



**2021 session of the Conference on Disarmament
High-Level Segment**

**Right of Reply
delivered by Mr. Seymur Mardaliyev
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan
to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva**

24 February 2021

Mr. President,

I am exercising this right of reply to the statement just delivered by the Permanent Representative of Armenia.

We regret that this august forum has been abused by Armenia to disseminate fabricated propaganda against my country which my delegation resolutely rejects.

It is appalling that Armenia brazenly accuses Azerbaijan of what it has itself committed in the course of its military aggression against Azerbaijan in September - November 2020. The Armed Forces of Armenia have repeatedly used the prohibited cluster munitions and white phosphorus projectiles in their deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against densely populated areas of Azerbaijan situated both in the conflict zone and far beyond the military scene. As a result of these attacks, 101 Azerbaijani civilians, including 12 children were killed and more that 400 hundred were wounded.

Contrary to its imperative obligations under the international customary law and international humanitarian law, Armenia has also resorted to employ child soldiers and used kindergartens and school buildings for military purposes. All these facts have been well and widely documented by the international actors and confirmed in the several reports prepared by the international NGOs like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Armenia's refusal of handing over maps of minefields it had planted during the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and in particular on the eve of the withdrawal of its military from Azerbaijan, has already claimed the lives of 15 and led to injuries of 65 citizens of Azerbaijan since the end of hostilities between the two countries in accordance with the trilateral Statement signed by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia on 10 November 2020. This situation continues to cause serious threats to lives and safety of Azerbaijani population and affects the realization of the inalienable right of about a million of Azerbaijani IDPs to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

If Armenia is genuinely interested to be a part of a regional peace building and to benefit from opportunities emerged following signing the trilateral Statement which has laid unique ground for normalization of inter-state relations between the two nations on the basis of respect of each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders, it should focus on fulfilling its obligations under the Statements of 10 November 2020 and 11 January this year in a good faith including through halting to deploy terrorist-sabotage groups to the territories of Azerbaijan and withdrawing all its remaining military from the territories of Azerbaijan.

As for the members of the terrorist-sabotage group of the Armed Forces of Armenia captured in the de-occupied Xocavend region of Azerbaijan, these persons are not considered prisoners of war in accordance with international humanitarian law since they were deployed to the territories of Azerbaijan on 26 November 2020 – two weeks after the trilateral Statement on cessation of hostilities had been signed – by illegally crossing the international border from Armenia into Azerbaijan, and committed acts of sabotage and terrorism against the Azerbaijani military personnel and civilians that resulted in killing of four Azerbaijani soldiers and seriously wounding one civilian. They are liable under the criminal legislation of Azerbaijan and the investigation is underway.

Mr. President,

The statement by Armenia also demonstrates that it is still far from responsible behavior and building relations based on the letter and spirit of international law. Instead of looking into the future and adequately evaluating new regional realities and opportunities created, Armenia again comes out with statements which, to our deep regret, is an indicator of the destructive thinking of the Armenian political establishment. This way of thinking goes against the framework of peace, security and cooperation in the region following the trilateral statements signed on 10 November 2020 and 11 January 2021. It is nothing but a pathetic attempt to inflame the tension and encourage enmity.

We strongly condemn this approach by Armenia and call on the international community to persuade Armenia from actions that would undermine the ongoing efforts for restoring peace and stability in our region.

We call upon Armenia to grasp new realities emerged in the region. The reality is that Azerbaijan has effectively restored its territorial integrity and sovereignty over its internationally recognized territories by enforcing Armenia to peace. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict does not exist any longer and went to the history.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we strongly believe that all efforts should be directed to use this unique opportunity to establish a long-lasting peace and stability in the region. Azerbaijan is committed to the trilateral statements and demonstrates its willingness to turn over the pages of hostility, hatred and confrontation in order to build the future of the region.

I thank you.