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Agenda items 9, 14, 19, 32, 37, 68, 70, 75 and 83

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Seventy-fifth year**

Letter dated 10 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to draw your attention to the outrageous falsifications in the maps contained on pages 24 and 29 of the voluntary national review report of Armenia on the Sustainable Development Goals, displaying the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the surrounding districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan currently under Armenia's unlawful military occupation in the same colour as Armenia itself. This fact demonstrates that Armenia is an aggressor and occupier of the territories of Azerbaijan and that Armenia's annexationist policy remains unaffected by changes in its Government.

We reject these falsifications as null and void, considering them as apparent non-compliance by Armenia with the Charter of the United Nations, international law, the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



In its resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), the Security Council condemned the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories and reaffirmed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory. The Security Council reconfirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied districts are an integral part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories. The General Assembly, in particular in its resolution 62/243, entitled “The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan”, and other international organizations have adopted a similar position.

Unfortunately, during the consideration of the voluntary national review report of Armenia at the 2020 high-level political forum on sustainable development on 10 July 2020, the Chair of the meeting, the Permanent Representative of Armenia, in an abuse of powers, ignored the repeated requests for the floor from my delegation. We express our resolute protest against the biased conduct of the meeting by the Chair, oppose its outcomes and demand that the fake maps be immediately and irreversibly removed from the report.

It is pertinent to recall that the outcome document containing the 2030 Agenda stated, *inter alia*, that there could be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. It further reaffirmed a commitment to international law, the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States and full permanent sovereignty of States over their wealth, natural resources and economic activity.

The aforementioned false information contained in the voluntary national review report illustrates that Armenia is in breach of those commitments. Furthermore, its attempts to consolidate the occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the surrounding seven districts of Azerbaijan, change their demographic composition and prevent the return to their homes and properties of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani internally displaced persons, along with the destruction and appropriation of property, the exploitation and pillage of natural resources and other wealth in the occupied territories, in grave violation of international law, can in no way be consistent with the 2030 Agenda.

This policy of Armenia also does a total disservice to the genuine interests, aspirations and well-being of the Armenian people, which can be ensured only through good-neighbourly relations. The Sustainable Development Goals are achievable for Armenia, first and foremost, only if its armed forces are immediately, unconditionally and completely withdrawn from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, as demanded in the aforementioned Security Council resolutions.

In addition, human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, embrace all humanity, and respect for these rights must be accorded on an equal and non-discriminatory basis. Armenia’s policy is based on a distorted understanding of commonly agreed values.

Moreover, unlike other countries in our region and beyond, Armenia is uniquely monoethnic. The causes of such an unsightly situation should be sought in the State policy of intolerance and discrimination, manifested in the forcing out of all non-Armenians on ethnic and religious grounds, including the expulsion of the remaining 250,000 Azerbaijanis at the end of the 1980s. The Azerbaijani historical and cultural heritage has been consistently and deliberately eradicated in Armenia; all Azerbaijani localities throughout the country have been renamed. That it is a pattern is evidenced in the same deliberate practice applied by Armenia to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Further, the fact that war criminals continue to enjoy immunity and are glorified in Armenia proves that the key constituents of this Member State's policy of aggression, racism and deep-rooted hatred remain unaffected by changes in its Government. Such a policy is definitely in defiance of human rights and incompatible with democracy.

Besides, all successive governments in Armenia, including the current one, have come to power by means of violent upheaval, and their terms in office have been accompanied by authoritarian rule, systemic corruption, election rigging and suppression of democracy and human rights.

Finally, while reporting about its GDP growth rate, as allegedly the highest among even the European countries, and other far-fetched achievements, the Government of Armenia passes in silence over the simple fact that its population has steadily declined from 3,538,171 in 1990 to 2,963,243 in 2020, that is, almost 600,000 less over 30 years. Undoubtedly, these numbers are significant enough for a small country. This process has not slowed down since 2018; rather, it has continued at an accelerated pace. If the Government of Armenia is confident in its successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, why do so many citizens of Armenia prefer to migrate for a better life in other countries?

Taking into account the above-mentioned facts, the voluntary national review report of Armenia containing the false information and, consequently, the entire reporting process of that Member State on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals have no validity whatsoever.

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, 32, 37, 68, 70, 75 and 83, and of the Security Council.

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