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Agenda items 35, 40, 86 and 135

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**Security Council
Seventy-fifth year**

Letter dated 13 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to our previous communications in connection with the outbreak of hostilities erupted in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan since 27 September 2020 as a result of the act of aggression perpetrated by Armenia against Azerbaijan, I have the honour to inform you of the following:

Despite the humanitarian ceasefire agreed during the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Moscow on 9 October 2020, with the mediation of the Russian Federation, to allow the return of remains and prisoners of war, effective as of 12.00 p.m. on 10 October 2020, the armed forces of Armenia continue to deliberately attack civilians and civilian infrastructure in Azerbaijan.

Immediately after the establishment of the humanitarian ceasefire, the armed forces of Armenia fired at the Aghdam and Tartar districts of Azerbaijan. A few hours later, they attempted to attack in the direction of Hadrut and Jabrayil.

A medical worker was seriously injured as a result of the shooting by Armenian troops of a sanitary medical vehicle with a visible distinctive sign, which was collecting the remains of Armenian soldiers in the area of Sugovushan.

On the night of 11 October 2020, Ganja, the second largest city in Azerbaijan, came under missile attack from the Vardenis district of Armenia. The city is situated approximately 40 km away from the front line and 72 km from the missile launch point. The missile strike completely destroyed an apartment building in the centre of Ganja, leaving its residents under ruins. As a result, 10 civilians, including 4 women,



were killed and 34 civilians, including 16 women and 6 children, were injured. Besides that, 10 apartment buildings and more than 100 other civilian facilities were extensively damaged in the city.

The same day, the city of Minghachevir, also situated far away from the front line and 104 km from the border with Armenia, was subjected to ballistic missile attack by the armed forces of Armenia. The missile fell in the close vicinity of the building of the Azerbaijan thermal power plant, which is located in the Mingachevir hydropower complex, the largest water reservoir in the South Caucasus.

On 12 and 13 October 2020, the Aghdam, Aghjabadi, Goranboy and Tartar districts of Azerbaijan were shelled by missiles and artillery from various directions, causing civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian and public property.

As a result of direct and indiscriminate attacks of the armed forces of Armenia against the cities, towns and villages in Azerbaijan, as at 13 October 2020, 41 civilians, including children, women and the elderly, had been killed, 211 civilians had been wounded and 1,185 private houses, 57 apartment buildings, 148 other civilian objects and 37 schools (12 in Tartar, 11 in Aghdam, 5 in Ganja, 4 in Fuzuli, 3 in Goranboy, 1 in Barda and 1 in Aghjabadi) had been either destroyed or damaged.

Armenia's attacks directed at civilians, the murder and injuring of civilians and attacks that have caused indiscriminate or disproportionate harm to civilians and civilian objects in Azerbaijan amount to war crimes under international humanitarian law, for which Armenia bears liability and which also incur individual criminal responsibility on the part of the perpetrators.

There is nothing surprising in Armenia's apparent disregard for the universal rules of civilized behaviour. It is pertinent to recall some basic facts.

The forcible deportation of some 250,000 Azerbaijanis from their homes in Armenia at the end of the 1980s was accompanied by killings, enforced disappearances, the destruction of property and pillaging. At the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992, the full-scale war that was unleashed by Armenia against Azerbaijan claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people and caused considerable destruction of civilian infrastructure, property and livelihoods in my country. A significant part of the territory of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the seven adjacent districts and some exclaves, was seized by Armenia and remains under its occupation, in violation of international law and Security Council resolutions [822 \(1993\)](#), [853 \(1993\)](#), [874 \(1993\)](#) and [884 \(1993\)](#).

The occupied territories were ethnically cleansed of all Azerbaijanis, as a result of which more than 1 million people were forced to leave their homes and properties in these territories. Besides, as at the beginning of this month, 3,890 citizens of Azerbaijan were registered as missing as a result of the conflict, including 719 civilians. Among the civilians, 71 are children, 267 are women and 326 are elderly persons. It has been established that 872 of the 3,890 missing persons were either taken as prisoners of war or hostages, including 605 servicemen and 267 civilians, of whom 29 are children, 98 are women and 112 are elderly persons. Armenia has consistently refused to account for the missing persons within its control and to conduct a prompt and effective investigation into the fate of the missing persons, in breach of its international obligations.

Furthermore, Armenia has undertaken purposeful efforts towards consolidating the occupation, strengthening its military build-up in the seized territories, changing their demographic, cultural and physical character and preventing the hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis from returning to their homes and properties in those areas.

In that regard, I would like once again to draw your attention to the report on war crimes in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia's responsibility, which examines the major war crimes committed between 1992 and 2019 by Armenia, its agents and officials and those for whom it is directly responsible, in the territories of Azerbaijan currently under occupation (A/74/676-S/2020/90). The report concludes that Armenia is responsible for a variety of war crimes, including those relating to civilian deaths or injuries; civilian property; the mistreatment of detainees and prisoners of war; the taking of hostages; ethnic cleansing, forced displacement and changing the character of the occupied territory; the destruction of cultural heritage; and damage to the natural environment. According to the report, some of the conduct that constitutes war crimes may also amount to the crime of genocide, as ethnic Azerbaijanis have been targeted because of their nationality and/or ethnicity, and the relevant intent has been to destroy the group in part.

However, despite the extensive and revealing evidence of extreme brutalities, Armenia has continued to enjoy impunity for the crimes committed, which, as an immediate corollary, has generated the sense of permissiveness in its leadership and led to the situation we are facing now.

The Republic of Azerbaijan strongly condemns the barbaric and atrocity methods of warfare employed by Armenia, which require action by the United Nations, Member States and the international community as a whole to ensure justice and accountability.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35, 40, 86 and 135, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar Aliyev
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
