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Letter dated 18 September 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In our letter dated 10 July 2020 ([A/74/946-S/2020/704](#)), we drew attention to the outrageous falsifications contained in the voluntary national review report of Armenia on the Sustainable Development Goals and to the biased conduct of the meeting by the Chair, the Permanent Representative of Armenia, during the consideration of the report at the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development on 10 July 2020.

In his letter dated 27 July 2020 ([A/74/967-E/2020/6](#)), the Permanent Representative of Armenia failed to provide any credible explanation in regard to serious concerns validly expressed by Azerbaijan and, in fact, admitted that he had volunteered to chair the above-mentioned meeting of the high-level political forum with the only purpose to prevent open, transparent and meaningful discussion of his Government's report.

In response to our protest against the map of Armenia contained in the above-mentioned voluntary national review report, displaying the Nagorno-Karabakh region



and the surrounding districts of Azerbaijan currently under Armenia's unlawful military occupation in the same colour as Armenia itself, the Permanent Representative of Armenia found nothing other than to resort to totally false, absurd and repeatedly refuted allegations. By asserting that "Nagorno-Karabakh has never been part of independent Azerbaijan" and that "the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are entitled to freely enjoy their inalienable rights, including the right to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development", the Government of Armenia confirms that it is not genuinely interested in engaging faithfully and responsibly in the negotiations to resolve the conflict peacefully on the basis of international law.

Moreover, the Permanent Representative of Armenia refrained from clarifying whether the fake map in question and his subsequent assertions, which are obviously not shared by a single State in the international community and are in clear contradiction with international law, the relevant Security Council resolutions and the agreed parameters of the settlement of the conflict, should be interpreted as Armenia's formal declaration on the annexation of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan. If so, and nothing testifies to the contrary, Armenia's unilateral withdrawal from the peace process is already an accomplished fact.

History, which Armenia so desperately tries to manipulate, is definitely not on its side. As is well known, "Nagorny Karabakh" or "Nagorno-Karabakh" is a Russian translation of the original name in the Azerbaijani language, "Dağlıq Qarabağ" (pronounced "Daghlygh Garabagh"), which literally means the mountainous Karabakh. While the mass settlement of Armenians in the area and the broader South Caucasus originated only in the first half of the nineteenth century, both the lower and mountainous Karabakh have historically been an inalienable part of Azerbaijan, including the first independent Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918–1920 and then the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan restored its independence in 1991 with the territorial boundaries that the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic had possessed within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Consequently, the definition of the territory of Azerbaijan as it proceeded to independence, and in the light of the applicable law, clearly included the mountainous Karabakh. The situation following the independence of Azerbaijan and the actions of Armenia are also clear. Any attempt by Armenia to encourage, procure or sustain the secession of that area from Azerbaijan is simply unlawful in international law.¹

In its unanimously adopted resolutions [822 \(1993\)](#), [853 \(1993\)](#), [874 \(1993\)](#) and [884 \(1993\)](#), the Security Council not only did not mention the existence of the "people of Nagorno-Karabakh" and its so-called "inalienable rights", but unequivocally 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. The numerous documents of other international organizations, expressing the unified position of the world community, are framed along the same lines.

It is important to note that the resolutions of the Security Council and the decisions and documents of other international organizations were adopted after the extremist forces among the Armenian community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan unilaterally declared their "independence".

¹ For more information, see Malcolm Shaw, "Report on the fundamental norm of the territorial integrity of States and the right to self-determination in the light of Armenia's revisionist claims" ([A/74/961-S/2020/729](#), annex).

Consequently, the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region is unequivocal – it is the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan under Armenia’s temporary unlawful occupation. Needless to say, the whole foundation of the international legal order would collapse if Armenia’s claims and fabrications had succeeded.

Another false allegation contained in the letter from the Permanent Representative of Armenia is that Azerbaijan “has chosen not to support the Secretary-General’s appeal for a global ceasefire”. By its letter dated 25 June 2020 addressed to the Secretary-General, the Government of Azerbaijan expressed its support for the appeal. This support was reiterated in the letter dated 31 August 2020 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan to the Secretary-General (A/74/1003-S/2020/872, annex).

As to Armenia itself, it was clear from the outset that its ostentatious statements about alleged adherence to the appeal of the Secretary-General are nothing but a hollow rhetoric and smokescreen to camouflage its own aggression and annexationist objectives. The recent attacks by the armed forces of Armenia against Azerbaijan across the international border, far away from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, regular ceasefire violations and deliberate actions aimed at changing the demographic, cultural and physical character of the occupied territories, in clear violation of international law, are illustrative in that regard.

With regard to their comments on human rights and democracy, the Armenian authorities should first look closely at themselves, rather than blame other countries. Indeed, all successive Governments in Armenia, including the current one, have come to power violently and have resorted to the cruellest possible methods of dealing with political opponents. Thus, the first President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrossian, was accused of rigging the elections in 1996 and forced to resign in 1998 after accepting a step-by-step settlement of the conflict with Azerbaijan, which was premised on the relevant Security Council resolutions and documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The following year, as a result of a terrorist attack in the National Assembly (parliament) of Armenia, eight people were killed: the Prime Minister, the Speaker and two Deputy Speakers of the National Assembly, one minister and three members of parliament. In 2008, 10 people were killed, dozens were sent to prison and a state of emergency was imposed to silence the protests against falsifications made during the presidential elections in the country.

Following the latest change in the Government in Armenia, which has again taken place under compulsion and in spite of the results of the elections, the new authorities at the outset started to diligently accuse their predecessors of authoritarian rule, systemic corruption, election rigging and the suppression of democracy and human rights. However, the natural question arises as to whether and under what grounds the current Armenian authorities should be regarded differently. The crackdown on opposition, the persecution of political opponents, politically motivated killings, limited freedom of media and interference in the judiciary are bitter realities in today’s Armenia.

As to Armenia’s groundless speculations about the so-called “anti-Armenian policies”, “Armenophobic hatred and propaganda”, the purpose is evidently to mislead the international community and disguise its own hate crimes and long-standing and deep-rooted racist policy. Thus, in contrast to the allegations contained in the aforementioned letter of 27 July 2020 that, “[f]or Armenia, the protection of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and other vulnerable groups, including children, refugees and people with disabilities, are undisputable priorities, both domestically and internationally” and that “[n]ational minorities are part of the vibrant political and civil life in Armenia”, the Government of Armenia itself stated, in its fourth periodic report under the International Convention on the Elimination of

all Forms of Racial Discrimination, that “Armenia is a mono-ethnic State”.² Therefore, the Armenian authorities must now clarify how they contrive to protect national minorities that were eradicated and are absent in the country.

Indeed, it is undeniable that, unlike other countries in the South Caucuses and across the globe, Armenia is uniquely mono-ethnic, having achieved such a discreditable situation, not as a result of natural demographic processes, but by expelling all non-Armenians, including in particular Azerbaijanis – once the largest national community in Armenia. There is not a single Azerbaijani remaining in present-day Armenia, of the more than half a million Azerbaijanis who lived there until the 1920s and onwards. The expulsion of the remaining 250,000 Azerbaijanis in the late 1980s was accompanied by the brutal killing of hundreds of innocent people. The Azerbaijani historical and cultural heritage has been consistently and deliberately eradicated in Armenia. Those monuments, buildings and religious sites that survived until the late 1980s have since been destroyed or subjected to the so-called “reconstruction” in such a way as to alter their Azerbaijani authenticity. All Azerbaijani historical localities were renamed throughout Armenia, and all Azerbaijani cemeteries in that country were destroyed and desecrated.

Armenia has applied the same policy and practice of creating ethnically homogenous areas to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The war waged by Armenia against Azerbaijan claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people and ruined cities, towns and villages; thousands of people went missing in connection with the conflict; and all areas captured were ethnically cleansed of their Azerbaijani population. Thousands of historical monuments, mosques, museums and cemeteries have been destroyed and plundered in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The sole purpose of alleged “archaeological excavations” or the so-called “reconstruction” and “development” projects implemented in those territories is to remove any signs of their Azerbaijani cultural and historical roots. All these acts were committed by the Armenian side on a widespread and systematic basis and amount to crimes under international law.³

Armenia’s discredited record is burdened also by the glorification of international terrorists and war criminals, whose only service rendered to Armenia and the factor uniting them were the killing of thousands of Azerbaijani civilians on ethnic and religious grounds in different periods of history. Suffice it to mention a few names.

Among the national heroes in Armenia is a certain Varujan Karapetyan, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in a European country for a terrorist act that claimed the lives of 8 people and injured 55 others. Another well-known international terrorist in the 1980s, who was raised to the status of national hero in Armenia, is Monte Melkonian. He was sentenced to six years in prison in the same European country and, after release, used his skills to kill and expel Azerbaijani civilians until he was liquidated by the Azerbaijani military in 1993. A Nazi collaborator during the Second World War, Garegin Ter-Arutunyan (nicknamed “Nzhdeh”), is also a national hero in Armenia. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison, where he died in 1955. In 2016, a monument to this war criminal was unveiled in the capital of Armenia. The ceremony was attended by the President of Armenia and other high-ranking officials.

As is seen from the above, Armenia’s leading positions in hate crimes, fabrications and hypocrisy are well deserved and incontestable, and it definitely must be the last to share experience about the values of democracy, human rights and responsible intergovernmental collaboration and multilateralism.

² CERD/C/372/Add.3, para. 5.

³ See, for example, A/62/691-S/2008/95, A/70/1016-S/2016/711, A/72/747-S/2018/115, A/72/842-S/2018/364, A/74/851-S/2020/388 and A/74/676-S/2020/90.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 9, 14, 19, 35, 40, 70, 71, 72 and 86, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
