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**Statement by Mr. Tofiq F. Musayev
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations**

at the Sixth Committee of the seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly under agenda item 84: "The rule of law at the national and international levels"

7 October 2022

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Azerbaijan commends the assistance by the United Nations to Member States in promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels, fostering a global rule of law culture, supporting adherence to international law and accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Strict compliance with international obligations, in particular those relating to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in internal affairs, is imperative.

As the Secretary-General has emphasized in his report (A/77/213), challenges to the rule of law remain on almost every front, with widespread conflicts and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and impunity for crimes.

Regrettably, not all such violations receive due attention and a response at the international, regional and national levels.

As a consequence, the lack of accountability, along with the global rise in hate speech and incitement to hostility and violence, has an undermining effect in the resurgence, protraction or expansion of conflicts as well as in post-conflict situations. Attempts to weaponize the past serve the same purpose, resulting in generations growing in a deep sense of hatred and intolerance.

Mr. Chairman,

As a result of the aggression committed against my country by neighboring Armenia in the early 1990s, at the core of which were unlawful territorial claims, misinterpretation of legal principles, fabricated historical narratives and racist prejudices, a significant part of the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan was seized and remained under occupation for nearly thirty years.

Serious breaches of international humanitarian law were committed in the course of the war, resulting in the killing of tens of thousands of civilians and ethnic cleansing of all occupied areas. Most captured cities, towns and villages of Azerbaijan were razed to the ground. Thousands of cultural objects and religious sites were looted, vandalized and destroyed. The aggression has also inflicted long term and irreversible damage on the natural environment.

Armenia's attacks two years ago again involved the use of military force and prohibited weapons against densely populated Azerbaijani cities far outside the theater of active hostilities, killing and wounding hundreds of civilians and destroying or damaging numerous civilian objects.

Armenia must redress the harm caused to Azerbaijan and its people, provide full reparation for the injury and offer appropriate assurances and guarantees of non-repetition. Armenia is also under the obligation to investigate offences committed by its armed forces, State organs, State agents and other persons who acted on its instruction or under its direction and control, prosecute and punish the perpetrators and cease and desist from spreading disinformation and disseminating, promoting and sponsoring hate propaganda.

At the national level, Azerbaijan has taken concrete steps to investigate and prosecute alleged violations of international humanitarian law.

At the international level, to ensure accountability for egregious violations of international law committed during the conflict, Azerbaijan instituted legal proceedings, including within the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights under the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and the European Convention on Human Rights, respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

Combating impunity for serious violations of international law and broader transitional justice are undeniable.

While redress serves to provide for the rights and interests of the victims, it is also an essential preventive tool and one of the key prerequisites on the path to genuine reconciliation.

It is also critical that the United Nations continue mobilizing the world against racism and confronting hatred.

It is essential to address conflict-related violations by all available means. Providing support to States affected by conflict and engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding, reconstruction and rehabilitation must be a commitment of the international community.

Thank you.