



PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

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Vienna, 27 March 2017

Dear Colleague,

Upon instruction from my Government, I am writing to inform you that in blatant violation of norms and principles of international law, relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, documents and decisions of the OSCE, the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia conducted regiment level military exercises in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Fact-sheet on exercises is enclosed herewith.

The President of Armenia personally attended the final phase of the exercises on March 25. On that occasion, he illegally visited the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, “awarded military servicemen who excelled in the combat duty” and made belligerent provocative statements threatening sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The President of Armenia attempted to introduce a religious dimension to the conflict as he praised the Armenian armed forces as upholders of Christianity. He, *inter alia*, admitted involvement of the armed forces of Armenia in occupation of the Azerbaijani territories and his own personal responsibility in this regard. He declared that in the course of military hostilities in April 2016, “...I gave a new order to strike back”. He further praised his own role in occupation of territories of Azerbaijan saying that: “only a strong one could give the order to stop [April operations], to spare those lives and to take upon himself the future hollow blows of populism, realizing all too well how much territory had been gained before that silently and how much would be taken next time.” (emphasis added).

The statement of the President of Armenia is a clear manifestation that Armenia violates the Bishkek Protocol of 1994, which is a basis for ceasefire, through entrenching and building-up military positions, transferring military equipment and hardware to the occupied territories and, thus, takes advantage of cessation of military operations to consolidate the status-quo of occupation.

In this regard, the statement of the President of Armenia is self-explanatory: “In one year [after April 2016], we fortified our border and armed our troops to the extent that today our frontline is simply unrecognizable. Today, our guys are following the movements of the enemy in the depth of its own territory. Today, super modern, devastating striking power aims at the entire territory of our belligerent neighbor, including its vital infrastructure. And today, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armenia without batting an eyelid will give if needed the order to strike with the Iskander. In the neighboring country they know it all too well.”

H.E. Mr. Clemens Kojas,
Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

Cc: Permanent Missions and Delegations of the OSCE participating States,
OSCE Partners for Cooperation,
OSCE Secretariat and OSCE Institutions

The military exercises and the statement of the President of Armenia are illustrative as to the real intentions of Armenia and its unwillingness to settle the conflict through negotiations. It is notable that the President of Armenia delivered his speech in Azerbaijan's occupied district of Aghdam, the seizure of which was condemned and the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal from which was demanded by the UN Security Council in its resolution 853. This demand by the international community remains unimplemented for 24 years.

Instead, Armenia uses the ceasefire to exercise and train its armed forces for renewed hostilities, as it was vividly demonstrated by Armenian tanks during the recent live fire exercises targeting ruined houses of expelled Azerbaijani population. This is a clear testimony of mindset of the senior leadership of Armenia built upon series of crimes against humanity, war crimes, acts of genocide committed against Azerbaijan and its civilian population. This is the understanding of peace, tolerance and co-existence by the Armenian leadership.

Provocative warlike gesture of Armenia and bellicose rhetoric of its high-ranking officials obviously run counter to this country's stated commitments both under international law and within the ongoing political process towards the resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This is a clear manifestation of continued illegal use of force by Armenia against Azerbaijan, and the OSCE should act in unity to reverse such a flagrant violation of basic principles of inter-State relations as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

The Azerbaijani side strongly urges the OSCE, in particular, the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairmen and the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship to publicly condemn Armenia's flagrant violations of relevant provisions of UN SC Resolutions and the ceasefire regime, demand from Armenia to put an end to its aggression against Azerbaijan, withdraw its forces and engage in good faith in substantive negotiations with a view to finding lasting political solution to the conflict.

Failure to properly react to such blatant and repeated violations by Armenia will be a serious blow to the peace process with unpredictable consequences, for which the Armenian senior political-military leadership bears full responsibility.

Please, accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Encl.: as stated

Sincerely,



Galib Israfilov

FACT SHEET

Photographic evidence of unlawful military presence and military exercises of the armed forces of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan



Flag of the Republic of Armenia hoisted over the military hardware and forces deployed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Source: www.president.am | 25 March 2017



President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan observing military exercises of Armenia's armed forces in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan
Source: www.president.am | 25 March 2017



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Source: www.president.am | 25 March 2017



“MI-24” SuperHind attack helicopters of the armed forces of Armenia deployed in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan
Source: www.president.am | 25 March 2017



“MI-24” SuperHind attack helicopters maneuvering during military exercises in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan
Source: video footage from NEWS.am, 25 March 2017



Military exercises in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan
Source: www.president.am | 25 March 2017



Ruined houses of expelled Azerbaijani population in the occupied territories are used as military targets for live fire exercises by the armed forces of Armenia
Source: video footage from NEWS.am, 25 March 2017



Flag of the Republic of Armenia hoisted over the tanks deployed for the military exercises in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan
Source: video footage from NEWS.am, 25 March 2017