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**Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their
implications for international peace, security
and development**

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 15 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write you in connection with yet another provocation resorted to by the Republic of Armenia, in defiance of its commitments both under international law and within the ongoing conflict settlement process.

On 9 May 2019, while the world was celebrating the Victory Day in the Second World War, the political leadership of Armenia visited the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan to participate in what they call “holiday celebrations” on the occasion of the forcible capture by the Armenians in May 1992 of the city of Shusha – Azerbaijan’s historical centre and cultural cradle in the region, with a predominantly Azerbaijani population before the war.

No doubt, such an ostentatious and cynical action, undertaken following the recent summit-level meeting and the resumption of talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan with the mediation efforts of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, will serve for nothing but deepening mistrust and narrowing the prospects of peace and reconciliation.

We, in Azerbaijan, will never forget how perfidiously the city of Shusha and 30 villages in the Shusha district were forcibly captured by the Armenian forces on 8 May 1992. It happened while the political leadership of Armenia and Azerbaijan had negotiations in Tehran, as an outcome of which they signed the Joint Statement, committing to resolve the conflict by peaceful means and in accordance with international law.

As a result of the Armenian offensive, 195 civilians were killed, 165 were wounded and 58 persons went missing. The occupied territory was ethnically cleansed of its Azerbaijani population; more than 24,000 residents of Shusha were forced to leave their native lands and properties.



Since then, many unique historical, cultural and religious sites in the city of Shusha, such as Panah Khan Castle, Gara Boyukkhanyim Castle, Yukhary Govharagha, Ashaghy Govharagha, Saatly, Khoja Marjanly, Merdinli, Kocharli, Julfalar, Hajy Yusifli, Chol Gala, Taza Mahalla and Chukhur Mahalla mosques, the caravanserais and mosque of Mashadi Shukur Mirsiyab and Mashadi Huseyn Mirsiyab, the madrasas of the Yukhary and Ashaghy Govharagha mosques, the House of Natavan, the Shusha Museum of History, the Shusha branch of the Azerbaijan State Museum of Carpets, the Karabakh Museum of History, the Karabakh Museum of Literature, the State Gallery of Pictures, the House Museum of Uzeyir Hajybayov, the House Museum of Bulbul, the House Museum of Mir Mohsun Navvab and the mausoleum of Molla Panah Vagif, have been destroyed or plundered, while systematic actions have been taken to erase any signs of the city's Azerbaijani cultural and historical roots and characteristics.

Moreover, as a means of implementing its annexation policy, Armenia encourages and facilitates the transfer of settlers into the occupied territories depopulated of their Azerbaijani inhabitants, including the city of Shusha, in clear violation of international law and in contravention of the objectives of the political settlement of the conflict.

The celebration and glorification of the seizure of the Azerbaijani city, which caused heavy human losses and suffering, also represent a profound disrespect for the memory of millions of people throughout the world who gave up their lives for freedom from tyranny and colonization in the Second World War. However, there is nothing surprising in such a policy of Yerevan, given the fact that military commanders of the Armenian Legion during the Second World War, Nazi Generals Garegin Nzhdeh and Drastamat Kanayan, are raised to the rank of national heroes in Armenia.

All of the above confirms that, despite the recent change of its government, Armenia continues to pose a serious threat to regional and international peace, security and stability, thus necessitating the constant attention and urgent reaction of the United Nations and the wider international community.

There is no doubt that Armenia will be compelled to withdraw its armed forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, including the city of Shusha, and that the demographic composition and the cultural structure of the liberated areas will be restored and the right of the forcibly displaced population to return to their homes in safety and dignity will be ensured.

Rather than wasting time on provocations and imitation of its commitment to the peaceful settlement, Armenia must drop its futile attempts to prolong the unsustainable status quo and faithfully comply with its international obligations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35 and 41, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar Aliyev
Ambassador
Permanent Representative