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**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the exercise of the right of
reply to the statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Armenia at the
16th plenary meeting of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly**

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The comments just made by the delegate of Armenia, which are false and unprofessional in substance and inappropriate in tone, do not deserve any response. However, proceeding from the importance of addressing the root causes of the conflict and their implications for regional peace and security and the conflict settlement process, we deem it important to briefly focus on the following key points:

First, the Nagorno-Karabakh region has always been and will remain an integral part of Azerbaijan.

Second, it was Armenia that resorted to force, violence and terrorist activities in an attempt to realize its groundless and unlawful territorial claims.

Third, since the very first day of the conflict, combat operations have been conducted exclusively inside the territory of Azerbaijan, almost in the middle of the country, affecting its civilian population and infrastructure.

Fourth, it is Armenia that continues to occupy the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the surrounding seven districts of Azerbaijan, in gross violation of international law and Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993).

Fifth, Armenia and its affiliates in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan are responsible for internationally wrongful acts, several of which constitute serious breaches of obligations arising from peremptory norms of general international law (*jus cogens*).

Sixth, Armenia's policy and practices are based on exclusion and discrimination on ethnic grounds and are aimed at legitimization of the results of the unlawful use of force and ethnic cleansing.

Seventh, Armenia distorts and misinterprets the principle of the people's right to self-determination and, notwithstanding the concept of self-determination adopted in international law, attempts to impose the view that this principle may be applied in the form of unilateral secession for the Armenians minority group living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. In reality, such a view has nothing in common with the principle of self-determination set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and other international documents.

Actions that Armenia describes as “the exercise of the right to self-determination” have been unequivocally qualified by the UN Security Council and other authoritative international organizations as the unlawful use of force and the commission of other serious crimes. Furthermore, the international community, including the Security Council and the General Assembly, has consistently reaffirmed the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan. The illegality of the subordinate racist minority regime established by Armenia in the occupied territory of Azerbaijan has been repeatedly stated at the international level in the most unambiguous manner.

Eighth, Armenia has consistently obstructed the conflict-settlement process and, in the meantime refuses to start result-oriented negotiations, while it regularly resorts to various provocations to escalate the situation on the ground.

Finally, the achievement of peace, security and stability will be possible, first and foremost, only if the consequences of Armenia's occupation are removed, thereby ensuring that its armed forces are immediately, unconditionally and completely withdrawn from the territories of Azerbaijan, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country are restored, and the right of internally displaced Azerbaijanis to return to their homes is guaranteed and implemented. That is what international law and the Security Council demand, and can in no way be substituted with semi-measures, made under any pretext, introduced as a compromise or used as a bargaining chip in the conflict-settlement process.