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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 Prime Minister of Armenia at the General Debate
of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly**

26 September 2019

We have asked for the floor to lay out some of the key facts that completely refute the assertions with regard to my country made by the Prime Minister of Armenia in his speech at the General Debate.

Firstly, the history, which Armenia so desperately has been trying to manipulate to serve its territorial claims, is not on its side. It is well-known that the transfer of the Armenians into what the Prime Minister of Armenia calls the “ancestral homeland” started in the nineteenth century. Their subsequent mass resettlement in the South Caucasus and attempts at territorial expansion have laid the basis for long-term instability, tensions and conflicts in the region that continue to date and have been accompanied by massacres and forcible deportations of the Azerbaijani population.

Second, the illegality within the Soviet legal system of any attempts aimed at either unification of the Nagorno-Karabakh region with Armenia or its unilateral secession from Azerbaijan was confirmed at the highest constitutional level. Evidently, the definition of the territory of Azerbaijan as it proceeded to independence and in the light of the applicable law clearly included the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The situation following the independence of Azerbaijan and actions of Armenia is also clear. That the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an integral part of Azerbaijan has been reaffirmed by the Security Council, which, in its resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), determined that Armenia’s territorial claims and actions are unlawful and incompatible with the prohibition of the use of armed force in international relations. The numerous documents adopted by other international organizations are framed along the same lines. It is pertinent also to recall that the General Assembly contains in its agenda the special item entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan".

Third, Armenia’s misinterpretation of self-determination have nothing in common with that principle, as it is laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and other international documents. What the Prime Minister of Armenia describes as “the exercise of self-determination” has been qualified by the Security Council as the unlawful use of force. In fact, it is the right to self-determination of the people of Azerbaijan is grossly violated as a result of Armenia’s policy of aggression, occupation and ethnic cleansing.

Fourth, human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, embrace all humanity, and respect for these rights must be accorded on an equal and non-discriminatory basis. In contrast to that generally accepted definition, Armenia's policy and practices are based on exclusion and discrimination on ethnic grounds. Thus, unlike Azerbaijan and other States in the region, Armenia is a uniquely mono-ethnic country. It has ethnically cleansed also the occupied territories and now refuses even to accept the existence of the Azerbaijani community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

It gives rise to the obvious conclusion that Armenia cannot demand privileges at the very core of which are gross and systematic violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and the discriminatory denial of the rights and freedoms with respect to others, in particular the significantly larger Azerbaijani population, totaling more than one million people, who were expelled and prevented from returning to their homes and properties in both Armenia and the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Armenia's denial of responsibility for its crimes is a defiance of human rights and a direct obstacle to lasting peace and genuine reconciliation.

Against that background, Yerevan's speculations with regard to human rights, democracy and the so-called "anti-Armenian sentiments" and "anti-Armenian hate speech" are irresponsible and misleading, to say the least. By asserting that Azerbaijan allegedly wants the territory without people, the Prime Minister of Armenia simply confuses fictitious objectives of my country with the real policy of his own government.

Fifth, in his speech, the Prime Minister of Armenia spoke eagerly about the peaceful settlement of the conflict and its crucial importance for the stability and security of the region. However, mere words are evidently not sufficient for achieving progress in the settlement process, especially when the commitments and deeds of Armenia have always been at odds with that objective.

Needless to say, Armenia's continuing aggression, non-compliance with international law and the resolutions of the Security Council, inflammatory statements, various provocations on the ground and attempts to change the demographic, economic, social and cultural character of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan cannot be reconciled with the goal of a peaceful settlement.

Most importantly, no peace settlement of the conflict can be reached which runs counter to the Constitution of Azerbaijan and which is inconsistent with international law.

The primary objective of the ongoing peace process, the mandate of which is based on the aforementioned Security Council resolutions, is to ensure the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and all other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders and the return of the forcibly displaced persons to their homes and properties.

The unlawful use of force and the resulting military occupation and ethnic cleansing of the territories of Azerbaijan do not represent a solution and will never bring peace, reconciliation and stability.

Rather than wasting time on attempts to mislead the international community and its own people, Armenia must drop its futile attempts to prolong the unsustainable status quo and faithfully comply with its international obligations. The earlier Yerevan realizes the lack of any prospect of its destructive political agenda, the sooner both our peoples will be able to benefit from peace, stability and cooperation