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42nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

**Clustered ID with SR on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation
and**

**SR on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound
management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes**

Right of Reply

**delivered by Shahriyar Hajiyev, Third Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN Office and other International Organizations in
Geneva**

09 September 2019

Thank you, Mr. President,

The issues raised in the statement focused on the environmental crimes being carried out by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan resulting in widespread, long-term and severe damage to the environment, including the biodiversity of the occupied territories, through destroying forests, burning and degrading soil and polluting water resources.

Nearly three decades, Azerbaijan continues to suffer from the aggression of Armenia, which has led to the seizure of 20 % of the territory of our country, claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people, ruined cities and livelihood and resulted in the ethnic cleansing of more than 1 million Azerbaijanis from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and Armenia itself.

Apart from aggression and occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan, Armenia employed nature as a method and means of brutal warfare against our country by causing widespread, long-term and severe damage to the environment, including the biodiversity of the occupied territories, through destroying forests, burning and degrading soil and polluting water resources.

Armenia dumps household waste, sewage and radioactive substances of industrial enterprises into the Araz River, thereby carrying out an environmental crime against Azerbaijan.

The attention should also be paid to the outdated Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant, which started to operate in Armenia in 1976 and which is regarded as a clock bomb threatening the South Caucasus region and its neighborhood. The Plant is located in extremely delicate seismically activity zone, it fails to meet the internationally accepted safety standards and has neither emergency core cooling system, nor primary containment structure. In total disregard of the danger, Armenian government extended the service life of the Plant until the year 2026, moreover is exploring the construction of a new second nuclear power plant.

Despite the demands of UN Security Council and UN General Assembly resolutions, Armenia continues to violate international law through damaging the environment of Azerbaijan and depleting natural resources in the occupied territories.

When it comes to the notion of “constructive engagement” by the authorities of the occupied territories, it is the Armenia that bears full responsibility over crimes committed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan not a puppet regime whatever its name.

Thank you.