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Seventy-eighth year****Prevention of armed conflict****Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia
and related intolerance****The responsibility to protect and the prevention of
genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes
against humanity****Letter dated 31 July 2023 from the Permanent Representative of
Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I am enclosing herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia on the abduction by the representatives of the border guard service of Azerbaijan of a 68-year-old person who was accompanied by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia for medical treatment on 29 July 2023 (see annex).

The arbitrary detention and arrest of a person under the protection of ICRC, in a gross violation of the basic tenets of international humanitarian law, is aimed at terrorizing the Nagorno-Karabakh population facing a humanitarian crisis owing to the ongoing blockade of the Lachin corridor.

I kindly ask that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 30, 66 and 132, and of the Security Council.

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



Annex to the letter dated 31 July 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Foreign Ministry of Armenia

29 July 2023

On July 29, 68-year-old Vagif Khachatryan, who, having serious health issues, was being transported from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia for medical treatment, accompanied by the International Committee of Red Cross, was abducted by the representatives of the border guard service of Azerbaijan at the illegal checkpoint installed on the Lachin corridor and taken in an unknown direction without any reliable explanation.

It should be emphasized that the ICRC provides the parties with the lists of patients to be transported in advance and carries out their transportation only after the consent of the parties. The release of the statement full of false narratives and accusations by the Prosecutor General's Office of Azerbaijan right after the abduction shows that this operation was thoroughly planned in advance. Moreover, the statement contains an open threat to apply the same approach to other residents of Nagorno-Karabakh as well.

This mode of operation by Azerbaijan is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law: the arrest of a person under the protection of international humanitarian law and the ICRC is nothing short of a war crime. It is also aimed at completely blocking the ICRC activities in Nagorno-Karabakh, while Azerbaijan continues the blockade of the Lachin corridor and hinders in general the access of other humanitarian organizations to Nagorno-Karabakh.

It is noteworthy that this action of the Azerbaijani authorities is a direct implementation of the statement made by the country's president on May 28 that "the installation of a checkpoint in the Lachin corridor would be a lesson for the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, ... they should show up with bent necks", and the continuous threats, about which the Armenian side has repeatedly signalled to international partners, calling on them to condemn these and other similar statements. This action of Azerbaijan directly demonstrates that the alarms, voiced by Armenia for already a long time, reflect the seriousness and urgency of the existing sinister risks of ethnic cleansing.

Moreover, this pattern of behaviour time and again demonstrates the bankruptcy of the arguments of the Azerbaijani side with regard to the Armenian prisoners of war, civilian captives, as well as the servicemen abducted from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia on May 26, who went through sham trials and are still illegally kept in Baku.

This arbitrariness of Azerbaijan, carried out in parallel with the complete blockade of the Lachin corridor and refusal to address the issues of rights and security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, is aimed at terrorizing the Nagorno-Karabakh population and in case of absence of international engagement once again casts serious doubt on the possibility of not only ensuring the minimal rights of the Nagorno-Karabakh people, but also on the possibility of realizing the right to life.

We consider the criminal act committed by Azerbaijan today and the ongoing blockade of the Lachin corridor unacceptable and reprehensible. We expect united and clear-cut steps by the international community, including using existing tools aimed at restoring unimpeded movement through the Lachin corridor, ensuring the activities of international humanitarian organizations in Nagorno-Karabakh as well as humanitarian access to Nagorno-Karabakh.