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**Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their
implications for international peace, security
and development**

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Identical letters dated 20 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention the joint report of the Azercosmos OJSCo and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan entitled “Illegal activities in the territories of Azerbaijan under Armenia’s occupation: evidence from satellite imagery”.¹

The report provides irrefutable evidence testifying to ongoing activities in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including the implantation of settlers in those territories depopulated of their Azerbaijani inhabitants; depredation and exploitation of natural, agricultural and water resources; infrastructure changes; and destruction and desecration of historical and cultural heritage.

Those activities are carried out under the cover of the peace process, notwithstanding clear prohibitions in international law and despite earlier warnings, demands and condemnation by the international community.

In its resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), the Security Council condemned the use of force against Azerbaijan and reaffirmed respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, the inviolability of international borders and the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory. In response to Armenia’s territorial claims and forcible actions, the Council reconfirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories. Other international organizations have adopted a similar position.

The international community has, on a number of occasions, reaffirmed the right of Azerbaijani internally displaced persons to return to their homes. Realization of

¹ Available at www.azercosmos.az/storage/brochures/February2019/dx2c0FfrOGIj1ml7pRH7.pdf.



this right, along with the complete withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, is the core element and imperative condition of the negotiated resolution of the conflict in accordance with international law.

At the request of the Government of Azerbaijan, the Organization for Security in Europe (OSCE) conducted fact-finding and fact-assessment missions in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan in 2005 and 2010, respectively. As an outcome of the missions, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs “discourage[d] any further settlement of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan” and “urge[d] the parties ... to avoid changes in the demographic structure of the region”² and “any activities ... that would prejudice a final settlement or change the character of these areas.”³

Nine years have passed since the last OSCE-led mission. However, as the aforementioned joint report and other sources⁴ attest, the illegal activities in the occupied territories have not only continued but intensified and expanded over this period.

Such policy and practices of Armenia, which are aimed at colonization and annexation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, constitute a clear violation of international law, undermine the rights and freedoms of hundreds of thousands of people uprooted from their homes and pose an imminent threat to peace, security and stability in the region.

It is abundantly clear that attempts to change the demographic composition in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan by artificially increasing the number of Armenians there and preventing the return of Azerbaijani internally displaced persons to their homes and properties, along with the exploitation of natural resources and other wealth in those territories and the destruction or appropriation of property, can in no way be reconciled with the objectives of achieving a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The United Nations and the international community as a whole have the responsibility to ensure strict compliance by Armenia with its international obligations, provided, in particular, that its unlawful activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan aimed at changing unilaterally their demographic, economic, social and cultural character are ceased and reversed immediately, completely and unconditionally.

The unlawful use of force and its temporary and unsustainable military consequences do not represent a solution, and Armenia will be compelled to put an end to its aggression and withdraw from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and all other occupied territories of my country.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35 and 41, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar Aliyev
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

² See letter of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to the OSCE Permanent Council on the OSCE Minsk Group Fact-Finding Mission to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) (A/59/747-S/2005/187, annex I, p. 5).

³ See the executive summary of the OSCE field assessment mission report, available at <http://www.osce.org/mg/76209?download=true>; and the press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (A/65/801-S/2011/208, annex).

⁴ See the report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan entitled “Illegal economic and other activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan” (A/70/1016-S/2016/711, annex).