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Agenda items 19 (a), 26 (b), 32 and 37

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**Security Council
Seventy-fifth year**

Letter dated 27 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to address you with reference to the multi-stakeholder hearing on the topic of “Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”, held virtually on 21 July 2020.

The event has provided an important platform for different stakeholders from Member States and non-governmental organizations to come together to discuss, learn and offer solutions to issues affecting women and girls in the run-up to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

At this challenging and unprecedented time, the General Assembly and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) continue to play a crucial role in promoting the rights of women and supporting Governments in delivering on their key gender equality and empowerment of women objectives. Strong international cooperation and leadership are needed now more than ever to ensure that, amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other issues, including the growing number and increasingly protracted nature of armed conflicts around the world, the international community has sufficient means to achieve progress in advancing women’s rights.



Regrettably, Armenia abuses such valuable platforms as the multi-stakeholder hearing to promote false narratives for political purposes. Such was the case with the statement of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Zaruhi Batoyan. The Minister took advantage of the invitation extended to her to assert groundless accusations against the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Minister did not inform the participants about the serious social, economic and political challenges facing women in Armenia, who are disproportionately affected by many human rights violations, discriminatory practices and poor policies of the Government, and instead devoted her speech to extraneous topics and misstatements of the facts.

The Minister did not react to the multiple comments of the delegation of Azerbaijan, nor did she respond to the question posed in the chat box, which was the only means available to the delegation to engage in dialogue and seek clarification from her.

Contrary to the allegations of Ms. Batoyan, it is the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia that launched an unprovoked attack across the international border of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Tovuz region using heavy artillery on 12 July 2020, in violation of the existing ceasefire regime. The indiscriminate shelling of Azerbaijani villages resulted in a number of military and civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian property.

Over the years, Armenia has been actively undermining peace negotiations led by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. As the world copes with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the leaders of Armenia continue nefarious provocations aimed at killing civilians and prolonging the occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the surrounding districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

It has been internationally recognized, including by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the United Nations treaty bodies, the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and other international organizations, that the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the surrounding districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan are under Armenia's occupation and that this occupation is unlawful. Accordingly, the item entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" has been included in the agenda of the General Assembly since its fifty-ninth session, in 2004.

It is unacceptable that the General Assembly's platform was used for dissemination of false information by the representative of Armenia. Therefore, all the necessary measures should be taken to prevent any future recurrence of such abuses.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 19 (a), 26 (b), 32 and 37, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar T. Aliyev
Ambassador
Permanent Representative