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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****Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts****The rule of law at the national and international levels****Security Council  
Seventy-fifth year****Letter dated 5 May 2020 from the Permanent Representative  
of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General**

In reference to the letters dated 13, 17 and 20 April 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia ([A/74/801-S/2020/298](#), [A/74/815-S/2020/314](#) and [A/74/818-S/2020/320](#)), I would like to point out the following.

First, two of the above-mentioned letters contain as their annex the so-called “statements” on behalf of the illegal puppet regime established by Armenia in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In this connection, we register once again our resolute protest against the continued circulation by Armenia of various papers in the name of that regime. Besides being a primitive fabrication and example of extreme cynicism, such papers are null and void per se and must be rejected at the outset.<sup>1</sup> The very fact of propagating a regime, which has been set up as a result of aggression, ethnic cleansing and mass killings, graphically demonstrates Armenia’s refusal to comply with the obligations incumbent on it under the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The international community has recently reaffirmed its consistent and principled position of collective non-recognition of the situation resulting from the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan by rejecting and invalidating the so-called “elections” to the self-styled structures of the puppet regime staged by Armenia on 31 March and 14 April 2020.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, Armenia’s statement on its alleged support for and adherence to the appeal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a global ceasefire is an

<sup>1</sup> See [A/72/508-S/2017/836](#), [A/72/889-S/2018/546](#), [A/73/689-S/2018/1167](#), [A/74/320-S/2019/669](#), [A/74/636-S/2019/1014](#) and [A/74/744-S/2020/193](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [A/74/805-S/2020/301](#).



example of another falsehood, which is, however, not uncommon for aggressors. Spurious peacefulness and commitment to truce and ceasefire are among the tools that they frequently employ in attempts to freeze military gains achieved as a result of the unlawful use of force and the scorched earth policy.

It is worth mentioning that, since the very first day of the conflict and until the establishment of the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1994, large-scale combat operations have been conducted exclusively inside the territory of Azerbaijan, almost in the middle of the country, affecting its civilian population and infrastructure. It is the territories of Azerbaijan that were seized, looted and devastated and it is our hundreds of thousands of citizens who were forcibly expelled from their homes and properties in those territories.

Moreover, over the years passed since the establishment of the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1994, along with its unconstructive stance in the peace process, the armed forces of Armenia have regularly violated the ceasefire, targeting the positions of the armed forces of Azerbaijan and subjecting the towns and villages in my country situated along the front line and the border between the two States to direct and indiscriminate attacks. Such attacks continue notwithstanding the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire and Armenia's declared support for this initiative. Thus, only from 1 to 5 May 2020, the armed forces of Armenia violated the ceasefire 116 times, using mortars, large-calibre machine guns and sniper rifles.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Armenia has pursued the deliberate policy of consolidating the status quo of the occupation, including by strengthening its military build-up in the seized territories and changing their demographic, cultural and physical character, in clear violation of international law.

Thirdly, the unlawful presence of and provocations resorted to by the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan are the main causes of incidents and casualties in the conflict and the major impediment to its political settlement. This was also the case during the outbreak of hostilities that occurred in 2016.

In the early hours of 2 April 2016, the armed forces of Armenia, from their positions in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, subjected the armed forces of Azerbaijan along the front line and the adjacent densely populated areas to intensive fire with heavy artillery and large-calibre weapons. As a result of Armenia's attacks, 34 towns and villages in Azerbaijan were shelled, causing casualties among civilians and the servicemen of the armed forces of Azerbaijan as well as destroying or substantially damaging private and public property, including residences, schools and kindergartens. A total of 6 civilians were killed and 33 civilians (including children) were wounded.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Azerbaijan published a report that described the forced displacement that had resulted from Armenian attacks on civilians in the beginning of April 2016. The report stated that, of the 121,761 people who lived in towns and villages in Azerbaijan affected by violence (which included "intense shelling" and the "use of rockets and heavy artillery [which] resulted in numerous casualties"), an estimated 58,594 were "at various stages of displacement", meaning that they were "either leaving their residences every night fearing the nightly artillery bombardments, relocat[ing] more vulnerable family members away from the frontlines or mov[ing] to a safer location altogether". UNHCR reported that the violence that had started in April 2016 had "changed fundamentally" the lives of people living near the "Line of Contact" "due to the use of new and heavier types of military hardware inflicting worse damage and

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.mod.gov.az/en](http://www.mod.gov.az/en), A/74/798-S/2020/295 and A/74/804-S/2020/300.

reaching further behind the frontlines”, as a result of which many civilian objects, including schools, were damaged in the area near the front line in the Goranboy, Tartar, Aghdam and Aghjabedi districts of Azerbaijan.<sup>4</sup>

Generally, ceasefire accords must be respected, implemented in good faith and not misused. One cannot demand to abide by the ceasefire arrangement when it fits its interests and violate it when it does not. What makes any ceasefire durable is the will of the parties to seek a resolution to the conflict. A ceasefire, even when longstanding, is not meant to last forever. The ceasefire arrangements suspend military operations, but do not terminate the state of war. Such arrangements are merely supposed to be a springboard for diplomatic action to remove the consequences of the armed conflict and achieve a political settlement.

It is what Armenia must finally understand instead of continuing its unlawful actions under the cover of the ceasefire. Its populist declarations about alleged adherence to the ceasefire are nothing but a hollow rhetoric and smokescreen to camouflage its annexationist aspirations. Despite a certain intensification in the frequency of meetings between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the past years, the apparent lack of political will of Armenia continues to impede the process for moving forward. The decrease in tensions along the front line since at least September 2018 did not result in progress in the negotiations. Recent statements from Armenia challenging the step-by-step approach in the resolution of the conflict, agreed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe participating States by consensus and endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in its relevant resolutions, vividly demonstrate how far this country is from a constructive search for peace and reveal its true intentions to derail the political process and to further consolidate the unsustainable and dangerous status quo.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 32, 37, 75 and 83, and of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Yashar Aliyev  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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<sup>4</sup> UNHCR Azerbaijan, “Assessment mission report: populations affected by the violence on the line of contact in April 2016”, 15 May 2016, p. 2.