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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT
on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
as delivered by the Delegation of Armenia
at the 1400th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
24 November, 2022

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, let me join others in emphasizing the importance of observing the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which should not be limited to mere celebration, but also be seen as an occasion to take stock of the accomplishments and the challenges ahead when it comes to creation of equal opportunities for and empowerment of women.

That being said, latest years have been particularly challenging globally. Obviously, it has not been marked by outstanding achievements in promotion of human rights, including the rights of women. On the contrary, unprecedented circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as lockdowns, have created new types of challenges that disproportionately affected women and girls, undermining their rights and limiting their livelihoods.

Dear colleagues,

The devastating consequences of the 44-day war unleashed by Azerbaijan with the involvement foreign terrorist fighters, have created new challenges for Armenian women and girls, and particularly exacerbated the plight of those living in conflict-affected areas.

During this violent wars of 2016 and 2020 as well as during the recent aggression of Azerbaijan against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia, a number of Armenian women, not only civilians but also members of military personnel, were brutally and arbitrarily killed. There have also been cases of torture and mutilation of the bodies of killed women. Among killed civilian women were Nina Davityan and Elena Hakobyan, 83-year-old and 68-year-old residents of the Hadrut region of Artsakh, who were found beheaded in their homes.

During the September aggression, the Azerbaijani armed forces brutally killed and mutilated the bodies of several Armenian female soldiers who died defending their homeland. I would like to bring to your attention just one specific episode of the horrifying war crimes committed by the armed forces of Azerbaijan during the recent aggression against Armenia. In particular, I want to draw your attention to the case of Ms. Susana Margaryan, whose desecrated and dismembered body was put on display through social networks. The perpetrators left a message reading “Yashma” (the code name for the Azerbaijani special forces) on her naked body. In addition, her hands were placed above the head, a severed finger stuck out of her mouth; one of her eyes was closed, while the other had a reverted eyeball placed on her closed eyelid. This despicable barbarity has not been properly condemned.

Mr Chairman,

The Women, Peace and Security agenda and the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, which represents a milestone in the struggle for the fundamental human rights of women, are also among the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. We believe that the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all spheres of public life, including the defence sector, are key prerequisites for sustainable development and, in particular, for sustainable and lasting peace.

It is with this understanding that Armenia has developed a solid legal framework and has taken concrete measures aimed at increasing the full participation of women in the security sector, including in the armed forces, promoting their political participation and economic empowerment. The Republic of Armenia has developed the Second National Action Plan for 2022 – 2024 in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, thereby reaffirming the country’s commitment to continue work on Women, Peace and Security issues. The Plan builds on the analysis of the previous National Action Plan and takes into account achievements and lessons learned. As a country at the forefront of the fight against mass atrocities, Armenia gives high priority to the role of women and girls in the context of genocide prevention in its NAP.

In Resolution 1325, the United Nations recognised that women and children constitute the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and are increasingly being targeted. Thus, the Second National Action Plan of Armenia also reflects the issues and challenges faced by women in the border regions of Armenia and in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) as a result of the hostilities unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh in autumn 2020. The Plan has been developed on the principle of inclusive participation, in particular, with the involvement of non-governmental organisations and women affected by the war, including those displaced from Artsakh.

In closing, let me reiterate that the issue of the elimination of violence against women remains high on the agenda of the Armenian Government.

Thank you.