

**REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**Statement at the high-level segment**  
**of the 14<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**  
*Kyoto, 7 March 2021*

**Mr. President,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Ever since its inception for almost seven decades ago, the United Nations Crime Congress has become one of the main platforms which gathered together governments, experts and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the whole range of issues related to crime prevention and criminal justice and elaborate necessary mechanisms and instruments to bolster our national and international criminal justice responses to all forms of rapidly evolving crime.

We are glad that for the second time in the history of the Crime Congress the beautiful city of Kyoto is hosting this important event, which shows the dedication and devotion of the Government of Japan to this crucial undertaking. In this vein, I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing our appreciation to the host country Japan as well as the UNODC for the excellent organization of the 14<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

We also commend the wise and skillful leadership of Japan, due to which after almost two years of intensive negotiations we were able to agree upon the Kyoto Declaration in the spirit of consensus. This is a crucial achievement, which sends a clear message to criminals that the international community is united in its efforts in crime prevention and criminal justice. We are confident that the Kyoto Declaration will serve as a lantern to light our way in this field for the years to come.

**Mr. President,**

Since the 2018 Velvet Revolution, the Republic of Armenia with a renewed resolve and determination has engaged in strengthening the democracy and rule of law in our country. For the last three years, Armenia has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda and has achieved significant progress in fostering a culture of lawfulness and improving legislative frameworks for crime prevention and criminal justice in close cooperation with our international partners.

One of the pillars of our reform agenda has been the judicial reform aimed at ensuring independence of the judiciary and strengthening public trust towards the system. Its key elements are the introduction of a balanced mechanism for evaluation of the integrity of judges as well as the establishment of functional, structural, material and social guarantees of their independence.

Unwavering fight against corruption is another important priority of the Government. The Anti-corruption Strategy introduces institutional framework focused on prevention, examination and

education. It includes issues related to the establishment of an anti-corruption institutional body, anti-corruption court, penalization of illegal assets and verification of property status of public officials.

The ongoing reform in the Police, apart from its strong anti-corruption component, aims also at transforming it to a more prevention-oriented body. A new specialized unit would be created for the protection of witnesses.

We have put at the heart of our criminal justice reform a human-centered and human-oriented approach with the objective of transition from a punitive to restorative justice. This approach is enshrined in the amended Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code which were approved by the Parliament in December 2020. The new Codes ensure a human rights-based approach in all stages of criminal justice; instrumentalize more advanced use of alternatives to detention and custodial sentences; as well as provide for the corpus delicti in line with international standards to name but a few of key improvements.

Guided by the public demand for elimination of the negative impact of criminal subculture, as a breeding ground for organised crime, the Criminal Code of Armenia also envisages criminal liability for such activities.

**Mr. President,**

The issue of hate crime is of particular importance and relevance for the delegation of the Republic of Armenia as the Armenian nation throughout its history has been a victim of discrimination, persecution, hate crimes and genocide due to intolerance towards its distinctive ethnic, religious and cultural identity and its different expressions.

Therefore, Armenia has undertaken targeted and consistent efforts to condemn and counter all acts of hate crime and strengthen our international legal frameworks in that regard.

Against this backdrop, the delegation of Armenia has initiated the inclusion of a separate paragraph on hate crime in the Kyoto Declaration to keep this important matter under the radar of our criminal justice responses for the years to come. And we would like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for co-sponsoring that paragraph as well as the interested delegations for their constructive approach throughout the negotiations.

**Mr. President,**

Armenia considers hate crime and crimes based on identity characteristics to basically be the first step that may lead to serious crimes against humanity including war crimes and ethnic cleansing. We believe that impunity for the past crimes, their justification and denial pave way for resurgence of violence and new atrocities.

A clear case in point is the recent war waged by Azerbaijan with the help and direct engagement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters against the Republic of Artsakh and its people. The causes of that war as well as the first war in Nagorno-Karabakh in the beginning of 1990s is deeply rooted in the hatred and discrimination against Armenians, their indigenous culture and denial of their basic human rights including the right to live without oppression on their ancestral lands.

The Armenophobic policy of Azerbaijan fostered throughout decades has found its most inhumane expression during its recent aggression against the people of Artsakh, which was accompanied by war

crimes and crimes against humanity. The most notorious examples of such crimes were the extensive use of cluster munition against the civilian population, the deliberate targeting and destruction of the Armenian cultural heritage and the use of incendiary weapons containing white phosphorus against the forcefully displaced population that found refuge in forests causing an irreplaceable damage both to the people and the environment.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan's refusal to return the prisoners of war and captives in gross violation of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols is another expression of the armenophobic policy and should not be tolerated by the international community.

**Mr. President,**

The recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters by Turkey and their subsequent deployment in the ranks of Azerbaijan's armed forces to shore-up and sustain the military operations is another grave crime committed by Azerbaijan and Turkey in gross violation of all international norms. Ample evidence obtained from all relevant sources, including the Internet and the battlefield, the testimonies of captured FTFs, public statements of leaders of a number of countries including the three members of the UN Security Council make it clear that Turkey and Azerbaijan support and promote the increase of terrorist threat in our region and beyond.

Therefore, we believe that the international community should join efforts to counter this threat and bring the supporters and perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice.

In this vein we welcome the fact that the Kyoto Declaration extensively addresses the crime of terrorism, which sends a clear signal to those who are engaged in the perpetration and facilitation of this crime. Having said that, we commend the tremendous efforts and dedication of the Chair of informal consultations on the Kyoto Declaration, H.E. Ambassador Takeshi Hikihara for his skillful leadership and wisdom to build consensus around a strong and targeted message against terrorism regardless of the attempts of some delegations to water down this important part of the Declaration to cover-up their vulnerabilities in this field.

In the end, I would like to once again congratulate Japan and the UNODC Secretariat for the excellent organization of this extremely important event, especially in light of restrictions posed by the global coronavirus pandemic, and wish to all delegates a fruitful work.

I thank you, Mr. President