



**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
1440<sup>th</sup> (Special) Meeting of the Permanent Council  
20 September 2023**

*In response to the Delegation of Armenia*

Mr. Chair,

First, the Delegation of Azerbaijan deplores continued attempts by Armenia to exploit the OSCE in its campaign to mislead the international community. Such a reckless abuse of the Permanent Council and the OSCE Rules of Procedures for already third time is utterly inadmissible, a serious blow to the authority and reputation of this Organization, and must be resolutely rejected. We also resolutely reject the tone and content of the statement delivered by the Delegation of Armenia utterly disrespectful of the leadership of Azerbaijan and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country. There are certain rules of behavior and established practice in this Council, which includes respectful attitude towards our leadership. No matter how bitter is the sorrow of defeat, the Armenian Delegation should respect these rules of behavior. I will not stoop down to the level of the Armenian delegation and comment on Pashinyan and his regime, otherwise it will take the whole another special meeting of the Permanent Council.

Second, given the speculations of Armenia related to the local counter-terror measures taken by the armed forces of Azerbaijan within its sovereign territory in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, the Delegation of Azerbaijan would like to bring to the attention of the Permanent Council the following.

What Armenia tries to present to the international community as an attack on “peaceful” residents of the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan, were in fact local counter-terror measures by the armed forces of Azerbaijan taken fully in line with its rights under the UN Charter to disarm the Armenian armed formations illegally stationed in the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan.

Armenia’s attempts to accuse Azerbaijan of violating the Trilateral Statement of 10 November 2020 of the leaders of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Armenia is equally baseless and false.

On the contrary, it is Armenia that blatantly disregarded its commitment under the very same document with respect to withdrawal of its forces from the territory of Azerbaijan. Throughout the past three years since the signing of this statement, Armenia kept more than ten thousand-strong armed formations equipped with such heavy weaponry as tanks and other armoured vehicles, artillery pieces, multiple rocket launchers, mortars, electromagnetic warfare equipment and other types of offensive arms in the territory of Azerbaijan. The use of electromagnetic warfare equipment illegally deployed in the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan is of particular concern. Not only civilian aircrafts of the Azerbaijani Airlines, but also those of foreign countries have been target of radio-electronic interference for the last several months, posing serious risk and threat for their safety and security of

people and air traffic. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and Russian peacekeeping contingent were informed on such threatening actions.

These illegal armed forces were sustained through direct military-technical, logistical and financial support by Armenia, including by abusing the Lachin road, in an attempt to resuscitate separatism in the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan for the purposes of its revanchist policy.

This illegal military build-up became even more intensive over past months in parallel to Armenia's world-wide smear campaign against Azerbaijan built upon fabricated accusations of a so-called "blockade" and "humanitarian crisis".

This smear campaign essentially collapsed on 18 September 2023, in view of eventual implementation of Azerbaijan's offer of using multiple routes for delivery of goods to meet the needs of ethnic Armenian residents of the Garabagh Economic Region of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has been warning about the looming military adventure by Armenia for several weeks in light of intensified military engineering works and concentration of forces.

Following active diplomatic efforts by several international actors, including the members of the Security Council, simultaneous delivery of humanitarian goods through Aghdam and Lachin was finally conducted by the International Committee of the Red Cross after weeks of artificial delay caused by illegitimate obstructions by Armenia and its subordinate puppet regime.

Having failed to impose its fabricated narrative on the international community through the so-called "humanitarian agenda", Armenia resorted to military provocation the following day, 19 September 2023, to provoke a retaliation by the Azerbaijani side in order to continue its groundless blame game against Azerbaijan.

Thus, as a result of explosion of mines planted by Armenian sabotage group on the Fuzuli-Ahmadbeyli-Shusha road, 2 civilian road constructors tragically lost their lives. 4 police officers also fell victim to another mine explosion in close vicinity of the same area while attempting to inspect the mine incident site. These mine explosions also led to serious wounding of 6 more Azerbaijani police officers. The fact that the area where these mine explosions took place has been under regular use by Azerbaijan before leaves no room for doubt that these mines were recently planted by the Armenian sabotage group infiltrated into the area.

It should be noted that since August of 2022, a total of 2,728 landmines manufactured in Armenia in 2021, that is after the 2020 Trilateral Statement, were detected and neutralized, out of which 1,119 landmines were neutralized in the Kalbajar and Lachin districts along the border area between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Some 1,609 landmines were detected in the territory of the Garabagh Economic Region. Since the signing of the trilateral statement in November 2020, 314 individuals have fallen victim to landmines.

Terrorist attack on 19 September was not an isolated incident. The past days have witnessed even more intensified military provocations, accompanied by increased military build-up, both along the undelimited border between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and in the Garabagh region. We have also registered reinforcement of battle positions with military personnel, armored vehicles, artillery pieces and other firepower, bringing units to high level of combat readiness, creation of additional mobilization units, expansion of reconnaissance activities against units of the Azerbaijan's Armed Forces, as well as incursion into the positions of our armed forces to carry our reconnaissance-

subversion acts by planting new landmines across already demined areas and the roads used for civilian purposes.

Systematic shelling of positions of the Azerbaijan's Armed Forces by the armed formations of Armenia using weapons of different calibers, continued mining of our territories, fortification of battle positions, as well as an increase in the number of trenches and military shelters in the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan in the past few months have further escalated the tensions.

Despite its earlier statement regarding Armenia's recognition of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan that includes the Garabagh region, the Prime Minister of Armenia took yet another extremely provocative step by issuing a so-called "congratulatory message" on the occasion of the so-called "anniversary" of the establishment of the illegal puppet structure in the territory of Azerbaijan.

Armenia's Prime Minister once again referred to the so-called "right to self-determination of Armenian residents" and confirmed that Armenia would continue to intervene in matters related to these residents under the pretext of their security and rights. Armenian Prime Minister's message is nothing other than yet another confirmation that Armenia has not abandoned territorial claims against Azerbaijan, it has no intention to stop fueling separatism in our territory by all available means, including by providing political, military and financial support. The illegal activity under the false pretext of so-called "elections" of the so-called "president" by the puppet regime created as a result of the occupation by Armenia of the territories of Azerbaijan was another extremely provocative step and made it absolutely clear that by these actions Armenia aimed at nullifying its previous statements on the recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and demonstrated that this country is not engaging in negotiations on peace treaty in good faith.

All our calls to exert pressure on Armenia by international community to stop these illegal activities were neglected and no action was taken to address Azerbaijan's legitimate and fact-based concerns. All above-mentioned attests to Armenia's systematic policy aimed at undermining the normalization process and efforts of the international community to take this process forward. We drew the attention of the Permanent Council that the peace process is at the critical juncture. We called on States to address the risks and threats posed by Armenia's irresponsible and destructive behavior. We called on the international community and OSCE participating States to take necessary urgent measures to urge Armenia to reverse its dangerous path. We demanded that Armenia actions, which undermine the peace process, must be condemned by the international community and additional efforts must be taken to enforce Armenia to peace and to keep it within the logic of normalization process. What we have heard in response?! Nothing. Deafening silence.

Those States who said that there was no military solution did not say this in response to the unlawful military activities by the Armenian armed forces illegally stationed in the territory of Azerbaijan. Even today, we have not heard targeted condemnation of planting of new landmines by Armenian forces that led to tragic incident yesterday. In accordance with article 9 of the trilateral statement of November 2020, Armenia was supposed to guarantee the security of transport connections between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to arrange unimpeded, I repeat, unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo in both directions. We have not heard calls to Armenia by participating States to implement this provision, which it refuses to implement to date.

Azerbaijan's commitment to the peace process is strong and has been proven through consistent steps we have been taking since November 2020. Azerbaijan is interested in finding a solution and has proved it in its sincere engagement with international actors, which offered their good offices and

mediation services. In all instances, without exception, the Armenian side violated previously reached agreements under different pretexts. The true reason is one and the same: to prolong the situation, artificially ignite tension and ultimately derail the normalization process.

Armenia and the junta it continues to maintain in the sovereign territories of Azerbaijan through all possible ideological, political, military, financial and other means, must face a unified and clear stance by international community that relying on old tactic of winning time has no chance to yield an outcome they desire.

The lack of adequate targeted reaction of the international community, including by the OSCE participating States, to irresponsible, warmongering statements and aggressive actions by Armenia, only contributed to this country's sense of impunity and permissiveness that led to more military and political provocations.

Newly laid landmine explosion incident on 19 September clearly demonstrated that Armenia has been waging hybrid warfare against Azerbaijan since November 2020. These latest actions can only be qualified as terrorist acts aimed at inflicting maximum damage to public property, killing and maiming civilians and pursues the obvious goal to prevent reconstruction and rehabilitation of the liberated territories and to prevent dignified return of former Azerbaijani IDPs to their homes and properties.

It demonstrated once again that revanchist attitude is still prevailing in Armenia in the post-conflict period, undermining the prospects for consolidating peace and stability in the region. The mine terror against Azerbaijan must stop. There can be no gray zones in Azerbaijan, where armed warlords are in charge.

The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is as important as that of any other country. And consequently, Azerbaijan is as entitled as any other country in the world to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to protect its civilians by all means safeguarded under international law.

In response to Armenian armed formations' subversive acts inflicting civilian and military casualties, the armed forces of Azerbaijan on 19 September launched local counter-terrorism measures to disarm these illegal armed formations and neutralize the imminent threat posed to the safety and security of Azerbaijani civilian and military personnel.

The local counter-terror measures of Azerbaijan exclusively aimed at neutralizing legitimate military targets within the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan. As such, they fully aligned with the sovereign right of Azerbaijan to self-defence enshrined in the UN Charter.

We reject all the allegations of Armenia accusing Azerbaijan in allegedly targeting civilians. Such accusations are in particular preposterous given the notorious rack record of Armenia in committing systematic and widespread uncorrected war crimes and other atrocities. Gross violations of international humanitarian law, during the 44-day war by Armenia and its armed forces have still not been investigated and perpetrators were not brought to justice. This also includes brutal tactic of terror by Armenia, when Armenia deliberately targeted large civilian settlements in Azerbaijan, including those located far away from the frontline, such as Ganja, Barda and Tartar with heavy artillery and missiles, including ballistic and cluster munitions that claimed the lives of more than 100 civilians. Impunity of the Armenian armed formations for these atrocious crimes today lead to new similar tactics of targeting civilians. Thus, as a result of deliberate mortar attack of the Armenian armed

forces targeting the cities of Shusha and Aghdam, two civilians were killed yesterday. The city of Shusha was under shelling throughout last night.

Contrary to the Armenian propaganda, Azerbaijan acted in full compliance with norms of humanitarian law. All measures have been taken to avoid collateral damage on civilians and civilian infrastructure. All the accusations on intentional and deliberate targeting of civilians by armed forces of Azerbaijan are baseless and false. The Ministry of Defense has released aerial images proving that only military objects were targeted by precision-guided munitions.

In order to protect civilians, and in light of deliberate deployment of Armenia's armed forces and weapons close to the residential areas in violation of international humanitarian law, from the very first minutes, the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan made several public statements calling on the civilians to stay away from military installations. Similar notifications were also sent to the Armenian residents of the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan via mobile SMS service.

The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan also announced that the protection and security of administrative, social, educational, medical, religious, and other facilities would be ensured in line with the laws of Azerbaijan and the norms of international humanitarian law while women, children, elderly people, as well as people with disabilities and the sick would be rendered necessary medical aid, supplies and other assistance. Furthermore, humanitarian corridors and reception stations were created on the Lachin road and in other directions to ensure the evacuation of the population from the danger zone.

The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan maintained operational contact throughout the counter-terrorism measures with the Russian peacekeeping contingent temporarily deployed in the territories of Azerbaijan and created conditions for fulfillment of its tasks.

We also reject Armenia's worn-out allegations that Azerbaijan allegedly pursues the policy of so-called "ethnic cleansing". Azerbaijan is on the record for pursuing the policy of reintegration of ethnic Armenian residents of the Garabagh region as equal citizens guaranteeing all the rights and freedoms envisaged in the Constitution of Azerbaijan and all the relevant international human rights mechanisms that Azerbaijan is signatory to. The events that unfolded today demonstrated once again that all Armenian allegations are groundless and nothing than propaganda.

We have previously informed the Permanent Council that the Government of Azerbaijan has appointed a Special Representative for the dialogue with local Armenian residents with a view to discussing issues pertinent to their reintegration. Despite repeated invitations to continue these discussions the Armenian side has refused under different pretexts. Last time, on 4 August 2023, agreement was finally reached with respect to organization of a meeting in Yevlakh in Azerbaijan. However, at the very last moment, the Armenian side backtracked from this agreement by putting forward politically motivated, illegitimate pretexts. When the local counter-terrorism measures started the Presidential Administration of Azerbaijan again invited the representatives of the Armenian residents of the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan to come to the meeting in Yevlakh region of Azerbaijan to discuss reintegration measures. As proposed by the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the meeting with the representatives of the Armenian residents living in the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan to discuss the reintegration issues, based on the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its laws will be held on 21 September 2023 in Yevlakh.

Azerbaijan has stated from the very beginning that the local counter-terrorism measures pursue the precise objectives of disarming unlawful Armenian formations and neutralizing military

infrastructure. The Delegation of Azerbaijan informs the Permanent Council that today the agreement was reached to stop local counter-terrorism measures. The Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan stated that considering the appeal by the representatives of the Armenian residents living in the Garabagh Economic region of Azerbaijan, conveyed by the Russian peacekeeping contingent, an agreement has been reached as of 13:00, 20 September 2023, to stop the counter-terror measures under the following terms:

1. The formations of Armenia's armed forces stationed in the Garabagh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan and illegal armed groups lay down their arms, withdraw from their battle positions and military outposts and are subjected to complete disarmament. The formations of Armenia's armed forces leave the territory of Azerbaijan and illegal Armenian groups are disbanded.
2. Simultaneously, all the ammunition and heavy military equipment is handed over.
3. Conducting the abovementioned process in coordination with the Russian peacekeeping contingent is ensured.

We urge the participating States to refrain at this critical juncture from statements and actions that could jeopardize the fragile situation, and to join Azerbaijan in demanding from Armenia to stop its military and political provocations; to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan; stop interfering into the internal affairs of Azerbaijan, and implement its other commitments under the Trilateral Statements.

In conclusion, in response to the statement delivered by the Delegation of France, which reflects the statement issued by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, I would like to state that Azerbaijan strongly rejects and condemns the statement issued by France regarding the measures taken in response to further provocations of the Armenian armed forces illegally stationed in the Garabagh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Despite the fact of occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan, as well as the recognition of this fact by 4 resolutions of the United Nations Security Council demanding full, immediate, and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from the territories of Azerbaijan, the engagement of France to maintain the results of the occupation and the status quo in the region instead of contributing to a just solution of the conflict based on international law during its co-chairmanship to the OSCE Minsk group in 1997-2020 is remembered well.

In this regard, Azerbaijan considers today's statement issued by France on the measures taken in response to provocations of the Armenian armed forces illegally stationed in the Garabagh region while refusing to abandon its previous policy in the current post-conflict situation, as the support to the remnants of the occupation.

France, being distinguished by its anti-Azerbaijani position and statements during the 44-Day War, remaining outside of peace-building efforts in the region in the post-conflict situation and its issued statements only having a negative impact, as well as issuing statements supporting separatism while further isolating itself from the region is well-known.

The stance of France demonstrates that it refuses to learn from the current situation in the colonial regions that it faces today and continues its previous behavior and policy in this regard.

French officials, the National Assembly, and the Senate are even more active than Armenia with the issuance of statements and documents against Azerbaijan.

Islamophobic and anti-Azerbaijani policy of France, as well as its unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of Azerbaijan clearly demonstrates that the farther France is from the region, the better it will be.

I request that this statement be attached to the Journal of the Day.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.