



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
1388th Meeting (Special) of the Permanent Council,
13 September 2022**

*On “the escalation of military hostility
at the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan”*

Mr. Chairperson,

We reject all the allegations by the Delegation of Armenia against Azerbaijan in strongest possible terms. References by the Armenia’s delegation in its official communications and statements to localities within Azerbaijan under different fake names demonstrate Armenia’s persistent disregard for the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The assertion that Azerbaijan committed imaginary “aggression” is absurd not only because it does not withstand scrutiny of the real situation on the ground, but also because Azerbaijan is simply not interested in any tension and demonstrated that not only by words, but by deeds to consolidate peace. The chain of events and actions taken by both countries vividly demonstrate who stands for peace in the region and who is unhappy with the realities and wants to contest it at all cost.

In this regard, we draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the recent large-scale military provocations committed by the armed forces of Armenia in the directions of Dashkasan, Kalbajar and Lachin districts of the Azerbaijan-Armenia state border. Thus, on the night of 12-13 September, the sabotage groups of the Armenia’s armed forces using the complicated mountainous terrain of the area and existing valley gaps attempted to plant landmines at the supply roads and between the positions of the units of Azerbaijan’s armed forces. Furthermore, the armed forces of Armenia subjected to intensive fire the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan in these directions with different types of weapons, including mortars. This resulted in casualties among the military personnel of Azerbaijan, damage was inflicted on military infrastructure.

The armed forces of Azerbaijan took resolute and adequate measures to repel this provocation of Armenia, and military threats against Azerbaijan’s territory and sovereignty, as well as to ensure the safety of our military personnel and civilian workers involved in post-conflict reconstruction activities in the territory of Kalbajar and Lachin districts.

It must be emphasized that Azerbaijan’s armed forces did not target any civilian objects. As it was admitted by the Ministry of Health of Armenia, there were no casualties or injuries among civilians. Thus, the disseminated disinformation regarding alleged targeting of the civilian population, facilities, and infrastructure is far from the reality, to say the least. Countermeasures taken in response to Armenia's provocations were limited and targeted, aimed against legitimate military objects. They were executed with high precision and professionalism.

Taking into account the requests of our international partners, an agreement on ceasefire was reached, starting from 13 September, 9 a.m. Baku time. Azerbaijan expects that Armenia will adhere to this

agreement and will not escalate the situation by resorting to new provocations. On its part, Azerbaijan is committed to the reached agreement.

The large-scale military provocation by Armenia at the state border which happened last night is not an isolated incident. It is an element in the chain of military and political provocations committed by the Armenian side over the recent days with a view to derail and backtrack from the process of post-conflict normalization. It also fits well into the pattern of behaviour of Armenia aimed at escaping from the implementation of its commitments on the eve or immediately after the negotiations.

Thus, from 2 September onwards, after the fourth trilateral Brussels meeting between the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia mediated by the European Council President Charles Michel which took place on 31 August, the units of the armed forces of Armenia from their positions at the state border, using various caliber weapons, regularly subjected to fire the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan in the direction of the Kalbajar and Lachin districts of Azerbaijan.

In a similar vein, we recall that on 3 August Armenia resorted to military provocations in the direction of the Lachin district, about which we already informed the Permanent Council in detail at the meeting on 9 August. The purpose was obvious - on the one hand, to delay the withdrawal of remains of Armenia's illegally present armed forces and illegal armed detachments from the territory of Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily deployed, and on the other, to postpone the return to Azerbaijan of the city of Lachin, Zabukh and Sus villages, and relocation of illegal settlers from there. At the meeting of the Permanent Council on 1 September, we provided a detailed account of the return of these territories to Azerbaijan and complete restoration of Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the Lachin district, in line with trilateral statement of 10 November 2020, which represents a triumph of international law and justice, and fulfilment of fundamental OSCE principles and commitments.

We further inform the Permanent Council that in violation of the provisions of 10 November 2020 trilateral statement regarding the end of all military activities, as well as Armenia's other international obligations, Armenia continued intensive planting of mines in the territories of Azerbaijan. Thus, starting from 15 August, as a result of conducted search operations, more than 1300 pieces of anti-personnel mines were found, and this is only in the territory of the Lachin district. It was established that these mines were produced in Armenia in 2021 and were laid in the territory of Azerbaijan after the signing of the 10 November 2020 trilateral statement.

Along with indiscriminate deployment of landmines in the territory of Azerbaijan, Armenia, in violation of its obligations under customary international law, refuses to provide Azerbaijan with accurate maps of mines in all liberated territories which Armenia mined on a massive scale in the course of its aggression against Azerbaijan. We recall that after the signing of the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020, more than 240 persons were killed or injured due to explosion of mines. We also stress that 134, or 50% of these cases, were registered outside the areas for which Armenia submitted the mine maps so far.

We further remind the Permanent Council that Armenia is yet to fully withdraw the remains of its armed forces and illegal armed formations from the territory of Azerbaijan, where the Russian peacekeepers are temporarily deployed, as envisaged by Article 4 of the trilateral statement. Armenia delays this process under various pretexts. The fact of the presence of Armenia's armed forces and illegal Armenian armed detachments in the territory of Azerbaijan was acknowledged by the Armenian officials, including Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armenian armed forces Sahak Sahakyan and the Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan. Thus, Armenian officials openly admitted the violation by Armenia of its obligations under the trilateral statement and

international law. At the same time, despite this announcement, the withdrawal of Armenia's military personnel from the territories of Azerbaijan has not yet happened.

In the meantime, Armenia continued to demonstrably backtrack from the implementation of agreements reached between the two countries.

At the second meeting of the trilateral working group on opening of regional communications in the region which took place on 30 August in Moscow, Armenia attempted to escape from previous agreements by putting forward new elements. The aim was obvious - derailing the process altogether.

In the same vein, Armenia does not reciprocate on the proposal of Azerbaijan to establish inter-State relations based on the five principles grounded in international law that Azerbaijan presented to Armenian and that should serve as the basis for an inter-State peace treaty. In this regard, we remind that after the fourth trilateral Brussels meeting on 31 August, it was agreed to establish joint working group and step up the work to advance on the treaty on establishment of inter-State relations. Right after the Brussels meeting, Azerbaijan proposed to hold a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of two countries at the end of September. Yet Armenia left our proposal unanswered.

Quite on the contrary, three days after the Brussels meeting, at which an agreement was reached regarding the next steps in negotiations on normalization of relations between the two countries based on mutual recognition and respect to each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, the Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia resorted to a political provocation by illegally visiting the city of Khankendi of Azerbaijan. Moreover, after the Brussels meeting, Armenia's Prime Minister and Ministry of Foreign Affairs made provocative statements in regard with anniversary of so called "independence" of illegal regime in the territory of Azerbaijan. Thus, instead of engaging in good faith in the implementation of what has been agreed, Armenia chose to advance its territorial claims against Azerbaijan.

Similar attitude was demonstrated by Armenia at the bilateral meeting between Foreign Ministers of two countries held in Tbilisi on 16 July. Armenia left unanswered the proposal to establish respective working groups by two countries. Armenia even refused to agree on a short press statement regarding the meeting.

This is the overall context in the run-up to the military provocations of 13 September. It gives one a solid ground to understand that it was not Azerbaijan, but Armenia who was interested in the escalation of the situation in the region. Thus, all calls to de-escalate and return to negotiations must be addressed to this country.

We also would like to inform the Permanent Council that currently Azerbaijan implements large-scale investment projects, and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the proximity of the areas where the escalation of the last night took place. Military confrontation in these territories could put these projects under a direct threat and Azerbaijan cannot be interested in jeopardizing the rehabilitation of its territories after devastation inflicted on them in the course of Armenia's aggression.

In this context, we recall that the first group of Azerbaijani IDPs recently returned to newly reconstructed Agali village of Azerbaijan's liberated Zangilan district after almost three decades of occupation and denial of their basic human rights. Further to this, Azerbaijan is about to complete the construction of a new airport in Zangilan close to the state border with Armenia. In the coming days, it is planned to open the airport.

A few days ago, Azerbaijan, as a humanitarian gesture, handed over to Armenia five more Armenian servicemen detained in Azerbaijan. This step was taken by Azerbaijan as a good-will gesture in order to contribute to the normalization and peace process, as the handover took place bilaterally without the mediation of a third party. This is a manifestation of Azerbaijan's willingness to continue the normalization process in good faith.

The government of Azerbaijan takes continuous steps aimed at developing contacts and dialogue with local Armenian residents of Azerbaijan living in the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan. In the recent days, a positive dynamics was registered in this direction. Thus, during construction of the new road bypassing the city of Lachin there were contacts of Azerbaijani side with local Armenian residents of Azerbaijan. A large part of the construction process was carried out without observation of the temporarily deployed Russian peacekeeping contingent. Moreover, the direct contacts were established during the use of small hydro power stations and Sarsang water reservoir on the territory of Lachin district of Azerbaijan. This demonstrates the shrinking influence of Armenia on the ground in general, and in particular, on Armenian population of Azerbaijan, who wants to live in peace and stability. This also demonstrates, contrary to what we hear from Armenia, that direct people-to-people contacts and common activities between Azerbaijanis and Armenians living in Azerbaijan are possible and must be viewed also as an essential post-conflict normalization and confidence-building measure.

On its side, Armenia continuously tries to disrupt these positive processes and hinder the development of contacts and dialogue between Azerbaijan and local Armenian residents. This exposes the approach of Armenia towards its obligations and its indifference towards concerns and development of local Armenian residents of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chair,

Azerbaijan suffered from Armenia's aggression and occupation for the past thirty years before it restored its sovereignty and territorial integrity following the 44-day Patriotic War and the signing of 10 November 2020 trilateral statement, which put an end to the armed conflict. In the war of the early 1990s Azerbaijan lost more than 20,000 people, while during the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020 we lost around 3000 people. As a result of Armenia's aggression and occupation, around 1 million Azerbaijanis became refugees and IDPs. Our cities and villages have been completely devastated and razed to the ground, incalculable damage was inflicted by Armenia on the properties of Azerbaijanis and on Azerbaijan's cultural heritage, for which Armenia is yet has to pay reparations and offer assurances and guarantees of non-repetition.

By resorting to the latest large-scale military provocation at the state border, Armenia attempts to escape from implementing the obligations that it assumed and increase tensions instead. Armenia aims at dragging the third parties into the situation and expanding the geography of tensions for sustaining its revanchist attitudes. By using tensions, and political and military crises elsewhere, Armenia aims to derail the process of normalization of relations with Azerbaijan and regress into discussions of obsolete narratives and concepts based on the claims that it puts forward against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. This has no relation whatsoever to the new reality on the ground which came about with the resolution of the armed conflict and restoration of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Against this background, it is essential for the international community, including the OSCE, to resolutely condemn Armenia's actions, which run counter to international law and fundamental OSCE principles and commitments. The OSCE should refrain from indulging into Armenia's unacceptable behaviour premised on territorial claims towards other states, but send the right messages to Armenia and urge this country to focus on the implementation of its obligations instead of engaging in the acts

of politico-military adventurism and opportunism, which proved costly for this country on so many occasions before.

Armenia should soberly assess the new realities, and instead of repeating its worn-out accusations and allegations, should reciprocate on the constructive offer of Azerbaijan and seize the historic window of opportunity to normalize its relations with Azerbaijan and other neighbouring countries and engage in post-conflict peace-building efforts based on the five principles proposed by Azerbaijan.

We stress that on its part Azerbaijan will continue undertaking post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and peace-building efforts and implementing commitments stemming from the trilateral statements. We will resolutely prevent any destructive steps against this process. We urge Armenia, if this country is genuinely interested in peace and stability in the region, to abandon its attempts aimed at undermining the process of post-conflict normalization and ensure that necessary further steps are taken in this direction. This has no alternative for long-term peace and stability in the region.

In closing, we stress once again that the armed forces of Azerbaijan will continue taking appropriate resolute measures in order to repel any provocations by Armenia and ensure the protection of Azerbaijan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of its internationally recognized borders.

I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.