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**Seventy-fifth year****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 5 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of  
Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Further to my communications transmitting the letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia dated 27 September (A/75/356-S/2020/947), the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia dated 28 September and the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Artsakh dated 27 September (A/75/366-S/2020/955) and the statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia dated 29 and 30 September and the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Artsakh dated 20 September (A/75/370-S/2020/959), I am writing to you with regard to the ongoing large-scale military aggression launched by the Azerbaijani armed forces against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh).

In the early morning of Sunday, 27 September, Azerbaijan launched airborne, missile and land attacks along the entire line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, targeting civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and kindergartens, including in the capital city of Stepanakert. The intensive, indiscriminate attacks resulted in the killing of civilians: one woman and one child. The Azerbaijani army massively used a wide range of heavy weaponry, such as tanks, armoured combat vehicles, multiple-launch rocket systems and unmanned aerial vehicles.

The offensive unleashed by Azerbaijan against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and perpetrated with the direct involvement of Turkey and Turkish-backed foreign terrorist fighters<sup>1</sup> have led to the most intense and destructive escalation in the region since the 1990s. Launched amid the outbreak of an unprecedented global pandemic,

<sup>1</sup> “Turkey deploying Syrian fighters to help ally Azerbaijan, two fighters say”, <https://www.reuters.com/article/armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria-int/turkey-deploying-syrian-fighters-to-help-ally-azerbaijan-two-fighters-say-idUSKBN26J258>.



the military aggression has inflicted heavy human losses and massive damage on civilian settlements and infrastructure.

The scope and the nature of the attacks, as well as the available factual evidence, unequivocally demonstrate that the offensive was indeed premeditated and planned well in advance. The aggression unleashed against Nagorno-Karabakh was preceded by clearly detectable warning signs.

With air traffic closed weeks before the attack, Azerbaijan made no secret of its belligerent intentions by carrying out a draft of the military reserve force and even confiscating civilian trucks for military needs.<sup>2</sup> On 25 September, two days before the attack, the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan rejected the request of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group to conduct monitoring along the line of contact.<sup>3</sup>

The hostilities were also preceded by consistent escalation of inflammatory rhetoric in Azerbaijan, including at the highest political level. The aggressive tirade of the Azerbaijani leader delivered at the general debate of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly demonstrated an extremely high level of anger and frustration and was nothing short of war-mongering and hate speech.<sup>4</sup>

There is no shortage of credible evidence and reports to indicate that the hostilities were instigated, prepared and carried out with the direct involvement of Turkey, which has been playing a most destabilizing role in the region. From 29 July to 10 August, large-scale Azerbaijan-Turkey joint military exercises were held in Baku, Nakhichevan, Ganja, Kurdamir and Yevlakh with the involvement of thousands of military personnel, hundreds of armoured combat vehicles, artillery and military aircraft, including unmanned aerial vehicles. Under the disguise of the military exercises, Turkish military personnel and equipment, including F-16 fighters of the Turkish Air Force, were deployed in Azerbaijan.

Against the backdrop of reports of deployment of Turkish-backed militants in Azerbaijan, which started to emerge in the international media on the eve of the attack,<sup>5</sup> the representatives of the Turkish media were quick to cover the launch of the hostilities, demonstrating presence in the conflict zone from the very outset and indicating that they were aware of the attacks in advance and well prepared to report on them. In Azerbaijan, access to social networks and media outlets was blocked at the very outbreak of hostilities and continues to remain prohibited.

The international media have been extensively reporting on the role of Turkey in deploying foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries from the territories of Syria presently under Turkish control to Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>6</sup> According to the reports, Turkey is recruiting and transporting rebel fighters to support Azerbaijan in the

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<sup>2</sup> “Зачем в Азербайджане вызвали на сборы уволенных в запас?”, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-54282373>.

<sup>3</sup> Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia on Azerbaijan’s Aggression against Artsakh, [https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2020/09/28/mfa\\_statement\\_nk/10467](https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2020/09/28/mfa_statement_nk/10467).

<sup>4</sup> Official record of the 9th plenary meeting of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, Thursday, 24 September 2020 [to be issued as A/75/PV.9].

<sup>5</sup> “Is Turkey planning to recruit Syrians to fight Armenia?”, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/is-turkey-planning-to-recruit-syrians-to-fight-armenia-643628?fbclid=IwAR2n4iHVabjO7W2DWhKmE770IxztuALnrXGLm6Wkdr4um9tw3TVLut5e8u8.>; and “Ankara sends its ‘hired killers’ to Azerbaijan. Is it planning another massacre against Armenians?”, [http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/09/ankara-sends-its-hired-killers-to-azerbaijan-is-it-planning-another-massacre-against-armenians/?fbclid=IwAR1f08rhyAUqCTzmORIV2uLN3EpkOphPVQE8iY3W4fqW1O-Tn\\_b8gteSpbE](http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/09/ankara-sends-its-hired-killers-to-azerbaijan-is-it-planning-another-massacre-against-armenians/?fbclid=IwAR1f08rhyAUqCTzmORIV2uLN3EpkOphPVQE8iY3W4fqW1O-Tn_b8gteSpbE).

<sup>6</sup> “Syrian rebel fighters prepare to deploy to Azerbaijan in sign of Turkey’s ambition”, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition>.

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone.<sup>7</sup> The reports have been subsequently confirmed by the Russian Federation,<sup>8</sup> France<sup>9</sup> and the United States,<sup>10</sup> despite the attempts of Azerbaijan and Turkey to deny the facts.

The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs immediately condemned the use of force and reiterated that there is no alternative to a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.<sup>11</sup> Subsequently, a statement at the level of Heads of State was adopted on 1 October, calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and resuming substantive negotiations, in good faith and without preconditions, under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.<sup>12</sup>

The international community has unequivocally condemned the aggression and called for immediate cessation of hostilities and return to negotiations without preconditions. The United Nations Secretary-General voiced strong concern over the hostilities, called for immediate de-escalation and urgent resumption of a dialogue without preconditions and expressed full support for the important role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the European Union reacted with appeals for immediate cessation of hostilities, de-escalation and strict observance of the ceasefire and return to negotiations of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, without preconditions.<sup>14</sup> Calls for immediate ceasefire and resumption of dialogue followed from many other countries and international organizations. Despite all these appeals, Azerbaijan and Turkey continued to perpetrate acts of massive aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.

Despite the calls of the international community, the armed forces of Azerbaijan conducted massive attacks using armoured combat vehicles, the “Smerch” multiple-launch rocket system with banned cluster munition warheads and the TOS heavy flamethrower system. Civilian settlements in the town of Martakert came under fire on 28 September.

With the direct involvement of the Turkish armed forces, Azerbaijan sought to expand the geography of its aggression by attacking the civilian-military infrastructure in the Vardenis region of Armenia on 29 September. The bombardment targeted the civilian population and infrastructure, as a result of which one civilian was killed. On the same day, an F-16 fighter of the Turkish Air Force downed within the airspace of the Republic of Armenia in the Vardenis region an SU-25 fighter of the Armenian

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<sup>7</sup> “Nagorno-Karabakh clashes: Turkey sends Syrian mercenaries into combat against Armenians”, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nagorno-karabakh-clashes-turkey-sends-syrian-mercenaries-into-combat-against-armenians-wz6cqjc57>.

<sup>8</sup> Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России относительно переброски иностранных наемников в зону нагорно-карабахского конфликта, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4363834](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4363834).

<sup>9</sup> “Macron reprimands Turkey, accuses Erdogan of sending ‘jihadists’ to Azerbaijan”, <https://www.france24.com/en/20201002-macron-reprimands-turkey-accusing-erdogan-of-sending-jihadists-to-azerbaijan>.

<sup>10</sup> Sky News Arabia, وأذربيجان تركيا بين "المرتزقة رحلات" حقيقة يكشف أميركي مسؤول.

<sup>11</sup> Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/465018>

<sup>12</sup> Statement of the presidents of Russia, the United States and France on Nagorno-Karabakh, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64133>.

<sup>13</sup> Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-09-27/statement-attributable-the-spokesman-for-the-secretary-general-the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict>.

<sup>14</sup> Nagorno Karabakh: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/85862/nagorno-karabakh-s.tatement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/85862/nagorno-karabakh-s.tatement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell_en)

Armed Forces which was carrying out combat tasks to repel the attacks of Azerbaijan on military and civilian objects.

Azerbaijan's aggression has been accompanied by extensive use of a wide range of heavy weaponry such as tanks, armoured combat vehicles, air-to-surface long-range missiles, multiple-launch rocket systems, the TOS heavy flamethrower system and aircraft, including unmanned aerial vehicles. On 30 September, the bombardments of civilian settlements and infrastructure resulted in three more casualties among the civilian population in the Martakert region of Artsakh. On the same day, Azerbaijan handed the command of the offensive air operation to the Turkish Air Force. Two Turkish F-16 fighters, together with Azerbaijani SU-25 fighters and Turkish Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicles, bombarded civilian settlements and infrastructure in the Hadrut and Martuni regions. The operation was controlled by a distant E7-T air force command post in the Erzerum-Kars area in Turkey. In addition, an unmanned aerial vehicle Turkish command post located near the Hadrut region coordinated the attacks of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces.

On 1 October, the Azerbaijani air force bombarded civilian settlements and infrastructure in the Martuni and Hadrut regions of Artsakh, which resulted in injuries among reporters of the *Le Monde*, Armenia TV and 24news.am media outlets. A reporter from *Le Monde* was wounded in an artillery strike by the Azerbaijani military in the Martuni town hall. On the same day, Azerbaijan launched artillery and combat unmanned aerial vehicle attacks in the direction of the Shatvan and Mets Masrik settlements and the Vardenis-Sotk road in the Gegharkunik region of Armenia, as a result of which one civilian was killed and two were injured. The air defence of Armenia downed three combat and four surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles in the Gegharkunik and Kotayk regions of Armenia.

Azerbaijan continued indiscriminate shelling, causing injuries among civilians, including servicemen of the Rescue Service of Artsakh in Stepanakert, and inflicting serious damage upon critical civilian infrastructure. On 2 October, the Hadrut region of Artsakh was attacked by the "Smerch" multiple-launch rocket system, resulting in injuries among civilians.

Large-scale attacks continued in the northern and southern directions of the line of contact, with concentration of a massive amount of heavy weaponry. On 3 October, Azerbaijan twice bombarded Stepanakert, using long-range missiles and inflicting serious damage upon the civilian infrastructure of Artsakh's capital. On the same day, Azerbaijan used long-range strike means, targeting civilian infrastructure of critical environmental concern.

The armed forces of Azerbaijan have been extensively using long-range missiles, namely "Polonez" and "Smerch" multiple-launch rocket systems, as well as the air force, to carry out indiscriminate attacks on Stepanakert and Martakert, resulting in large numbers of casualties among the civilian population. Evidence points to the use of cluster munitions prohibited under international law.

In the light of Azerbaijan's continued attempts to target the civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh with the use of heavy weaponry stationed in the civilian settlements of Azerbaijan, the President of Artsakh made an appeal to the population of Azerbaijan to leave the settlements, which are instrumentalized by the armed forces of Azerbaijan to use civilians as human shields. It was announced that the Defence Army of Artsakh is compelled to take suppressive action and attack such military objects in order to protect the population of Artsakh. On 4 October, the Defence Army of Artsakh resorted to suppressive measures in relation to the military airport in Ganja to contain Azerbaijan's ongoing aggression. The political-military leadership of Azerbaijan bears full responsibility for the consequences of its reckless conduct in

the region and the unlawful aggression unleashed against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The large-scale military hostilities, which have been going on since 27 September, have resulted in the killing of 21 people among the Armenian civilian population, leaving 82 people injured. The armed forces of Azerbaijan continue to deliberately target vital civilian infrastructure in Stepanakert and other settlements, aiming to cause a humanitarian crisis.

Azerbaijan's massive war crimes are being accompanied by a large-scale disinformation campaign. Due to the large-scale defeat and the losses suffered, Azerbaijan has been trying, in all ways possible, to boost the morale of its public by publishing and disseminating false information and photos. Having failed in its military objectives, Azerbaijan, on the one hand, has been parading imaginary gains, and, on the other hand, proliferating fake news and far-fetched, fabricated content to spread deceptive information about the situation on the ground, including the fake allegations of strikes from the territory of Armenia at the Azerbaijani settlements. The aim of such a deceitful campaign is to cover up the massive shelling of the settlements of Nagorno-Karabakh conducted by Azerbaijan, leading to tragic casualties and large-scale damage of the essential civilian infrastructure. With its desperate disinformation campaign, Azerbaijan also aims to prepare the ground to extend the geography of its criminal actions. The Armenian side will respond adequately to each and every provocation.

Azerbaijan, together with its enabling state Turkey, must stop the acts of aggression and provocation, cease the hostilities and ensure that all foreign terrorist fighters leave the conflict zone immediately.

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex therein 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 to the letter dated 5 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**





