



# General Assembly Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
22 July 2021

Original: English

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**General Assembly  
Seventy-fifth session**

Agenda items 9, 18, 70 and 72

**Report of the Economic and Social Council**

**Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the  
International Conferences on Financing for Development**

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

**Promotion and protection of human rights**

**Economic and Social Council  
2021 session**

23 July 2020–22 July 2021

Agenda items 5 (a) and 6

**High-level segment: ministerial meeting of  
the high-level political forum on sustainable  
development, convened under the auspices  
of the Economic and Social Council**

**High-level political forum on sustainable  
development, convened under the auspices  
of the Economic and Social Council**

## **Letter dated 20 July 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Economic and Social Council**

I am writing in relation to the third voluntary national review of Azerbaijan presented at the high-level political forum on sustainable development on 12 July 2021.

Azerbaijan has yet again abused the important process of voluntary national reviews to disseminate misinformation and falsifications about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In particular, the misleading references to a counter-attack in response to the aggression of the Armenian armed forces on 27 September 2020, contained in the national review of Azerbaijan, constitute nothing short of an attempt to deny responsibility for the pre-planned large-scale military aggression conducted against the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic), inflicting immense human suffering, atrocities, ethnic cleansing and a major humanitarian crisis at the time of a global pandemic.

While the world was focused on containing the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and responding to the socioeconomic and humanitarian consequences of the global crisis, Azerbaijan sought to weaponize the pandemic in order to realize its long-standing goal of resorting to the use of force in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in violation of the trilateral ceasefire agreements of 1994 and 1995 and contrary to the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire launched at the



outset of the pandemic in 2020, which Azerbaijan brazenly chose to neither endorse, nor to uphold.<sup>1</sup>

From 27 September to 9 November 2020, Azerbaijan conducted a premeditated military offensive leading to the most intense and destructive crisis in the region since the 1990s, in grave violation of the ceasefire agreements and international humanitarian law. There is no shortage of evidence that the aggression was indeed well prepared in advance, and any reference by the Azerbaijani side to an alleged “counter-attack” is utterly deceptive.<sup>2</sup>

During its pre-planned aggression, Azerbaijan, with the direct involvement of Turkey and Turkish-backed foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries from the Middle East, carried out massive attacks against Nagorno-Karabakh, accompanied by the deliberate targeting of the civilian population, including women, children, journalists and humanitarian and medical workers, and the destruction of the critical civilian infrastructure. The humanitarian crisis caused by the military hostilities was further exacerbated by the spread of the coronavirus disease in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan’s use of prohibited weapons, such as white phosphorus, set off massive forest fires in Nagorno-Karabakh, causing severe physical and psychological injury and major environmental damage. In this regard, references in the voluntary national review of Azerbaijan to “deliberate fires” in the forest areas in Nagorno-Karabakh demonstrate the cynical intention to deny crimes and shift the blame from the actual perpetrator.

Violent videos of public executions, the decapitation of prisoners of war and civilian hostages, the killing of injured, non-resistant soldiers and the mutilation of the bodies of dead soldiers have been widespread in online media. Extensive dissemination of such content through social networks and the glorification of the inhumane actions by public figures permeate a precariously conducive environment for anti-Armenian hate crimes and radicalization of society in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan’s grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law have become the culmination of a decades-long policy of instigating violence and anti-Armenian hatred, condoned and encouraged by the highest state authorities. The inauguration of the “military trophy park” in Baku by the President of Azerbaijan on 12 April, with dehumanizing, vilifying images of Armenian soldiers on display, illustrates the deeply enrooted policy of indoctrination of society, in particular children and youth, with Armenophobia. The ethnic hatred is also manifested in the deliberate destruction and desecration of Armenian churches, shrines and cultural monuments by the armed forces of Azerbaijan, aimed at erasing all evidence of the civilizational presence of the Armenian people in the region.<sup>3</sup>

Time and again, the government of Azerbaijan has abused the high-level political forum and the voluntary review process to promulgate national hatred and domestic propaganda at the United Nations, in an effort to divert attention from its

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<sup>1</sup> UN News, “170 signatories endorse UN ceasefire appeal during COVID crisis”, available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1066982>.

<sup>2</sup> See the letters from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General dated 5 October 2020 (A/75/495) and 29 December 2020 (A/75/693).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Dale Berning Sawa, “Monumental loss: Azerbaijan and ‘the worst cultural genocide of the 21st century’”, *The Guardian*, 1 March 2019. Available at [www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/mar/01/monumental-loss-azerbaijan-cultural-genocide-khachkars](http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/mar/01/monumental-loss-azerbaijan-cultural-genocide-khachkars).

appalling record on justice,<sup>4</sup> human rights,<sup>5</sup> press freedom<sup>6</sup> and corruption.<sup>7</sup> Azerbaijan's long-standing policy of pursuing corrupt schemes and practices to influence decision-making in the international forums and to downplay mounting international criticism has been extensively documented in the reports of various international organizations and human rights organizations,<sup>8</sup> paving the way for investigations conducted in several Member States.<sup>9</sup>

Armenia recognizes the voluntary national review under the high-level political forum as a central platform for the assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and, in this regard, finds it utterly unacceptable that Azerbaijan continues with its detrimental practice of misusing this important process.

I kindly ask that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 9, 18, 70 and 72, and of the Economic and Social Council under agenda items 5 (a) and 6.

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

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<sup>4</sup> See Human Rights Watch, World Report 2021. Available at [www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/azerbaijan](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/azerbaijan).

<sup>5</sup> See Amnesty International, Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights (London, 2021). Available at [www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1032022021ENGLISH.PDF](http://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1032022021ENGLISH.PDF).

<sup>6</sup> See Reporters Without Borders, 2021 World Press Freedom Index. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/azerbaijan>.

<sup>7</sup> See Transparency International, 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index. Available at [www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/aze](http://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/aze).

<sup>8</sup> Report of the independent investigation body on the allegations of corruption within the Parliamentary Assembly. Available at <http://assembly.coe.int/Communication/IBAC/IBAC-GIAC-Report-EN.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> European Stability Initiative, "Caviar diplomacy: Why every European should care". Available at [www.esiweb.org/proposals/caviar-diplomacy](http://www.esiweb.org/proposals/caviar-diplomacy).