



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

**Statement**

**by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia  
at the 1053rd Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation  
Closing session of the FSC Chairpersonship of Bulgaria**

*26 July 2023*

Let me join the previous speakers in extending out thanks to Bulgaria for their stewardship of the FSC during this challenging trimester and fostering discussions on highly pertinent topics against the backdrop of the tense security and humanitarian situation we are facing in particular in the South Caucasus region, which comes as the result of the continuous blatant violations of the OSCE core principles and commitments by one participating State.

We highlight the Security Dialogues on the Humanitarian Mine Action, the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and UNSCR 1325 with an emphasis on conflict situations, which were highly relevant in the wider security policy context and in particular with regard to the challenges that the people of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh have been facing, including unconscionable violations of the principles of international humanitarian law and OSCE commitments.

Madam Chair,  
Distinguished colleagues,

During the past months the security situation in our region remained tense, marked by constant ceasefire violations along the border with Armenia, in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, and the exacerbated humanitarian situation as faced by the peaceful people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act, Azerbaijan continues occupying around 150 square kilometers of Armenia's internationally recognized territory, as a result of its unprovoked and unjustified aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia. As we have witnessed, these territories have mainly been used to build military fortifications and strongholds for subsequent attacks against my country.

To recall, over the last months Azerbaijan launched a number of armed provocations targeting the military positions and civilian communities and objects in the bordering areas of Armenia as well as Nagorno-Karabakh, using artillery, mortars and combat UAVs, which resulted in casualties, including among civilians.

Most of these attacks were carried out while the negotiations with the mediation of our international partners were underway. This fact clearly reveals that the use of force and military aggression has become the preferred operational tactics for the Azerbaijani leadership with the goal to advance its maximalist positions and achieve unilateral concessions from Armenia, thus undermining the efforts of Armenia and international actors in the negotiating process aimed at establishing lasting peace and security in the South Caucasus region.

Moreover, we are currently witnessing heavy concentration of armed forces and military equipment in the areas bordering Armenia, as well as uncontrolled accumulation of offensive weapons, exceeding the ceilings in 4 out of 5 categories set by the CFE treaty, as revealed in the recent Annual Exchange of Information by Azerbaijan.

This aggressive behaviour clearly indicates that the Azerbaijani leadership is preparing for new large-scale aggressions, perceiving the absence of robust international condemnation as a *carte blanche* for its expansionist policy.

Dear colleagues,

Throughout the past few months, we have been updating you on the security and humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. And I would like to use this opportunity to draw your attention to the already unfolded humanitarian disaster that the Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh are currently facing, as a result of the around 8 months-long illegal blockade imposed by Azerbaijan in blatant violation of its obligations under the November 9, 2020 Trilateral statement and the legally binding orders of the ICJ. As you are well aware, since June 15, Azerbaijan fully sealed the Lachin Corridor by banning any humanitarian supply to Nagorno-Karabakh including by the ICRC, which is the result of the absence of time-bound and measurable steps by the international community as well. As a result, 120 000 people are trapped in a complete siege by the Azerbaijani armed forces, amounting to collective punishment - a gross violation of international law.

Along with violation of the fundamental right of free movement, Azerbaijan continues to weaponize food, medical and energy supply, targets and intimidates the civilian population conducting livelihood or agricultural works which is in line with its long-standing coordinated, systematic and consistent policy: i.e. through creating unbearable living conditions for the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part or to subject them to forced displacement, thus achieving its final goal of complete ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Dear colleagues,

While I am delivering my speech, the disastrous situation is worsening with each passing hour, driving people to the verge of hunger and starvation. Supply of essential products to the shops is no longer possible because of the lack of fuel in the country. Due to severe malnutrition, cases of miscarriages have tripled among pregnant women in Artsakh, children's diseases have increased in numbers. Even emergency transportation of patients to local hospitals is no longer possible.

Here I would like to bring to your attention the alerting press-release by the ICRC, published yesterday: "The civilian population is now facing a lack of life-saving medication and essentials like hygiene products and baby formula .... Fruits, vegetables, and bread are increasingly scarce and costly, while some other food items such as dairy products, sunflower oil, cereal, fish, and chicken are not available. The last time the ICRC was allowed to bring medical items and essential food items into the area was several weeks ago...Our humanitarian aid convoys are a lifeline for the population in this area. With these convoys blocked, our concern is that the humanitarian situation will further deteriorate."

Madam Chair,  
Dear colleagues,

In fact, what the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are facing now is ethnic cleansing in the making, right before the eyes of the international community, including the OSCE. We cannot afford another tragedy; decisive actions are urgently needed to prevent another humanitarian catastrophe in the OSCE area.

Therefore, we once again reiterate that sending an international fact-finding mission to the Lachin Corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh, and insuring unhindered humanitarian access to Nagorno-Karabakh for relevant UN bodies, are imperative, in order to prevent the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) of its native Armenian people and their eventual extermination.

In closing, I would like to once again express our gratitude to the Bulgarian Chairpersonship, for the effective cooperation in the past challenging trimester. We also look forward to working with the incoming Canadian chairpersonship.