

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

**First right of reply at the high-level segment
of the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

Kyoto, 7 March 2021

Mr. President,

My delegation has asked for the floor to use its right of reply to address the highly manipulative and fictitious statement of the delegation of Azerbaijan containing baseless allegations against my country.

First, let me mention that during the last 30 years, the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) under the conditions of non-recognized status has developed vibrant democratic institutions, including crime prevention and criminal justice system, which could serve as an example for Azerbaijan. Whereas Azerbaijan itself has become a safe haven for such crimes, as corruption, money laundering, human trafficking and drug trafficking. One need only to check the World Drug Report 2020, prepared by the UNODC, to see which country in our region has become a major source and transit of narcotic drugs smuggled to the developing countries. And that country is Azerbaijan. One need to check the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020 to see which country in our region has been a hotbed of human trafficking. And that country is Azerbaijan. To comprehend the amount of money shipped through offshores from Azerbaijan one needs simply to become acquainted with the scandal of Azerbaijani laundromat, revealed by the OCCRP, according to which only in 2 years (2012-2014) almost 3 billion dollars have left this country through different money laundering mechanisms and criminal financial flows.

Mr. President,

During the last 30 years Azerbaijan, guided by deep rooted hatred and xenophobia against all Armenians of the world, has systematically pursued anti-Armenian policies both inside the country, creating the collective enemy image of Armenians, and outside as an integral part of its foreign policy, aiming at Armenian diaspora communities worldwide. For years millions of dollars of assets acquired from various money-laundering schemes are and have been directed to different lobbying structures for this purpose. Today, however, we see that the Azerbaijani government itself is embarking on this task, which is a clear indication of the true intentions of that regime.

Mr. President,

The brutal suppression by Azerbaijan of the basic human rights of the people of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) including their inherent right to self-determination and the right to live free of any oppression on their ancestral lands is the root-cause of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. These brutal acts by Azerbaijan included ethnic cleansing of Armenians from all cities of Azerbaijan where they were compactly living including from the capital Baku, the cities of Sumgait, Kirovabad and others. Just a few days ago, Armenian nation was commemorating the 33th anniversary of the pre-planned massacres of Armenians carried out in the city of Sumgait (Azerbaijan) amid the encouragement of the Azerbaijani authorities and the permissiveness of the law enforcement bodies. Up until now, the real planners and perpetrators of this crime remain unpunished.

Those unhindered atrocities guided by deep rooted Armenophobia have resulted in two brutal wars, the recent one at the end of 2020 unleashed by Azerbaijan with the help of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Those wars were accompanied by grave violations of international humanitarian law, with many war crimes directed against the civilian population.

Mr. President,

The war crimes committed by Azerbaijan contain many elements of crimes, which in fact the international community has undertaken to tackle through their separate and joint efforts, which has brought us to the Kyoto Congress to elaborate viable mechanisms against those crimes.

The crimes committed by Azerbaijan and its military include but are not limited to deliberate targeting of civilian population, destruction and desecration of indigenous Armenian cultural heritage, misappropriation of Armenian medieval churches in the territories occupied by Azerbaijan. Furthermore, Azerbaijan has committed crimes that have a direct impact on the environment, using incendiary weapons containing white phosphorus against the people and forested areas of Artsakh, which has been thoroughly documented to assess the overall damage caused to the environment as a result of burning down large forested areas.

Last but not least, Azerbaijan with the help of Turkey has recruited and deployed in the ranks of its armed forces thousands of foreign terrorist fighters from the areas of Syria, which are currently under control of Turkey. For that purpose, Azerbaijan and Turkey have been employing different mechanisms, which seemingly contain elements of organized crime as well, to provide financial and logistical support to foreign terrorist fighters, which beyond any reasonable doubt was financed from the proceeds of crime of extensive corruption and money laundering in Azerbaijan, as well as through number of foundations, which claim to have charitable, cultural, and social goals.

In this vein Armenia as a co-sponsor of a number of UN resolutions on counterterrorism financing including the UNSC Resolution 2462 (2019), calls upon the international community to keep the illicit financial flows from Azerbaijan under its close monitoring and scrutiny.

Thank you.