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Agenda items 31, 60, 69, 71 and 129

Prevention of armed conflict

**Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and
displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

**Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and
related intolerance**

Promotion and protection of human rights

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

Letter dated 26 January 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am transmitting herewith the appeal of the Pan-Armenian Union “Gardman-Shirvan-Nakhijevan”, a civil society organization established to protect the rights of Armenian refugees who were subjected to massacres and pogroms by the Azerbaijani authorities in 1988–1992 (see annex).

I kindly ask that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 31, 60, 69, 71 and 129.

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



Annex to the letter dated 26 January 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Pan-Armenian Union “Gardman-Shirvan-Nakhijevan” was established to protect the rights of Armenian refugees subjected to massacres and pogroms by the Azerbaijani authorities in 1988–1992, contribute to the solution of the problems of Armenian refugees in a fair and timely manner, raise issues of preservation of Armenian cultural heritage in the territories of historical Gardman, Shirvan and Nakhijevan, as well as in the territories under the actual Azerbaijani control. We represent the forcibly displaced Armenians from Azerbaijan, and have united to display to the world the injustices we have faced in terms of our violated rights and focus the attention and efforts of the international community on addressing our problems.

34 years ago, from January 13 to 19, 1990, the Armenian population of Baku was subjected to a tragic massacre. Once more, Armenians, integral to the socio-economic, cultural and political life of the city, and significant contributors to its development, endured unprecedented violence, looting, and mass killings. The armed groups directed by the Azerbaijani authorities began to break into/raid the apartments of Armenians, torturing them to death. There are many documented cases of brutalities and murders committed with extreme cruelty, including body mutilation and dismemberment, disembowelment of pregnant women. The crowd, fueled by Armenophobia, went so far as to instigate arsons targeting Armenians, creating a situation that not only threatened their survival but also hindered any attempt to leave the city. These pogroms persisted for six days, leading to the forced exodus of hundreds of thousands of Armenians from the city. This mass displacement left them incapable of effectively managing their properties. From 1988 to 1992, more than 500,000 Armenians fled Azerbaijan as a result of the ethnically motivated pogroms and mob violence against Armenians, which were orchestrated by Azerbaijani authorities. There are differing factual claims that the actual number of refugees is significantly higher than the officially reported number.

During that short period of time ethnic Armenians living in the territory of Azerbaijan for centuries were subjected to the highest manifestation of Armenophobia, based on racist and religious discrimination - massacres, deportation, destruction of Armenian cultural heritage or identity distortion and appropriation. After the Armenian pogroms in Sumgait (official death toll-26), Baku (official death toll-400), Kirovabad (Gyanja) (no clear death toll) and the deportation of the Armenians from Nakhijevan, Azerbaijan continued its ethnophobic policy in the form of damage and destruction of Armenian cultural heritage.

Regrettably, the Armenophobic practices carried out by Azerbaijan are not novel to the civilized world. Over the past three years, there has been a persistent recurrence of similar actions, characterized by a reluctance to resolve issues through peaceful means. The inclination to resort to force, the use of military intervention, and subsequent deployment of false flag tactics are recurring patterns exhibited by the Azerbaijani authorities, for whom Armenophobia has evolved into a strategic tool and a predominant objective.

The ethnic cleansing of the Armenian population from its native ancestral territory of Nagorno-Karabakh between 2020 and 2023 served as another instance of an Armenophobic policy. This tragic development directly stemmed from the international community's failure to appropriately address the criminal actions undertaken by the political and military authorities of Azerbaijan during the years 1988–1992.

These actions by Azerbaijan are gross violations of several important international human rights declarations and conventions that deserve detailed investigation and international attention.

We, Armenian refugees from historical Gardman, Shirvan, Nakhijevan, have a right to repatriation and compensation based on a number of international human rights instruments. Specifically, Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that every individual possesses the right to depart from any country, including their own, and has the right to return to their country. Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights emphasizes that no person should be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter their own country. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination obliges States Parties to take measures to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination, ensuring the right of everyone, regardless of race, color, or national or ethnic origin, to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country. Moreover, General Assembly resolutions have reaffirmed the right of refugees to voluntary repatriation and compensation. For more than 30 years, the Azerbaijani state has denied our right to return to our homes.

Considering the prevalent Armenophobic rhetoric in Azerbaijan, along with the undeniable fact that Azerbaijan intentionally created a humanitarian crisis for over 10 months by unlawfully blocking the Lachin Corridor and committing crimes against the civilian population during the war on September 19–20, 2023 in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as during and in the aftermath of the 44-day war of 2020, we firmly believe that the realization of our right to return should be guaranteed by the international security mechanisms. The Azerbaijani state's promotion of Armenophobia and ethnic hatred, fueling animosity towards ethnic Armenians and causing the destruction and vandalism of Armenian cultural heritage, has generated an atmosphere of hatred and hostility towards Armenians within Azerbaijani society. Consequently, the establishment of an international mechanism for security guarantees is deemed essential for ensuring the realization of our right to return.

Moreover, throughout the last 30 years, Armenian cultural heritage has faced persistent and systematic appropriation, mutilation, and outright destruction by the Azerbaijani authorities. Presently, the Armenian cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh is also under threat, with observable similar occurrences.

Honorable Secretary General, we respectfully implore you, as well as the appropriate UN bodies to use your mandate to help us by exerting pressure on the Azerbaijani state to cease its Armenophobic policies. We fully hope that only with fair international legal assessment and implementation of appropriate measures it is possible to prevent such painful phenomena in the future, which infringe on the human being as a global value and peace as a global achievement. We seek your assistance in ensuring the realization of our rights as well as the rights of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh to return and to live in peace and security in our homes under international guarantees. Your support in this matter would be immensely appreciated.
