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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Note verbale dated 6 September 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 answer of the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia to the question on the implementation of the fact-finding mission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Nagorno-Karabakh (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 Human Rights Council under agenda item 4.

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



Annex to the note verbale dated 6 September 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

Answer of Mr. Vahan Hunanyan, the MFA Spokesperson, dated 25 August 2021 to the question of "RFE/RL" on the implementation of the fact-finding mission of UNESCO in Nagorno-Karabakh

Question: President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has stated that Armenia is against the visit of the UNESCO fact-finding mission to Nagorno-Karabakh. How would you comment on that?

Answer. It should be noted that the need for immediate implementation of the UNESCO fact-finding mission has occurred for the protection of the Armenian cultural and religious heritage from the imminent danger of destruction in the territories fallen under the control of Azerbaijan as a result of the 44-days war of 2020.

Both during the military hostilities and after the establishment of ceasefire, there have been numerous documented facts of deliberate destruction of the Armenian churches and other cultural and religious monuments, as well as cases of vandalism by the Azerbaijani armed forces. Moreover, along with the physical destruction of Artsakh's religious and cultural heritage, we observe unacceptable cases of falsification of historical facts, distortion of the identity of Armenian monuments, and changing of the architectural appearance by the order of the top leadership of Azerbaijan.

Perhaps, in order to conceal its cultural crimes, for a long time Azerbaijan has been hindering the visit of UNESCO experts, while accusing the organization of bias. The practice of creating obstacles for the implementation of the mission and politicizing the issue by the Azerbaijani authorities still continues. We would also like to remind that in December, 2020, the Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO stated that Azerbaijan was not agreeing on the dispatch of the mission.

It should be noted that Armenia has welcomed the UNESCO fact-finding mission and is ready to support its implementation as soon as possible, in line with the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two protocols.

The endangered cultural and religious heritage of Artsakh requires urgent international attention in order to properly preserve it and prevent the cases of vandalism. The implementation of UNESCO mission and the comprehensive study of historical and cultural heritage will contribute to the efforts of preserving the cultural heritage in the territories under Azerbaijani control and preventing possible negative developments.

The Armenian side is interested in the implementation of the mission in the shortest possible time and continues to exert purposeful efforts in this regard.
