



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 4

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

### **Note verbale dated 11 June 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 a statement made by the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Ara Aivazian, at the 131st session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (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.

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



**Annex to the note verbale dated 11 June 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**

**Statement of the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ara Aivazian dated 21 May 2021 at the 131st Session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**

Mr. President, dear Minister Maas,

Germany held the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers in challenging times, not least due to the continuing and crippling pandemic. I join the previous speakers in appreciating the efforts made by your country to confront these challenges.

Mr. President,

We welcome the Strategic Framework prepared by the Secretary General, which is a solid foundation for a longer-term vision and continued reforms of the organization. We would also like to thank the Secretary General for her Annual Report, rightly assessing the state of democratic security in Europe.

Secondly, Mr. President, this year marks the 20th Anniversary of Armenia's membership to the Council of Europe. Throughout these years the Council of Europe has contributed to the democratic consolidation in Armenia, and it continues to do so. We remain committed to the ideals and values of the Council of Europe with strong ownership.

But on the other hand, we see degradation and the moral defeat of these values in a larger context of European democratic security.

Last year Azerbaijan waged a bloody war against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh). The war was accompanied with massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. These transgressions are well documented not only in Armenian sources, but also internationally: by organizations such as Amnesty, the Human Rights Watch and Freedom House. Our own European Court of Human Rights indicated interim measures to Azerbaijan with relation to hundreds of persons confirmed to be captured by that country, requesting information about them, but not receiving any. The Court went to the length of publicly notifying the Committee of Ministers that Azerbaijan is not cooperating. Last PACE plenary expressed its grave concern as well. By refusing to hand over the remaining prisoners of war Azerbaijan continues violating international human rights law and international humanitarian law to this very day.

We see an important role for the Council of Europe in addressing the devastating humanitarian consequences of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh including displacement, destruction of cultural and religious sites and continued captivity of hundreds of prisoners of war and civilians. We believe that our Committee should bolster its efforts in this respect, also by providing its full support to the Court, Parliamentary Assembly, Commissioner for Human Rights and other relevant bodies. So far, the response of the Committee to Azerbaijan's obvious violations of its statutory and conventional obligations has not been adequate.

Lack of strong response to massive and grave human rights violations in Nagorno-Karabakh further emboldened Azerbaijan to project the same policy towards Republic of Armenia by making attempts to seize borderline territories and deprive the local population of their livelihood.

Mr. President,

The Council of Europe was established with the aim of achieving greater unity among its Member States. And the Council has been successful in bringing almost the entirety of Europe under one roof and in devising legal standards guiding many aspects of the cooperation between its Member States. Yet, there is a great divide between some of our

Member States. And while the perpetrators of atrocious crimes are allowed to be on equal footing with those who still believe in the values of democracy and human rights, this divide is only going to widen. Unless we reinvigorate our efforts in ensuring democratic security throughout Europe, and particularly for those living in areas of conflicts and confrontations, our overarching goal of greater unity in Europe would remain illusory.

Thank you.

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