

## **Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

Over the last several days, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, which continue to illegally occupy Azerbaijani territories, have repeatedly violated the cease-fire regime by attacking positions of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan in several directions along the Armenia-Azerbaijan border and the Line of Contact. On several occasions, reconnaissance and sabotage groups of the Armenian military attempted to break through the Line of Contact. These provocative steps by the Armenian side caused a significant escalation of tensions along the frontline and resulted in numerous fatalities. Official Yerevan, which initiated and ordered these provocative actions, bears full responsibility for the evolving dangerous situation.

Armenia has taken a non-constructive approach to the negotiations, strives to maintain the *status-quo* and attempts to evade the Madrid Peace Plan. Furthermore, Armenia's refusal to implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the policy of ruthless ethnic cleansing and the expulsion of over a million people from their native homes, as well as its latest provocative steps, which undermine the peace process, provide strong reasons for Armenia to be subjected to substantial sanctions by the international community. The continued presence of Armenia's armed forces on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan remains the greatest threat to the peace process. Therefore, first and foremost, the armed forces of Armenia should withdraw from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The sooner Armenia realizes' this, the sooner region will restore peace, stability and predictability.

The Ministry offers sincere condolences and thoughts to the family members and relatives of the sons of Azerbaijan, who sacrificed their lives for the independence and territorial integrity of our nation. Let them rest in peace!