally binding Order of the ICJ, Azerbaijan has been effectively keeping the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) under blockade for more than 100 days now, by obstructing the free movement along the Lachin Corridor, the only lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the outside world. This illegal blockade is accompanied by deliberate disruptions of critical infrastructure, such as natural

gas and electricity supply from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, which together with the food and medical supply shortages have compounded the humanitarian crisis.

Moreover, Azerbaijan continues to terrorize the Armenians of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) by targeting civilians during agricultural works, as well as conducting sabotage intrusions and positional advancement in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

To recall, on March 5, a sabotage group of the Azerbaijani armed forces crossed the line of contact and attacked a vehicle of the Police of Nagorno-Karabakh, in the vicinity of Stepanakert, capital city of Nagorno-Karabakh. As a result of this deadly attack, three police officers were killed and another was wounded. On 25 March, the Azerbaijani armed forces, in flagrant violation of the trilateral ceasefire statement of November 9, 2020, crossed the line of contact and moved further into the territory of Artsakh, in the direction of the unpaved road Stepanakert-Lisagor. Moreover, on 27 March, the Azerbaijani armed forces made another attempt to take control of the mentioned road. With these attempts Azerbaijan is seeking under far-fetched arguments to cut also the emergency communication link between capital Stepanakert and a number of communities of Nagorno-Karabakh, thus exacerbating the dire humanitarian situation, caused by its imposed blockade. This tactic of medieval siege of Azerbaijan is aimed at either forcibly subjugating the Armenian people or forcing them to leave their homes, thus achieving the final goal - complete ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh.

There is no doubt that these actions of consistent escalation of the situation along the border with Armenia and on the line of contact with Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) are instructed and directly supervised by the highest authorities of Azerbaijan. This is clearly evidenced by the recent drastic upsurge in the amount of hate-filled and warmongering rhetoric from the highest political authorities of Azerbaijan.

Dear colleagues,

With constant military provocations, acts of intimidation and infringement on the fundamental rights of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, accompanied by aggressive disinformation campaigns, as well as rejection of any genuine and meaningful dialogue, inability or reluctance to implement agreed steps, Azerbaijan is laying the grounds for a new aggression, new atrocities and new tragedy, which will have devastating effects on the region and beyond.

We reiterate that under current circumstances it is necessary 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.

We appreciate the unambiguous statements and positions of many OSCE participating States expressed so far which called upon the government of Azerbaijan to immediately lift the blockade and restore the free and unimpeded movement through the Lachin Corridor. We also encourage the OSCE participating States to further increase the pressure on Azerbaijan for it to comply with its own commitments and obligations, and through targeted actions to deter Azerbaijan's deliberate policy of further escalation of the situation with detrimental impact on the prospects of regional peace and stability.

Despite all the risks and security threats, while rejecting the approach of resolving conflicts through the use of force and the threat of use of force, Armenia remains determined to continue its efforts towards establishing peace and stability in the region exclusively through peaceful negotiations, including on comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

To conclude, I would like to once again express our gratitude to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Chairpersonship, for the effective cooperation and successful Chairmanship of the FSC. We welcome Bulgaria as an incoming chair and Canada, as a new Troika member, and we stand ready to continue our close cooperation with the FSC Troika and all colleagues.

I thank you.

### **Right of Reply to the delegation of Azerbaijan**

In exercising its right of reply to the delegation of Azerbaijan, the delegation of Armenia would like to stress the following:

Firstly, we resolutely reject all the allegations and unfounded claims by the Azerbaijani delegation against Armenia.

Secondly, today we have witnessed again that Azerbaijan attempts to abuse the OSCE assistance mechanism for the sake of political manipulation and propaganda purposes. In fact, Azerbaijan seeks to legitimize 2020 war of aggression and the massive use of force against Nagorno-Karabakh and its people, which was accompanied by numerous gross violations of international law by the Azerbaijani armed forces. We once again call upon FSC Chairmanships and all OSCE structures to refrain from any action and activities that might be perceived as endorsing Azerbaijan's war of aggression and massive use of force against Artsakh and its peaceful people. Any conflict-related OSCE activity can only be carried out after careful consultation and clearly expressed consent of all parties concerned.

Thirdly, our delegation has stated on numerous occasions, that currently there are no armed forces of the Republic of Armenia in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. As for the Artsakh Defense Army, they have the inherent right and obligation to protect people in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, given the constant and continued security threats posed by Azerbaijani aggressive actions, as well as in light of the continued ceasefire violations, use of force and atrocities committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces against the peaceful population of Nagorno-Karabakh.