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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Statement

**of the Delegation of Armenia at the 1048th Meeting
of the Forum for Security Co-operation
Security Dialogue on OSCE Code of Conduct on
Politico-Military Aspects of Security**

7 June 2023

Madam Chair,

The Delegation of Armenia commends the FSC Chairmanship of Bulgaria for holding this Security Dialogue on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. We also join our colleagues in thanking the distinguished speakers for their insightful contributions.

Full, faithful and effective implementation of the principles of International Humanitarian Law as enshrined in the Code of Conduct, is of particular importance, against the backdrop of the current security crisis in Europe, preeminently large-scale use of force including with the involvement of foreign terrorist fighters as mercenaries in armed conflicts within the OSCE area, accompanied by mass violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

This being said, I would like to draw your attention to the violations of some of the key provisions of the Code of Conduct that occurred during the recent years and continue to be the major security threats that we face in the South Caucasus region.

Under Paragraph 4 of the Code of Conduct participating States reaffirmed their respect for each other's sovereign equality and individuality, the rights inherent in and encompassed by its sovereignty, as well as took the commitment to refrain from using armed forces to limit the peaceful and lawful exercise of individual and collective human rights.

In blatant violations of these basic principles, which are in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, on September 27, 2020, Azerbaijan, in its deliberate policy to suppress the right of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) to live freely and safely in their historical homeland, launched a large-scale aggression. The 44-day war of aggression was accompanied with numerous egregious violations of IHL, as reported and documented by various human rights institutions, such as deliberate targeting of the civilian population and critical civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals,

cultural and religious monuments and massive force displacement of around 90 000 civilian population with disproportionate impact on women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities. As a result of the indiscriminate targeting of residential areas with multiple missile salvos, including with the use of high-precision weapons such as Lora ballistic missiles and internationally prohibited cluster and white phosphorus munitions, a total of 81 civilians, including 12 women were killed in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). There is ample evidence of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions of both civilians and servicemen that were taken hostage by the Azerbaijani armed forces.

Encouraged by the absence of adequate response from the international community, in September 2022 Azerbaijan launched another unjustified aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia, during which the Azerbaijani armed forces committed numerous heinous atrocities and mass violations of the IHL both against the Armenian servicemen and civilians, including desecration and mutilation of dead bodies and extrajudicial killings, subjecting the Armenian military personnel, including women to the most shocking and horrific humiliation and torture, targeting of densely populated residential areas and civilian critical infrastructure. This aggression resulted in occupation of around 150 square km of sovereign territory of Armenia and hundreds of casualties, including among civilians.

Contrary to the responsibilities laid out by the Code of Conduct to ensure that armed forces act in accordance with international humanitarian law, the rules, conventions and obligations governing armed conflict, and ensure accountability for their actions, to this day, no single member of the Azerbaijani armed forces, who committed war crimes, has been held accountable by the authorities of Azerbaijan, despite the latter's declarations that criminal charges have been brought against the perpetrators.

Azerbaijan has also failed to address the humanitarian consequences of its aggression, in line with the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, and the Trilateral Statement of 9 November 2020, for around 3 years continues to illegally detain at least 33 Armenian POWs and civilians, subjecting them to torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, as well as staging mock-trials, which are gross violations of the IHL.

Moreover, on May of 26 this year Azerbaijani armed forces abducted 2 Armenian servicemen from the sovereign territory of Armenia, who were on their way to supply food to the combat positions of the Armenian Armed forces. As was further revealed by the President of Azerbaijan, this was an ordered and preplanned act, with an attempt to deviate from its own obligations and to unreasonably equate this unlawful act with the case of Azerbaijani servicemen, who penetrated into the Armenian territory in early April of this year and were apprehended by the local residents in the villages located around 20 km from the border, one of whom, as the subsequent investigations revealed, had deliberately killed the guard of the local copper mining company in the Syunik Province of Armenia.

Dear colleagues,

Under the Code of Conduct, the participating States have committed to the maintenance of peace to the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Despite this, since December 12 2022, Azerbaijan has imposed a blockade on Nagorno-Karabakh in a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and the order of the International Court of Justice of 22 February 2023, obliging Azerbaijan to ensure the free movement of people, goods and

vehicles along the Lachin Corridor, connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia and the rest of the world. For 6 months now, a population of 120.000, including 30000 children continue to suffer from critical shortage of essential goods, including food and medical supplies. The humanitarian situation is further exacerbated by complete disruption of gas and electricity supplies, deterioration of critical infrastructure, as well as regular targeting of civilians conducting agricultural activities.

Madam Chair,

We have stressed this many times that the clear and overt purpose of the blockade of the Lachin Corridor is fully in line with and part and parcel of Azerbaijan's long-standing coordinated, systematic and consistent policy of ethnic cleansing, through creating unbearable living conditions for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part or to achieve its forced displacement, which is a crime, punishable under international law.

All these unlawful actions on the ground accompanied with decades-long policy of promoting anti-Armenian hatred and xenophobia, clearly indicate the genocidal intent of Azerbaijan, with a final goal of the total ethnic cleansing of the indigenous population of Nagorno-Karabakh. This is exactly why Azerbaijan deliberately hinders the international presence on the ground.

Therefore, we once again 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, as well as to ensure dignity, physical security and fundamental human rights of people, in line with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Thank you.