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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**of the Delegation of Armenia at the 1060th Meeting
of the Forum for Security Co-operation
Security Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security**

25 October 2023

First of all, I would like to commend the Canadian Chairpersonship for their commitment to advance the Woman, Peace and Security agenda as a topic of key importance and thank the distinguished Speakers for their presentations.

Peace and security related efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflicts, the delivery of relief and recovery efforts, as well as in contributing to the lasting and durable settlements. It is particularly important to ensure protection of the rights of women, and girls from gender-based violence during armed conflicts and in conflict-affected areas.

The Government of Armenia remains committed to further advancing the Women, peace and security agenda. It should be noted that in Armenia women have a significant representation in the Government, Parliament as well as at the municipal level. Women make up around 52% of Armenia's Foreign Ministry apparatus, and play a vital role in promoting our national interests, leading and inspiring us in our responsible mission.

Madam Chair,

The Government of Armenia remains committed to further advancing the Women, peace and security agenda. Armenia has translated its WPS policy commitments into adopting two National Action Plans. The second National Action Plan developed by Armenia on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for the period of 2022-2024, envisages coherent and coordinated policies for empowerment of women and enhancing their role in various spheres of public life, including in the security sector governance and reform.

Dear colleagues,

We are convinced that the discussions on the effective implementation of the commitments under the Resolution 1325 should not be limited to reference to the progress and achievements, but highlight threats and challenges as well, as cases of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of women, including female service members, POWs and civilians continue to occur in many conflict zones. In this vein today's discussion has a particular

relevance against the backdrop of the security threats and massive use of force in the South Caucasus region during the last years.

The UNSC Resolution 1325 recognizes that women and children constitute the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflicts and calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict.

In utter disregard of those obligations, the armed forces of Azerbaijan, during the aggressions in 2016 and 2020 against Nagorno-Karabakh and in 2022 against the sovereign territories of Armenia committed egregious violations of IHL both against civilians and military personnel, including women. And I would like to bring to your attention just a few examples:

In 2016, in the village of Talish, Nagorno-Karabakh, the Azerbaijani soldiers brutally murdered 2 elderly female members of an Armenian family and mutilated their bodies. In 2020, after the end of hostilities during the search operations in the occupied region of Hadrut, Nina Davityan and Yelena Hakobyan, 83-year-old and 68-year-old female residents were found decapitated in their houses. As a result of the 44-day war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, a total of 80 civilians were killed, including 12 women.

Moreover, during the military aggression against Armenia in 2022, the Azerbaijani armed forces brutally abused, desecrated and dismembered the bodies of several Armenian female soldiers who died defending their homeland,

Dear colleagues,

The Resolution 1325 also emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls.

As of today, none of the perpetrators of the mentioned abhorrent crimes was brought to justice, nor were they condemned by the Azerbaijani authorities. Instead, rewarding the culprits became the regular practice of the leadership of Azerbaijan.

Madam Chair,

The lack of a proper and adequate reaction of the international community to the illegal use of force by Azerbaijan, including the strong condemnation of war crimes and other gross violations of IHL, largely contributed to the creation of an atmosphere of impunity and served as an incitement to the recurrence of such crimes.

Thus, on September 19 and 20 of this year, the peaceful population of Nagorno-Karabakh had to face another wave of violence, atrocities and war crimes. After the 9 months long illegal blockade of 120 000 people, accompanied by deliberate disruption of supplies of gas, electricity and essential lifesaving products, Azerbaijani armed forces launched another war of aggression, inflicting an appalling and unacceptable toll on the civilian population, including women and children.

Peaceful cities and villages were deliberately targeted, with the use of cluster munitions and heavy artillery, resulting in death and injuries among civilians. In one village alone,

Sarnaghbyur, 5 civilians, including 1 female resident, Gohar Grigoryan, and 3 children, Davit Aleksanyan, Nver Poghosyan and Michael Poghosyan were killed.

At least fourteen dead bodies, transferred to Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh, four of them of children aged twelve and younger, and one of a female, had signs of torture.

This is the true face of Azerbaijan and the state of its compliance with the UNSC resolution 1325 commitments, to juxtapose to the desperate attempts to mislead the international community and cover up its well-documented internationally wrongful acts and the regular ungrounded allegations against my country, that we had to hear today.

Distinguished colleagues,

The latest war of aggression of Azerbaijan resulted in complete ethnic cleansing of the entire territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. After 9 months of blockade, Azerbaijan opened the Lachin Corridor solely for the expulsion of the Armenian population from its ancestral homeland.

The forcibly displaced people of Nagorno-Karabakh, including 60 000 women and 30 000 children who have endured extreme psychological trauma and distress, found refuge in Armenia and have to start from scratch as they fled to Armenia with just basic necessities, and are in extreme need of aid and support. In this regard, the international community, including specialized organizations, have a crucial role to play, to address the basic needs and ensure stable living conditions for the displaced Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh. We thank those participating states and other organizations and international partners, who have provided assistance.

Thank you.