



633 Third Avenue, Suite 3210, New York, NY, 10017
Tel: (212) 371-2559, 371-2832 (ext. 101); Fax: (212) 371-2784, (646) 738-6143

**Statement by Mr. Tofiq F. Musayev
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations**

**at the General Debate of the First Committee of the seventy-eighth session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

9 October 2023

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election.

Our delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Azerbaijan is strongly committed to its arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament obligations.

Unfortunately, the situation in these fields was dismal in our part of the world.

The aggression committed against my country by neighboring Armenia in the early 1990s undermined peace and seriously destabilized the security situation in the region. A significant part of the territory of Azerbaijan was seized by force and remained under occupation for nearly thirty years, in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As a result of resumed hostilities in the fall of 2020, Azerbaijan liberated more than 300 cities, towns and villages from occupation. The very fact of the destruction or seizure on the territory of Azerbaijan of a huge amount of weapons belonging to the armed forces of Armenia once again exposed Armenia's persistent denial of its responsibility for aggression and non-compliance with arms control obligations.

Despite the ruinous consequences of the occupation and mass atrocities endured by the people of my country, Azerbaijan extended the hand of peace and initiated the process of normalizing inter-State relations with Armenia based on mutual recognition and respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. This initiative was widely supported by the international community, and concrete steps were taken to launch and move the process forward with the facilitation of international partners.

However, Armenia did everything possible, in words and deeds, to imitate and obstruct the talks, backtrack from its commitments, sustain and further incite violent ethnic separatism in the territory of Azerbaijan.

In clear violation of international law and the November 2020 trilateral statement, Armenia refused to completely withdraw its armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan and continued to transfer weapons, military equipment and soldiers there, including by the apparent abuse of the humanitarian designation of the Lachin road.

Armenia further refused to disclose the locations of the hundreds of thousands of landmines it laid on the territory of Azerbaijan. As a result, in the post-conflict period, 64 citizens of Azerbaijan were killed and 267 injured by mine explosions.

Armed provocations have become more frequent in recent months. Accumulation of additional military equipment and manpower, installation of long-term fortifications, re-planting of mines in already demined areas, conducting drone-surveillance and reconnaissance-subversion operations inside the territory of Azerbaijan and even interfering with GPS satellite navigation systems of local and foreign passenger aircrafts flying in Azerbaijan's airspace are just some of them.

Azerbaijan took appropriate measures putting in place the effective border control to guarantee the safety of people and address the increasingly critical security situation. Further, last month, on 19-20 September, following new deadly terrorist acts that caused numerous casualties among our civilians and military, Azerbaijan undertook local counter-terrorism measures against the Armenian armed forces illegally deployed and present on the territory of Azerbaijan.

These measures were carried out in full accordance with the rights and responsibilities vested in States under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and in strict compliance with international humanitarian law. They lasted less than 24 hours and culminated in the dissolution of the former occupation regime and its structures and the surrender and disarmament of the Armenian armed forces on the territory of Azerbaijan.

Allegations about indiscriminate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure and the risk of genocide are false and highly irresponsible. On 2 October 2023, the United Nations mission that visited the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan reported that it "saw no damage to civilian public infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and housing, or to cultural and religious structures", "did not observe any destruction of agricultural infrastructure" and "did not come across any reports – neither from the local population interviewed nor from the interlocutors – of incidences of violence against civilians following the latest ceasefire."

Offensive weaponry and military equipment seized from surrendering troops, including tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, rockets, air-defense systems, mortars, electromagnetic warfare equipment and millions of ammunition, reveal the shocking extent of militarization of the region and Armenia's contempt for its international obligations.

Mr. Chairman,

It is important that the international community remember and insist on accountability for the war that Armenia unleashed, the tens of thousands of civilians whom it killed, the massive ethnic cleansing that it carried out and thousands of cities, towns and villages that it razed to the ground.

We expect the international community to encourage Armenia to uphold its international obligations, cease and desist from territorial claims, interference in the internal affairs of Azerbaijan, disinformation and hate propaganda, engage faithfully in efforts to build peaceful co-existence and focus on the successful conclusion of negotiations on a peace treaty between the two countries based on their territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Attempts by some non-regional States to impose the experience of their colonial past and present on the South Caucasus and expand their xenophobic policies in the region, including by arming Armenia and supporting its hate narratives and revanchist objectives, do not serve peace.

Azerbaijan is firm in its determination to further advance peacebuilding, reconciliation, reintegration and development in the region, as well as to ensure justice and prevent and repel any threats to the safety and well-being of its people and the State's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Thank you.