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Prevention of armed conflict

Right of peoples to self-determination

**The responsibility to protect and the prevention of
genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes
against humanity**

Letter dated 9 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic), dated 8 and 9 October 2020, regarding Azerbaijan's attack on the Holy Saviour Ghazanchetsots Cathedral of Shushi and the claims of Azerbaijan to exercise sovereignty over the people of Artsakh (see annexes).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34, 71 and 135, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mher **Margaryan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex I to the letter dated 9 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh on Azerbaijan's attack on the Church of the Holy All-Savior in Shushi

We strongly condemn the attack by the Azerbaijani armed forces on the Armenian Church of the Holy All-Savior (Ghazanchetsots), located in the city of Shushi of the Republic of Artsakh. We remind the Azerbaijani side that making historic monuments, works of art or places of worship which constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples the object of attack manifests serious violation of both treaty and customary international humanitarian law, and destruction of cultural monuments as part of the conduct of hostilities constitutes a war crime.

The deliberate destruction of historical, cultural and religious sites is a characteristic and notorious signature of international terrorist organizations. Suffice it to recall the destruction of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan by the Taliban, as well as the destruction of the Monumental Arch in Palmyra and the Armenian Church of Holy Martyrs in Deir ez-Zor by ISIS fighters in Syria.

The attack on the Church of the Holy All-Savior in the city of Shushi demonstrates that the criminal triple alliance of Azerbaijan, Turkey and terrorist organizations, which unleashed an aggression against the Republic of Artsakh, are united not only by common goals, but also by a common system of values and criminal methods of warfare.

We reiterate, that the preservation of the cultural heritage is of great importance for all peoples of the world and damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind. Along with adoption of numerous international conventions on the protection of cultural and historical heritage, the issue was also addressed at the level of the UN Security Council, which in its Resolution (No. 2347) on the inadmissibility of destruction of cultural property in the event of armed conflicts, notably by terrorist groups, called on all States to make collective and co-ordinated efforts to combat such practices.

We once again emphasize that under the circumstances of Azerbaijan's open denial of the principles of humanity and universal values, the international recognition of the independence of the Republic of Artsakh is the most effective way to ensure the security of the people of Artsakh, the realization of their fundamental rights and the preservation of Artsakh's cultural heritage.

Stepanakert
8 October 2020

Annex II to the letter dated 9 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh

9 October 2020

The recent statement of the President of Azerbaijan that the resumption of hostilities does not mean the rejection of the negotiation process, and that Baku continues to consider the residents of Artsakh as its citizens is a manifestation of the highest degree of cynicism. Such statements demonstrate that the military-political leadership of Azerbaijan lives in its own fictional world, detached from the reality. Without realizing the illegal and illusory nature of its claims to Artsakh, the Azerbaijani authorities will not be able to break the vicious circle into which Baku has driven itself with anti-Armenian propaganda, attempts to rewrite the region's history and manipulative interpretation of international law.

Firstly, citizens of the Republic of Artsakh have been living in an independent, sovereign state since 1991, and have no political and legal ties with Azerbaijan whatsoever. Baku has long lost the moral right to call the people of Artsakh "its citizens". And, after unleashing an armed aggression against the Republic of Artsakh on September 27, 2020, and deliberately targeting peaceful population and civilian infrastructure using cluster munitions and other types of prohibited weapons, such statements from Baku are a meaningless set of empty words.

Moreover, by unleashing another aggressive war and resuming attempts to resolve the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict by force, Baku has derailed all the efforts of the international mediators, nullifying their initiatives in the peace process. Under the current circumstances, there is only one way out – international recognition of the independence of the Republic of Artsakh, which will ensure lasting peace and stability in the region, as well as exclude Azerbaijan's attempts to start another war and prevent the Baku authorities from committing new crimes against humanity.
