



PRESS RELEASE

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A CALL TO ACTION to address the large-scale military offensive by Azerbaijan along the line of contact between Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Azerbaijan

On September 27, early in the morning, the Azerbaijani armed forces launched large-scale airborne, missile and land attack along the entire line of contact in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). Azerbaijani army uses tanks, helicopters, heavy artillery, UAVs, multiple launch rocket system Grad and Smerch. Moreover, F16 Turkish fighter jets were noticed in the vicinity of the line of contact. Armenian town Vardenis to the east of the Republic of Armenia has been also subjected to the Turkish-made UAV attacks.

During the offensive, Azerbaijan is targeting civilian settlements, infrastructure, and schools, including in the capital city of Stepanakert. For now, there are casualties among civilians, including a woman and a child.

This aggression was indeed pre-planned well in advance and any reference by the Azerbaijani side to 'counterattack' is utterly false. The statement of the Azerbaijani president at the UNGA on September 23 was a "diplomatic green-light" for this reckless aggression. It was full of hate speech and the manifestation of clear genocidal intent towards Armenian people.

Azerbaijan never hide its strategic goal to resolve the NK conflict by using force, keeping the tension high along the line of contact and the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border. On a number of occasions, Azerbaijani president has publicly denounced the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs aimed at the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, thus openly resorting to war. To this end, Azerbaijan also engages outside forces, including Turkey, whose growing presence in Azerbaijan, particularly in Nakhichevan region, attests to this.

After the July offensive, Azerbaijan has been consistently making war efforts.

First, Azerbaijan closed down the transit air corridors for the last two months despite the absence of any threat to civilian air traffic. On the state borders of Armenia as well as along the line of contact, Turkey and Azerbaijan have been carrying out provocative flights.

Second, since September 21, Azerbaijan started drafting reservists and confiscating civilian trucks for military needs.

Third, on September 25, the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defence rejected the request of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to organize a Ceasefire Monitoring along the line of contact.

Fourth, there have been credible reports of recruiting Foreign Terrorist Fighters from those parts of Syria which are under control of Turkish militaries, to be used in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Fifth, from early morning Azerbaijani authorities blocked social networks and media outlets. On top of that, Turkish media representatives are present at the conflict zone from the outset of the attack, which also comes to prove that they knew about the offensive in advance.

The preparation to this aggression was accompanied by large-scale military exercises by Azerbaijan and Turkey. From July 29 to August 10, large-scale Azerbaijan-Turkey joint military exercises were held in Baku, Nakhichevan, Ganja, Kurdamir and Yevlakh. The exercises involved thousands of military personnel, hundreds of armoured combat vehicles, artillery and military aviation, including UAVs. It is worrisome that after the military exercise, Turkish military personnel and equipment remained stationed in Azerbaijan. Also, since July aggression of Azerbaijan on the state border with Armenia, Turkey has been openly supporting Azerbaijan's military activities against Armenia and justifying the use of force. On September 27, shortly after the start of the Azerbaijani large-scale military offensive against Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkey once again unilaterally and unreservedly supported Azerbaijan.

As the above-mentioned shows, the leadership of Azerbaijan bears full responsibility for the consequences of their preplanned aggression and de-stabilization of the regional security.

Armenia strongly condemns the Azerbaijani aggression, which is in flagrant violation of international law, including humanitarian law. It violates the 1994 trilateral ceasefire agreement and commitments undertaken by Azerbaijan within context of NK peace process on non-use of force.

Armenia calls on the international community to strongly condemn the aggression of Azerbaijan and reiterate that the conflict has no military solution.

Armenia, as the security guarantor of Artsakh, will take all necessary measures to protect the Nagorno-Karabakh people and to deliver a proportionate response to the aggressor. Armenia stands ready to cooperate closely with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs to restore and preserve the regional peace and security.