



**Right of Reply
expressed by Vuqar Hacıyev, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of
Azerbaijan
71st session of UNHCR Executive Committee**

7 October 2020

Mr. Chair,

We hereby express our right of reply with regard to the right of reply made by Armenia whereby it attempted to mislead the international community from the realities of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, including on the situation of ongoing escalation.

Armenia again follows its predictable way of distorting facts and attempting to mislead this body, instead of abiding by the calls of the international community to halt its policy of aggression and occupation against Azerbaijan.

In fact, the current escalation of the conflict and peace enforcement operations carried out by the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan is not only the result of long-standing occupation and aggression policy of Armenia, but also a response to the series of attacks by Armenia against our country as well as numerous attempts by Armenia to humiliate people of Azerbaijan throughout recent months.

On September 27, 2020 the armed forces of Armenia blatantly violating the ceasefire regime have launched another aggression against Azerbaijan, by intensively shelling the civilians and civilian infrastructure, using heavy weaponry, including mortar launchers and artillery. By doing so Armenia clearly showed that, continuing its policy of aggression, it is trying to implement the "new war for new territories" tactics, as stated by the country's officials and therefore bears full responsibility for the current situation and results thereof.

Mr. Chair,

Armenian representative on Monday talked about civilian casualties and made groundless accusation towards Azerbaijan for targeting civilian population. However, he would have never talk about the real attacks on civilians that currently is being carried out by Armenian armed forces shelling cities and towns of Azerbaijan that are located far from conflict zone, some of them even 300 km far from conflict zone. During last 5 days of the conflict Armenia is deliberately shelling civilians in Ganja, Tartar, Beylaqan, Barda, Shamkir, Mingachevir cities of Azerbaijan both from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and from its own territory. Among them I want to highlight ongoing shelling of Mingachevir which besides being densely populated, is located in the immediate vicinity of Mingachevir water reservoir together with electricity station, destruction of which will result in massive humanitarian catastrophe in the region.

While Armenia continues to deny these facts, yesterday the video footage was made public where the Armenian missile system "Tocka U" stationed in the centre of residential area and being used for rocket launching towards cities of Azerbaijan. This fact clearly shows the very nature of Armenian aggression: using human shield and blaming other side for civilian losses.

Besides attempting to attract other parties to the conflict and create a large scale regional war, Armenia's intentions also include spreading terror among people of Azerbaijan. In this connection, let me quote the advisor to the prime minister of Armenia Vagarshak Arutyunyan, in his video interview to the media: "We have prepared tactics to strike artillery, to destroy air defence system, then shell civilian residential areas in order to provoke panic."

Armenian representative also accused Azerbaijan on using mercenaries, which is also baseless, since Armenia never provided any proof for this. In contrast, Armenia's own newspapers (with photos) reported several months ago before the last escalation that foreign fighters from Middle East were stationed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and even took interview with them. Yesterday the special services of Azerbaijan made publicly available a radio contact between terrorists talking about their arrival to Armenia and heading to Nagorno Karabakh for battles. In additions, a lot of materials, including videos and photos are available through social media proving the participation of groups of mercenaries from Middle East from Armenian side in current confrontation.

Armenia needs mercenaries, because Armenian people does not want to fight in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Mr Chair,

The dialogue the importance of which has been rightly mentioned by the H.E. High Commissioner in his comments, were continuing almost 30 years. However, during these 30 years no any sign of agreement from Armenian side was shown for the implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions demanding immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from the territories of Azerbaijan.

We would like to inform you certain territories are already liberated from Armenian occupation, which means that certain number of forcibly displaced families out of overall 750 000 IDPs will return to the territories that we have liberated. It will be durable solution for these IDPs.

Azerbaijan urges the international community to condemn strongly Armenia's policy of aggression and occupation carried out against Azerbaijan and to express its solidarity with Azerbaijan in its just struggle to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and protect its population.

I thank you.