



Statement

33rd session of the Human Rights Council

Agenda item 3

Clustered interactive dialogue with Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, and Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes

16 September 2016

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan welcomes the Working Group and the Special Rapporteur and thanks them for their reports.

With regard to the ongoing global study of the Working Group on national laws and regulations concerning private military and security companies, we would like to emphasize that there is no any private military company in Azerbaijan. As mentioned in the report of the Working Group the legislation of Azerbaijan regulates in detail the issues related to private security companies used for the protection of certain places.

Azerbaijan considers the recruitment, financing, training and use of mercenaries in armed conflicts as a violation of principles of international law such as those of sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity of states. With this in mind, Azerbaijan became a party to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries in 1997. In this regard, some amendments were made to the national legislation, and now such activities are regarded as war crime in the legislation of Azerbaijan.

It should be also mentioned that regretfully, mercenaries are still used by some countries in armed conflicts. In this regard, we are seriously concerned that Armenia, which is the only country that is not a party to the above-mentioned UN Convention in the South Caucasian region, still continues to use mercenaries from the Middle East, Europe and North America, in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and other regions of Azerbaijan. These facts have been reported also by numerous NGOs and mass media, including those of Armenia.

Mr. President,

Azerbaijan is concerned that people in all parts of the world continue to suffer daily from hazardous substances and wastes, which is still a permanent challenge to the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, including those of children.

In this regard, we are seriously concerned about the outdated Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant, which started to operate in Armenia in 1976. The Metsamor NPP presents potential catastrophic threat to the whole region and the immediate neighborhood. It is located in the highly seismic zone with shortage of water resources to cool its aging reactor. The EU has already classified the Metsamor's reactors as the "oldest and least reliable".

Further, the dubious condition of spent fuel and waste material from Metsamor NPP endanger security and safety situation in the region, especially in the context of disposal of radioactive waste in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. There are increasing reports on this issue.

At the same time, the intensive pollution, contamination with chemical, radioactive and other hazardous substances and wastes of the fresh water reserves of Azerbaijan by Armenia, causes problems in supplying drinking water to the population.

Furthermore, it is a matter of serious concern that there is an increase of recently revealed facts in international media about the special role played by the Republic of Armenia in smuggling of nuclear and radioactive, as well as nuclear waste materials.

Moreover, the recent statements by the high-level Armenian officials concerning Armenia's possession of "nuclear weapon" and threatening Azerbaijan should be also highlighted in this regard.

At the end, we would like to request the Special Rapporteur to pay due attention to the above-mentioned facts of poisoning of the environment of the region by Armenia.

Thank you for attention.

