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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Note verbale dated 12 February 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva hereby transmits the remarks of the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Ara Aivazian, on the Nagorno-Karabakh war and its consequences, delivered at the meeting of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Armenia kindly requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to circulate the present note verbale and the annex thereto* as a document of the Human Rights Council, under agenda item 4.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.



Annex to the note verbale dated 12 February 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Remarks by Foreign Minister Ara Aivazian dated 14 January 2021 at the meeting of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly

Dear colleagues, Members of Parliament,

I attach great importance to regular contacts with the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly, particularly to analyze and discuss the situation unfolded in the aftermath of November 9, as well as to exchange views on the challenges and opportunities we face in this new reality.

Dear Colleagues, in order to halt the 44-day Azerbaijani-Turkish aggression against the people of Artsakh, Armenia signed the trilateral statement of November 9, as a result of which a ceasefire was established and the peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation were deployed in Artsakh.

The last serious violation of the ceasefire took place yesterday, as a result of which a serviceman of the Defense Army of Artsakh was wounded. The Defense Army and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Artsakh issued statements in this regard, strongly condemning the provocative actions of the Azerbaijani side. We fully share the assessment in these statements, as a party that signed the trilateral statement we are deeply concerned about Azerbaijan's continuing violations of key provisions of this statement.

These violations first of all concern the provisions 1-8 of the statement, according to which the parties must remain in their positions, cease the fire completely and return the prisoners of war and captured civilians.

In some cases, these violations were interrelated, such as the attack by the Azerbaijani armed forces on the villages of Khtsaberd and Hin Tagher in Hadrut region as a result of which 64 servicemen have been captured.

Fabrication of false accusations against the Armenian servicemen and initiation of criminal cases violates not only the trilateral statement, but also the Geneva Conventions.

These actions do not contribute to confidence-building efforts in the region, as the most important guarantee for the trust-building is the fulfillment of commitments, but not the capture of civilians and continuation of the policy of Armenophobia.

Armenia pursues the aim of returning the prisoners of war at the highest level, which was stated by the Prime Minister of Armenia during the trilateral meeting on January 11.

Armenia will continue its efforts to return all prisoners of war and captured civilians, and will clarify the fate of all the missing persons. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperates with international partners, coordinating its steps with other relevant bodies. Being a part of the trilateral statement of January 11, Armenia clearly stated about the readiness to undertake steps towards the mutually beneficial use of the economic and infrastructure potential of our region. However, in order to reach success, we need mutual trust.

Dear colleagues,

The situation in the region is a consequence of the use of force. No conflict has been settled by force so far. The use of force may lead to a new stage in the conflict, but it cannot resolve the conflict.

Only a negotiated political settlement which would respect the rights of all, will pave the way for eliminating the causes and consequences of the war, and bringing lasting peace to the South Caucasus.

The settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is based on the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination. Armenia will continue to defend the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination and security.

Armenia is ready to continue the process of peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, based on the part of the fundamental principles and elements, which was not addressed in the statement of November 9.

One of the priorities of the Armenian sides is the de-occupation of the territories of Artsakh, ensuring relevant conditions for the safe return of the Armenians of Artsakh to their places of residence displaced from those territories.

The preservation of many Armenian historical-cultural and religious monuments under the Azerbaijani control should be an important part of the peace process, taking into account the numerous facts of systematic destruction of the Armenian cultural and religious heritage. So far, any move by the international community to protect cultural and religious heritage has faced Azerbaijan's resistance, which has barred international professional bodies, most notably UNESCO, from entering the region, about which the organization made a statement.

The misappropriation or distortion of the history and values of the Armenian people, the violation of the current rights of the Armenian people cannot lead to a good future for our region. From this perspective, the preservation of religious sanctuaries of cultural heritage can create preconditions for reconciliation in the region.

Addressing the humanitarian situation in Artsakh is one of our current priorities, with the direct involvement of our international partners, in particular the UN.

At this stage, the cooperation between Armenia and Artsakh is of crucial importance. I recently visited Artsakh and had discussions with the leadership of Artsakh about our common pan-Armenian agenda. I think we should more closely combine and coordinate our work with Artsakh at the parliamentary level as well, including to make the voice of the Armenian people more audible in various international parliamentary platforms.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you once again for initiating this discussion. I will gladly listen to your observations and approaches, as well as answer all your questions.

Thank you.
