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**UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-fourth Session**

**Clustered Interactive Dialogue with
Special Representative of the Secretary General
on Children and Armed Conflict**

Statement

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

March 7, 2017

Mr. Vice-President,

At the outset, on behalf of the Delegation of Azerbaijan I'd like to thank both Special Representatives of the Secretary General for their reports.

In my statement I will focus on Ms. Zerrougui's report and taking this opportunity, I would like to extend our cordial congratulations upon the 20th anniversary of the mandate of Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. This anniversary is as though intended to remind us to look back and take stock of the progress accomplished in the course of past years, as well as identify gaps laid on the way ahead and address the issues which didn't get sufficient and duly attention.

As it is evident from the report, in comparison to the time when the mandate was enacted, today the issue of grave violations against children in armed conflict has reduced neither its relevance nor urgency. To the deepest regret in our expected to be civilized world children continue to be victims of military operations and the number of children suffering from psychological scars caused by armed conflicts continues to rapidly increase. The only fact that over half of the world's refugees are children indicates how much still needs to be done to protect children and their rights. Instead of practicing their fundamental human right to education, at the moment children in certain parts of the world are witnessing the brutalities of war, are forced to flee and rescue from bombs shelling their schools and homes, are recruited and exploited by violent extremist groups.

As a strong and consistent supporter of international efforts aimed at ensuring more effective protection for the rights of children and improving the situation of children affected by armed conflict, Azerbaijan strongly condemns all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed against children. It is also important to underline our strong condemnation of all acts of violence committed against girls in situations of armed

conflict. All necessary measures must be taken to bring perpetrators of such acts to justice and to put an end to impunity.

Azerbaijan's determination with regard to the protection of children in situations of armed conflict is based on my country's keen interest in contributing to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to the achievement of sustainable peace and development.

This interest also stems from our sad experience in addressing the devastating consequences of serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the war of aggression unleashed by Armenia against my country, almost 25 years ago.

As a result of the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan 20 percent of my country's territories still remain under illegal military occupation by Armenia and more than 1 million Azerbaijanis have become refugees and internally displaced persons.

Since 1992 hundreds of Azerbaijani children were killed by Armenian soldiers, 92 children taken hostage, 3393 lost one parent, 120 lost both parents, hundreds of thousands of children became refugees and IDPs.

This February 25 years have passed since the brutal massacre of innocent inhabitants of Khojaly, a town of in the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, where severe crime against humanity has been committed by Armenian military. In the course of the tragedy 613 persons were brutally killed, including 63 children, 487 inhabitants were severely maimed, 76 of which were children. There were children who went missing and whose fate is unknown to date.

It does raise a very big question what factor impacts the reason why Azerbaijani children - victims of Armenian aggression are not under the scope the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict's report.

This mentioned, Azerbaijan urges UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to reflect in the next report the situation of Azerbaijani children - victims of the ongoing armed conflict.

I thank you for your attention.