



**Right of reply by the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
as delivered by Mr. Seymur Mardaliyev,
Charge d'Affaires a.i of the
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UNOG in Geneva**

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Mr. President,

I am exercising this right of reply to the statement made by the Armenian Foreign Minister this morning which reminded me a famous oriental proverb that says “no matter how many times you say baklava, it will not make your mouth sweet”.

We regret this Council has again been abused by Armenia in order to disseminate false information aimed at justifying its state policy of gross violations of international law, including the UN Charter. Armenia continues to challenge the international community by continuing its illegal occupation of one fifth of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan. It continues ignoring the will of the international community reflected in four UN Security Council resolutions of 1993 unequivocally demanding the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent territories of Azerbaijan. Armenian military aggression claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people and resulted in the ethnic cleansing of indigenous Azerbaijani population in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and Armenia itself with more than one million Azerbaijanis forcibly expelled from their native lands. Today, when we all speak about the importance of the Human Rights Council as an efficient tool in promotion and protection of human rights, we must think seriously how such an aggressor country like Armenia has a moral right to bid for the membership in this august body.

Everyone sitting in this hall will agree that Nagorno-Karabakh region has never been and never will be either independent or affiliated with Armenia. It has always been and will continue to be an integral part of Azerbaijan as a heart of Azerbaijani culture, science, art and political life. Armenia should halt dreaming as we will never allow the second Armenian state to be established at the expense of Azerbaijani lands.

Armenian attempts to impose that principle of self-determination may be applied in the form of unilateral secession for the Armenians living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region is null and void as this principle according to the Helsinki Final Act cannot breach other norms of the international law such as prohibiting the threat or use of force against sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Azerbaijani and Armenian inhabitants of the region are entitled to the internal right to self-determination within the boundaries of Azerbaijan.

Piece of papers distributed in the Human Rights Council by Armenia on behalf of the unrecognized and subordinated to Armenia puppet regime established in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan which Armenian Foreign Minister referred to in his statement are null and void ab initio as they are in violation of the principles enumerated in Article 2 of the UN Charter. It is

nothing but yet another useless attempt by Armenia to propagate separatist regime and deny the irrefutable facts and evade responsibility for the continued blatant violations of international law.

Mr. President,

All statements by Armenia about democratic values and human rights will remain mere words unless they are translated into action that in case of Armenia would mean withdrawal of its armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and ensuring the return of forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis to their homes in safety and dignity.

If Armenia is indeed interested in the peaceful settlement of the conflict how the military exercise it started in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in the immediate eve of the next round of negotiations between foreign ministers of two countries in Washington DC last week, Armenian defense minister's statement on new war for new territories and the recent rewarding of snipers for killing two Azerbaijani servicemen are in line with this doctrine.

Armenia should finally understand that the current status-quo in the conflict zone does not represent a solution and will never generate a political outcome desired by Armenia. The resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. Armenia must grasp this reality and engage constructively in the conflict settlement process.

I thank you.