



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 Security Council open debate on the theme “Peace through dialogue: the contribution
of regional, subregional and bilateral arrangements to the prevention and peaceful resolution
of disputes”, under the agenda item “Maintenance of international
peace and security”**

20 October 2023

Mr. President,

At the outset, we would like to commend Brazil for having convened this important open debate.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional arrangements under Chapter VIII of the U.N. Charter is essential for the promotion of the purposes and principles of the Organization. Such cooperation does not take place in a legal vacuum. Regional, subregional and bilateral efforts should be based, first and foremost, on respect for international law, impartiality and the consent of the parties concerned.

Azerbaijan’s experience of nearly thirty years of occupation of its sovereign territories by neighboring Armenia, in blatant violation of the U.N. Charter, international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, is an illustration and reminder of the need to do much more at the regional and international levels to confront the misinterpretation of international law and to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

The international community failed to prevent the aggression, ethnic cleansing and atrocity crimes against Azerbaijan and our people and to ensure the implementation of its own decisions. The mediation efforts conducted within the framework of the OSCE to assist in resolving the conflict yielded no results.

Double standards and selectivity with regard to international law and attempts to maintain “a reasonable balance”, instead of calling a spade a spade, only emboldened the aggressor.

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 and effectively prevented international access to these territories for almost thirty years. 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.

Despite the post-conflict peace prospects and the efforts made to that end with the facilitation of international partners, Armenia has opted for maintaining territorial claims, refusing to completely withdraw its armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan, further inciting violent ethnic separatism in my country and increasing armed provocations on the ground.

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 U.N. Charter 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.

At this critical juncture, we expect the international community to encourage Armenia to strictly abide by its international obligations, cease and desist from disinformation and misinformation and engage faithfully in efforts to build peace and stability in the region.

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 propaganda, 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.