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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 General Debate
of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly**

29 September 2020

The comments made by the delegation of Armenia at the General Debate on 26 September, in the exercise of the right of reply, have become a yet another failed attempt to deny the facts and mislead the international community.

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan began at the end of 1987 with the former's unlawful and groundless territorial claims on the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous province of Azerbaijan. These claims were accompanied by the most cruelest and violent methods for their achievement, including the carefully orchestrated attacks on the Azerbaijanis in Nagorny Karabakh, the total ethnic cleansing of the area and the forcible expulsion of 250,000 Azerbaijanis from Armenia itself.

On the eve of the independence of Azerbaijan, the unlawfulness of any attempts aimed at either unification of the Nagorno-Karabakh region with Armenia or its secession from Azerbaijan was confirmed at the highest constitutional level. Consequently, 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 are also known. In its unanimously adopted resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), the United Nations Security Council condemned the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories; reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of international borders; confirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is part of Azerbaijan; and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

It is important to note that the resolutions of the Security Council were adopted after the extremist forces among the Armenian community of Nagorny Karabakh unilaterally declared their so-called "independence". Consequently, the Security Council made it absolutely clear that this action had produced no legal effect whatsoever and invalidated Armenia's claims over the territories of Azerbaijan once and for all. The status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region is unequivocal – it is the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan under Armenia's temporary unlawful occupation.

The speculations of Armenia with regard to self-determination have no foundation in international law. 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.

As to Armenia's allegations about the so-called "Armenophobia" and "hate speech", the purpose is evidently to disguise own hate crimes and longstanding and deep-rooted racist policy.

As an aggressor, terrorist and racist State, Armenia is the main destabilizing factor and serious threat to peace and security in the South Caucasus.

On 27 September 2020, the armed forces of Armenia subjected the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan along the frontline and the adjacent populated areas in my country to intensive fire, with the use of large-caliber weapons, artillery and mortars, in blatant violation of international law. These acts have resulted in numerous deaths and injuries among civilians and military. Extensive damage was inflicted upon the civilian property and infrastructure in the area. Even hospitals are not spared.

In order to repulse the aggression and ensure the safety of the civilian population, the armed forces of Azerbaijan have undertaken countermeasures, in the exercise of the right of self-defence and in full compliance with international humanitarian law.

The current outbreak of hostilities has become the consequence of Armenia's attempts to derail the peace process, its inflammatory and warmongering statements and consistent provocations on the ground, including the deliberate attacks in April 2016 and July 2020, the incursion of the sabotage-reconnaissance group into the territory of Azerbaijan this August and purposeful actions aimed at changing the demographic, cultural and physical character of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan with a view to their colonization and annexation.

The achievement of peace, security and stability demand, first and foremost, the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the restoration of the territorial integrity of my country within its internationally recognized borders and the return of the internally displaced persons to their homes and properties.