

**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
12<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of Parties  
to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime  
(14-18 October 2024)**

**Agenda item 1(f): General Discussion**

**Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, for your election to lead the 12th session of the Conference of Parties to the UNTOC.

We also thank the UNODC Secretariat for their efforts in organizing this event.

Transnational organized crime poses significant challenges to both security and development worldwide.

The transnational threats and challenges posed by terrorism, violent extremism, separatism, radicalization, cybercrime, trafficking in human beings, weapons, cultural property and other goods, illegal exploitation and trafficking of natural resources and various other types of transnational organized crimes complicate national and global security environments.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime highlights the interconnectedness of transnational organized criminal activities with various other threats, such as corruption, illicit financial networks, as well as money laundering. This recognition emphasizes the need for comprehensive and coordinated responses to tackle these issues effectively.

**Mr. President,**

Azerbaijan restored its previously infringed sovereignty and territorial integrity as a result of the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020 and anti-terror measures of September 2023.

Unfortunately, for nearly three decades, we have witnessed a total disregard for norms and principles of international law, including international conventions and treaties, when my country faced military aggression and occupation of its territories. Along with gross violations of international humanitarian law, the formerly occupied territories of Azerbaijan were turned into a lawless “grey

zone” creating a conducive environment for transnational organized criminal groups to engage in various prohibited activities, with the aim of sustaining violence and instability and consolidation of the occupation. The staggering number of weapons destroyed or seized in the course of the 44-day war and following Azerbaijan’s counter-terror measures have revealed the shocking scale of militarization and illegal activities in the territories of Azerbaijan and provided additional evidence to blatant violations of rules of international law.

The monitoring conducted by national authorities, following the end of conflict, revealed that almost all major historical and cultural monuments located in the liberated territories were destroyed or subjected to acts of theft and various forms of vandalism.

Azerbaijan has restored border control along these areas to ensure that these territories are no longer used for illegal purposes, including for financing terrorism, illicit trafficking in weapons and other prohibited goods.

**Mr. President,**

The activities of the States in combating transnational organized crime should be guided by the normative framework developed by the United Nations, in particular the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, as well as relevant resolutions of the UNSC.

It is our firm belief that all Member States need to enhance cooperation in preventing and combating transnational organized crimes, especially by taking effective measures to fight against trafficking in cultural heritage and concrete actions to ensure the return of stolen cultural property to their legitimate owners in line with their international legal obligations, including those deriving from the UNTOC.

Azerbaijan is fully committed to the fight against transnational organized crimes and to international cooperation to this end and continues to take all necessary measures for effective implementation of UNTOC and its Protocols.

In closing, we reiterate our firm position on the importance of international cooperation, including through mutual assistance, extradition and cooperation between law enforcement and judicial agencies, to combat transnational, serious and organized crime.

Thank you.