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Culture of peace

Prevention of armed conflict

**Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and
displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

**Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia
and related intolerance**

Promotion and protection of human rights

The rule of law at the national and international levels

**The responsibility to protect and the prevention of
genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes
against humanity**

**Security Council
Eightieth year**

Letter dated 1 April 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing in connection with the false allegations made by the Permanent Representative of Armenia on 21 March 2025, during the commemorative meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which compel me to point out the following.

Armenia's claims that the Armenian residents of the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan were subjected to "ethnic cleansing" in 2023 are supported by no evidence. On the contrary, the undeniable fact is that those who chose to relocate to Armenia or other countries did so voluntarily, despite Azerbaijan's every effort to encourage them to remain. If Armenia is genuinely interested in understanding the reasons behind this, it must look inwards at its own long-standing, brutal and systematic policy of racial segregation and ethnic incompatibility.



Moreover, Armenia's claims were refuted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,¹ the United Nations mission to the region² and the residents themselves, who attested publicly that they had not been coerced to leave by Azerbaijan.³

Such claims are particularly cynical given numerous atrocity crimes committed by Armenia during the conflict. Thus, it forced nearly 300,000 Azerbaijanis to flee their ancestral homeland in Armenia in the late 1980s and is now arbitrarily preventing their return; soon after unleashed large-scale aggression and seized the Garabagh region and the adjacent seven districts of Azerbaijan, keeping them under occupation for almost 30 years in open defiance of a series of Security Council resolutions; ethnically cleansed these territories of their more than 700,000 Azerbaijani population and replaced them with a mono-ethnic Armenian population; executed tens of thousands of Azerbaijani civilians in acts of mass murder; destroyed and desecrated Azerbaijani towns, cities, districts and heritage sites, including markers of Azerbaijani cultural identity; and looted natural resources and severely harmed the environment.

The international community thoroughly documented and condemned these acts, qualifying them as amounting to serious crimes under international law and the "unacceptable scorched earth policy".⁴

Despite the liberation of the territories of Azerbaijan from occupation and the end of the conflict, most of the internally displaced persons are still unable to return to their homes due to the devastating consequences of the war and the threat posed by landmines and other explosives that Armenia planted with the sole purpose of deliberately killing and maiming people and maximizing harm.

Another false allegation is that Azerbaijan holds Armenian "prisoners of war and other detainees" on racial grounds and fabricates charges against them. It should be reminded in this regard that Azerbaijan repatriated all detainees to Armenia under the terms of the trilateral statement of 10 November 2020. Moreover, after the end of the local counter-terrorism measures in September 2023, thousands of Armenian servicemen and members of illegal armed formations who laid down arms were set free as a humanitarian gesture and allowed to leave the territory of Azerbaijan.

¹ United Nations, biweekly press briefing, statement by Kavita Belani, representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Armenia, 29 September 2023; see the letters dated 5 December 2023 and 8 February 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/78/636-S/2023/960 and A/78/764), with footnotes 10 and 4, respectively, which quoted the briefing from the source that was available at that time (<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1g/k1gvc8zwrdr>).

² United Nations, "UN team completes mission to Karabakh", 2 October 2023, available at <https://azerbaijan.un.org/en/248051-un-team-completes-mission-karabakh>.

³ See, for example, "Azerbaijanis offered Armenians to stay in Khojaly, Karabakh Armenian says", 29 November 2023, available at <https://caliber.az/en/post/207092/> (with reference to an Armenian YouTube channel, Oragir News).

⁴ See, for example, Security Council resolution 853 (1993) adopted on 29 July 1993, para. 3; report by the Chairman of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Council on her visit to the Transcaucasian participating States, CSCE Communication No. 301, Prague, 19 November 1993, p. 8; General Assembly resolution 48/114, adopted on 20 December 1993; report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Francis M. Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/50, "Profiles in displacement: Azerbaijan" (E/CN.4/1999/79/Add.1), 25 January 1999; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "International protection considerations regarding Armenian asylum-seekers and refugees", September 2003, paras. 116–117; report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin: mission to Azerbaijan (A/HRC/8/6/Add.2), 15 April 2008.

As for those brought to justice, they are prosecuted for serious crimes committed during the conflict, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, torture and terrorism. These measures are fully consistent with the legislation and international obligations of Azerbaijan, while the claims of Armenia are illustrative of its blatant contempt for international law and the rule of law.

It is noteworthy that Armenia's similar attempts to discredit justice by relying on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) have been earlier rejected by the International Court of Justice. Thus, in its order of 7 December 2021, the Court made it clear that it "does not consider that CERD plausibly requires Azerbaijan to repatriate all persons identified by Armenia as prisoners of war and civilian detainees". The Court further concluded that "Armenia has not placed before the Court evidence indicating that these persons continue to be detained by reason of their national or ethnic origin".⁵

Furthermore, in its order of 17 November 2023, the International Court of Justice again did not warrant Armenia's request related to Azerbaijan's investigative actions regarding the leaders and military personnel of the former occupation regime.⁶

In addition, in its opinion issued in February 2025, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the Human Rights Council concluded in relation to one of the leaders of the former occupation regime that his deprivation of liberty did not constitute a violation of international law on the grounds of discrimination, nor of his right to a fair trial and due process and thus was not arbitrary. The Working Group pointed out that, "notwithstanding [the] claims to the contrary, [the person in question] was detained on the basis of criminal charges alleging serious threats to national security, public safety and public order", including the financing of terrorism, the participation in the creation and operation of illegal armed groups and illegal crossing of the State border. Moreover, according to the Working Group, "[t]hrough his actions, he is alleged to have contributed to violent raids by armed groups that resulted in numerous deaths, hundreds of injuries and the destruction of vast amounts of property, including through rocket attacks and the laying of thousands of mines".⁷

Above all, it is particularly ironic that Armenia, a mono-ethnic State with a long-standing and deeply entrenched policy of ethnic exclusivity and intolerance, where international terrorists, war criminals and racist ideologues are welcomed and honoured as national heroes, volunteered to speak at the commemorative meeting on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In reality, as anticipated, such a performance had the exact opposite effect for Armenia, leaving Member States perplexed and bewildered by the stark inconsistency between conciliatory declarations by its leadership, on the one hand, and the incendiary rhetoric by the same country's representative in the United Nations, on the other. Against this background, it is no coincidence that the armed forces of Armenia have recently intensified shelling of the Azerbaijani Army positions along the border and even attempted to invade Azerbaijan's airspace on 29, 30 and 31 March 2025 to carry out reconnaissance flights using unmanned aerial vehicles. This is not the way to peace, which requires strict compliance with international obligations in their

⁵ *Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan)*. Provisional Measures, Order of the International Court of Justice of 7 December 2021, para. 60.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Provisional Measures, Order of the International Court of Justice of 17 November 2023.

⁷ Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its 101st session, 11–15 November 2024: Opinion No. 46/2024 concerning Ruben Vardanyan (Azerbaijan), [A/HRC/WGAD/2024/46](#), paras. 86, 91, 107 and 117.

entirety, as well as responsible diplomacy, predictability and steadfast commitment to genuine reconciliation.

Azerbaijan will continue its efforts to end impunity for serious offences, to promote the rule of law and to build, strengthen and sustain peace and stability in the region.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 14, 32, 60, 61, 67, 69, 71, 84 and 132, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tofiq **Musayev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
