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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yashar Aliyev  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations  
at the Security Council open debate on the theme “The rule of law among nations”, in  
connection with the under the agenda item “The promotion and strengthening of the rule of  
law in the maintenance of international peace and security”**

***12 January 2023***

Mr. President,

Allow me to begin by congratulating Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland for assuming the membership of the Security Council and wish them every success in discharging their highly responsible mandate. We are also grateful to the Japanese presidency for having organized this important open debate.

The United Nations was established to prevent war and human suffering by binding all its Members through a common international legal order.

As one distinguished scholar has emphasized, the U.N. Charter is not only the multilateral treaty which created the organization and outlined the rights and obligations of its Member States, it is also the constitution of the United Nations, laying down its functions and prescribing its limitations.

However, despite their universal acceptance and binding character, the purposes and principles of the Charter continue to be overtly neglected, resulting in the disruption of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, increased brutality of armed conflicts, identity-based intolerance and growing terrorist and separatist threats.

Mr. President,

By the time of joining the United Nations in May 1992, Azerbaijan had already been facing the armed aggression from neighboring Armenia for several years, at the core of which were the notorious ethno-nationalist ideology, fabricated historical narratives and groundless territorial claims.

Contrary to its solemn commitment to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force, Armenia seized and held under occupation for nearly thirty years a significant part of the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan.

The consequences of the aggression are shocking: tens of thousands of people were killed; all occupied territories were ethnically cleansed of more than 700,000 Azerbaijanis; hundreds of cities, towns and villages in my country were razed to the ground; and tremendous losses were inflicted on Azerbaijan's cultural and religious heritage and the environment.

The condemnations and binding demands contained in Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884, unanimously adopted in 1993, were simply ignored by Armenia, while the OSCE-led mediation failed to facilitate a negotiated settlement.

The lack of adequate reaction from relevant international institutions and double standards and selectivity with regard to the universally recognized obligations only encouraged Armenia to continue sticking to its guns and contributed to its sense of permissiveness.

The resumption of hostilities in the fall of 2020 became a logical consequence of Armenia's decades-long impunity. Armenia's direct and indiscriminate attacks against the populated areas in Azerbaijan caused numerous civilian casualties and significant damage to civilian infrastructure.

Azerbaijan resolutely responded to protect its people and liberate its occupied territories, acting exclusively on its sovereign soil, in full conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

After the end of the war, domestically, Azerbaijan prioritized the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the liberated territories and their reintegration into the country's economy to ensure the safe return of the displaced population and the high standard of living. To this end, by the decree of 7 July 2021, the President of Azerbaijan established the Karabakh and East Zangazur economic regions. Large-scale works continue in these regions.

To ensure accountability for egregious violations of international law, Azerbaijan instituted legal proceedings within the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights. Additionally, several individuals were prosecuted and punished for war crimes and terrorist and mercenary activities.

At the same time, Azerbaijan initiated the process of normalizing inter-State relations with Armenia based on mutual recognition and respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity within their internationally recognized borders.

Despite the broad international support for this initiative and the principles of normalization proposed by Azerbaijan, as well as intense diplomatic efforts over the past year, Armenia's approaches and actions in promoting the agreed commitments have not been faithful and straightforward.

We resolutely reject as false and misleading the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Armenia at this meeting.

Hackneyed fabrications and deliberate deceptions are part of Armenia's long-standing policy of disinformation carried out against the background of its decades-long blatant violations of international law.

It is paradoxical that Armenia – the country which unleashed aggression against Azerbaijan, held the sovereign territories of my country under occupation for almost thirty years, carried out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale and committed other heinous crimes during the war – appeals now to the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

However, it would be naïve to believe that Armenia suddenly realized the imperative of respecting the norms and principles of civilized behaviour and reconsidered its deeply rooted stereotypes of racial hatred and superiority.

Armenia must abide by its international obligations, completely withdraw its armed forces and illegal armed formations from the territory of Azerbaijan, cease and desist from territorial claims and illegal activities, put an end to mine terrorism, shed light on the fate of several thousand Azerbaijanis who went missing during the conflict, redress the harm caused to Azerbaijan and our people and concentrate on direct negotiations with a view to finding soonest diplomatic solutions pertaining to inter-State relations.

It is more important than ever for the entire international community to support bilateral and result-oriented talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the agreed principles and commitments. The still remaining opportunity to turn the page of enmity and establish a sustainable and lasting peace must not be missed.

Thank you.