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Prevention of armed conflict

**The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide,
war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity**

**Letter dated 3 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of
Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic) on the thirty-second anniversary of the massacre of Armenians in the city of Sumgait (Soviet Azerbaijan) (see annex).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 31 and 130, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mher **Margaryan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 3 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Comment by the Information and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh on the thirty-second anniversary of the massacre of Armenians in Sumgait

28 February 2020

32 years ago, on February 27–29, 1988, the authorities of the Azerbaijani SSR perpetrated the massacre and forced deportation of the Armenian population in the city of Sumgait, accompanied by atrocities committed with unprecedented cruelty. The three-day mass beatings, killings and violent acts were the response of the authorities of Baku to the peaceful and legitimate demands of the Armenians of Artsakh (Karabakh) to realize their inalienable right to self-determination.

There is ample evidence that the massacres of Armenians in Sumgait were thoroughly prepared and planned by the Azerbaijani authorities. Speaking at the rallies held on the eve of the massacres, high-ranking representatives of the city authorities called on the crowd to punish the Armenians and demanded “to kill and to deport them from Sumgait and from entire Azerbaijan”. Almost every speech ended with the chanting of “Death to Armenians!”. Amid the obvious inaction of the authorities and law enforcement bodies, as well as guided by the latters, hundreds of Azerbaijanis in Sumgait, inspired by the calls for hatred and violence against Armenians, started unimpeded attacks on the apartments of the Armenians living in Sumgait, having the lists of addresses at their disposal.

The impunity of the real organizers and perpetrators of the crimes against humanity committed in Sumgait created a fertile ground for the ethnic cleansing of Armenians throughout the Azerbaijani SSR in the subsequent years – in Kirovabad, Baku and a number of other Armenian-populated cities. Thousands of Armenians became victims of this policy, and hundreds of thousands became refugees.

Currently, the Azerbaijani authorities, unfortunately, continue their policy of inciting hatred and xenophobia against the Armenians, heroizing and glorifying the Azerbaijani officer who brutally killed an Armenian officer in Hungary in 2004. Another manifestation of such a policy became the rewarding of the Azerbaijani officer by the President of Azerbaijan for beheading a serviceman of the Artsakh Defense Army during the April war of 2016 unleashed against the Republic of Artsakh, as well as the gross violations of the norms of humanitarian law and the war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces.

We bow to the memory of the innocent victims of the Sumgait crime. The international community should condemn and give a clear and unequivocal assessment to the genocidal actions committed by the Azerbaijani authorities against the peaceful Armenian population, which will not only prevent the repetition of such atrocities in the future, but will also help to heal the situation in Azerbaijan.