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PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
ARMENIA TO THE OSCE

Opening Statement
by Ambassador Armen Papikyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia
at the 1066th Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation

17 January 2024

I would like to very warmly welcome the distinguished Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, H.E. Dr. Constantinos Kombos, and congratulate Cyprus on assuming the Chairpersonship of the Forum for Security Cooperation.

The Chairmanship of Cyprus comes at a critical time when the concept of comprehensive and indivisible security is being seriously undermined and trust and confidence across the entire OSCE region are deteriorating, making the core work of the Forum even more challenging.

Distinguished Chair,

We have carefully reviewed the programme of work for this trimester, which covers timely and highly relevant topics for discussion. It effectively addresses issues related to conflict situations and the severe consequences of armed conflicts.

In that context, I would like to highlight two topics selected for Security Dialogues that hold significant importance for my delegation: Women Peace and Security and International Humanitarian Law.

The promotion of women, peace, and security agendas remains critically important as discrimination and gender-based violence against women and girls continue to occur in many parts of the world, especially during armed conflicts and in conflict-affected regions. In this context, the landmark Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security sets a normative framework for ensuring the protection of women and girls in conflict situations, including those forcibly displaced as a result of conflicts. We recognise the importance of promoting gender equality and empowering women to actively participate in all aspects of the conflict cycle, as it is crucial for maintaining peace and security in our region.

The Delegation of Armenia also commends the intention to keep discussions on the implementation of International Humanitarian Law high on the agenda of this Forum, as thousands of people across the world continue to suffer from armed conflicts and conflict situations, including casualties, destruction of residences and civilian infrastructure, as well as erasure, distortion, and misappropriation of cultural and historical heritage.

Armenia remains committed to the full implementation of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. It believes that these principles can only be effectively preserved through an inclusive and consistent approach by the international community, including this organization. It is our strong conviction that this approach should apply to all conflict areas, without distinction or prioritization.

The aforementioned is particularly pertinent in the context of the latest aggressions accompanied by the attacks on civilian infrastructure and occupation of around 200 sq. km of Armenian sovereign territory, as well as other grave violations of IHL and war crimes committed by Azerbaijan. The latest war of aggression launched against Nagorno-Karabakh followed an almost 10-month-long inhuman and illegal blockade, weaponizing food for starvation, and resulted in the complete ethnic cleansing of the entire territory of Nagorno-Karabakh from its indigenous Armenian population. It is alarming and regrettable that just a week ago, the president of Azerbaijan continued to incite animosity and intolerance towards Armenians, make flimsy claims against Armenia's sovereign territory, and reject any attempts to bring about long-lasting peace in the South Caucasus, all while benefiting from the impunity of its previous crimes and violations of international law.

Mr. Chair,

We believe that no state can absolve itself of its obligations under international humanitarian law, and the perpetrators and those responsible for war crimes and other wrongful acts should be brought to justice.

The international community must demonstrate a strong commitment to addressing the egregious violations of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and take robust actions to safeguard fundamental human rights, especially those whose inalienable rights have been flagrantly and deliberately violated.

The OSCE must not stay silent in the face of outrageous violations of the principles of its founding document, the Helsinki Final Act. Failure to address these violations has already led to the recurrence of the use of force in other parts of the OSCE region and beyond. Eventually, this could result in the complete breakdown of comprehensive and indivisible security across the entire OSCE area.

In conclusion, allow me, Your Excellency, to assure you that the FSC Chairpersonship of Cyprus can count on our full support. Armenia is eager to work with the Chairpersonship of Cyprus and its professional team, under the leadership of our esteemed colleague Ambassador Ignatiou. We have full confidence in his stewardship of the FSC, aimed at ensuring meaningful discussions on challenging political-military issues and the ability to prevent attempts to misuse the FSC platform for political manipulations and abuse of its mechanisms to justify the use of force or legitimize its outcomes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing Chair Canada and extend a warm welcome to Croatia as a new Troika member.

Thank you.