

**Delegation of the Republic of Armenia**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**  
*Vienna, 17 May 2021*

**First right of reply at the General debate**

Mr. Chair,

It is extremely disappointing to see that the delegation of Azerbaijan continues to politicize the work of this functional commission which, as we have witnessed during those two days, has created major problems for the CCPCJ.

My delegation rejects all the groundless and manipulative allegations, which are solely aimed at covering up the violations of norms of international law and international humanitarian law committed by Azerbaijan during its recent war of aggression against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).

Mr. Chair,

The allegations pronounced by the delegation of Azerbaijan are the new fake narrative employed by that country targeting the Armenian Diaspora Organizations around the world my means of labeling and tarnishing the reputation of those organizations, which have been providing urgently required humanitarian relief and assistance to the deprived people of the Republic of Artsakh and all others in need in the face of the brutal war of aggression and ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijan.

The attempts of Azerbaijan to deprive the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) of rights to pursue economic, social, cultural, humanitarian and other activities by defining them as illegal or criminal constitute a clear violation of individual and collective human rights of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and thus should be unequivocally dismissed and condemned.

Let me remind to the representatives of Azerbaijan that many of the Armenian Diaspora Organizations, which Azerbaijan is attempting to target with its campaign, have been working in the field of humanitarian relief and assistance for many decades, providing humanitarian aid, first to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and then to the people of Armenia and Artsakh ravaged following the natural disaster (1988 earthquake), as well as continuous aggression by Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, some of the Armenian Diaspora Organizations have a history of humanitarian work and assistance longer than the history of the state of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Chair,

The Armenian Diaspora Organizations have been implementing humanitarian projects for decades and have achieved remarkable outcomes. They also have a quite long record of contributing to the development and prosperity of many host countries and societies where they have been residing.

By way of these ill-grounded and preposterous allegations the delegation of Azerbaijan also attempts to challenge and question, to say the least, the legal systems and capacities of law enforcement agencies of countries where Armenian humanitarian organizations are registered and operate. Azerbaijani delegation did not produce any evidence that could lead us to believe that the countries which otherwise have a stellar record of rule of law and compliance with all international law norms and standards, fail in their obligations. It is twice ridiculous to hear such allegations coming from Azerbaijan with its endemic corruption, whose track record of the rule of law is abysmal, and the suppression of voices of conscience and civil society organizations and activism is widespread.

Mr. Chair,

It is clear that by targeting all Armenians of the world, including in Armenia, Artsakh and Diaspora, the representatives of Azerbaijan, first and foremost are trying to whitewash its wrongdoings by way of diverting the attention of the international community. This tactic also perfectly falls within the logic of the deplorable policy of hate filled campaign against Armenians following the public ruling of the President of Azerbaijan, who in one of his statements openly declared that “all Armenians of the world are enemies of Azerbaijan”. This evolved into a racist and Armenophobic state policy, which has been persistently fostered at all levels of the Azerbaijani society for decades.

Following the 44-day war of aggression, the anti-Armenian hate policy manifested itself in the crimes committed against the Armenian cultural heritage and religious sites in the territories of Artsakh, occupied by Azerbaijan, including the destruction, alteration and misappropriation of churches. The opening of the abhorrent military trophy park in Baku on April 12, 2021, which showcased mannequins of Armenian prisoners of war in a most dehumanizing way is the apogee of state perpetrated and promoted hate policy.

Mr. Chair,

While saying that with this campaign Azerbaijan is trying to divert the attention of the international community from its wrongdoings, I refer also to the well-documented and widely-reported facts of recruitment by Azerbaijan and its ally of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters from well-known terrorist organizations such as DAESH and Jabbat Al Nusra, in its war of aggression against Artsakh.

Moreover, to provide financial and logistical support to this recruitment-transfer-deployment scheme, Azerbaijan used the resources of private entities, as well as state-affiliated non-profit organizations, which claim to have cultural, humanitarian or charitable character.

Furthermore, the track record of Azerbaijan in money-laundering is also widely known. The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, the OCCRP, investigated, revealed and extensively reported on Azerbaijani laundromat, used to launder billions of US dollars through shell companies to disguise their origin.

There are sufficient grounds to believe that Azerbaijan has used those laundering schemes to recruit-transfer-deploy of FTFs, hence to provide necessary financial and logistical support to terrorism, which is a violation of the UN Convention on the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism, as well as relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions on counter terrorism.

From the investigative reporting sources, we learn that the state-affiliated Azerbaijani carrier, the Silk Way Airlines has been engaged in series of illicit trafficking and transfer of firearms and small arms and lights weapons to many conflict zones and authoritarian regimes, in violation of the UNTOC Protocol on Firearms, as well as relevant international obligations.

According to the confirmed information, during the 44-days war of aggression against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries, ammunition, and military hardware were transferred to Azerbaijan while using the commercial cargo flights of the Silk Way Airlines.

Mr. Chair,

The brutal war of aggression waged by Azerbaijan against the people of the Republic of Artsakh last autumn, all war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Azerbaijan during that war, including the systematic shelling of densely populated settlements of Artsakh, including the capital Stepanakert, second largest city of Shushi, other cities and villages, the use of banned cluster munitions and incendiary weapons, including weapons containing white phosphorus, clearly show that the people of Artsakh are facing an existential threat. Moreover, the well-documented and reported fact of the engagement of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters by Azerbaijan in the pre-planned and premeditated aggression and ethnic cleansing against the people of Artsakh, makes our concerns of this existential threat even more acute, which require urgent international attention and efforts.

Armenia will continue to raise the awareness of the international community regarding the mentioned crimes, including the evolving threat of foreign terrorist fighters, and will do its utmost to bring the perpetrators to justice.

In the end, we once again call on the delegation of Azerbaijan to stop politicizing the CCPCJ and allow the Commission to focus on its substantive work, which is extremely crucial especially in these difficult times.

Thank you