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BMT yanında Daimi
Nümayəndəliyi**



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

**at the Sixth Committee of the seventy-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly
under agenda item 83: "The rule of law at the national and international levels"**

19 October 2023

Mr. Chairman,

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

As the Secretary-General has emphasized in his report on the strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities (A/78/184), upholding the rule of law is essential to addressing the complex crises of our time and to building peaceful societies with equal opportunities and with full respect for the rights and freedoms of all.

Azerbaijan's experience of nearly thirty years of occupation of its sovereign territories by neighboring Armenia, in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, is an illustration and reminder of the need to do much more to confront racist ideologies, hate propaganda, disinformation and misinterpretation of international law, to curb radical ethnic diaspora organizations, to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and to fight against impunity for serious offences.

The international community failed to prevent the aggression and atrocity crimes against Azerbaijan and our people, ensure the implementation of its own decisions and assist in resolving the conflict by peaceful means.

In a hope for endless impunity, Armenia never engaged faithfully in the peace process and, instead, directed all its efforts at colonizing the occupied territories of Azerbaijan under the cover of the ceasefire and the peace process. The defeat of this policy was inevitable.

By the fall of 2020, when the hostilities resumed, the situation was indicative of the absence of other reasonable means of bringing the aggression and occupation to an end, rendering the use of force in self-defence the *ultima ratio*. As a result of the 44-day war, Azerbaijan liberated more than 300 cities, towns and villages from occupation. Azerbaijan fought not against a fictitious entity or civilian residents, as Armenia falsely claims, but against the regular armed forces of Armenia, as well as terrorist and mercenary groups under its command and control, deployed in the territories of Azerbaijan.

Despite the post-conflict peace prospects and the efforts made in this regard, Armenia has opted for its usual practice of feigning participation in the normalization process while maintaining territorial claims, launching a smear anti-Azerbaijan campaign and attempting to sustain and further incite violent ethnic separatism in my country.

Having refused to completely withdraw its armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan, in violation of international law, the 1993 Security Council resolutions and the November 2020 trilateral statement, Armenia increased its armed provocations in recent months. On 19-20 September, following new deadly terrorist acts that caused numerous casualties among our civilians and military, Azerbaijan undertook the 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.

In the context of the efforts at the national level to promote accountability consistent with international standards, Azerbaijan has taken concrete steps to investigate and prosecute serious offences committed during the Armenian aggression, in full accordance with its national legislation and international obligations.

At the international level, we instituted legal proceedings within the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights under the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and the European Convention on Human Rights, respectively.

In its provisional measures of 7 December 2021, the ICJ ordered Armenia to “take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred, including by organizations and private persons in its territory, targeted at persons of Azerbaijani national or ethnic origin” and to “refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve”. There are numerous reports of Armenia’s non-compliance with these measure indicated by the Court.

Armenia subsequently requested that the Court order Azerbaijan to remove the border checkpoint it established at the entrance to the Lachin-Khankandi road. The Court's decision of 6 July 2023 to reject Armenia's request was a unanimous decision by all of the Judges of the Court, vindicating Azerbaijan's sovereign right to secure and protect its borders.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan commenced the inter-State arbitration under the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats to hold Armenia accountable for its extensive destruction of Azerbaijan's environment and biodiversity.

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, large-scale ethnic cleansing that it carried out and thousands of cities and towns and villages that it razed to the ground with the sole purpose of fulfilling its unlawful territorial claims based on fabricated historical narratives and racist ideology.

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

Thank you.