



PERMANENT MISSION OF ARMENIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Agenda Item 80 “Crimes against Humanity”

Statement by H.E. Mr. Mher Margaryan, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the UN

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Mr. Chair,

[As this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Sixth Committee and to wish you much success]

Crimes against humanity constitute grave offenses against the very values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Armenia welcomes the ongoing discussions on the draft articles on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity.

Adopting a convention for the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity can offer an important legal tool by facilitating national investigations, prosecutions and punishments and by fostering international cooperation to this end, while filling a perceived gap by adding to the treaties on the prevention and punishment of genocide and war crimes. Yet, the significance of a new convention goes beyond a merely legal matter, as crimes against humanity not only represent a direct assault on the dignity of human beings but also pose grave threats to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We have seen such heinous crimes systematically inflicted by neighbouring Azerbaijan, whose pervasive record of human rights violations, anti-Armenian rhetoric and unchecked, disproportionate violence demonstrates a most dangerous pattern of utter disregard for the international law.

The aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 is one such case in point, unleashed amidst a global pandemic in a brazen attempt to resolve an international dispute by force. It took lives of thousands of people, leading to the most intense and destructive crisis in the region since the 1990s, in grave violation of the ceasefire agreements and the international humanitarian law.

The repeated military attacks against the territorial integrity of Armenia in 2021 and 2022 targeted densely populated areas and civilian infrastructure, with verified and extensively documented reports of despicable crimes having been committed on the territory of Armenia, including those involving most barbaric forms of atrocities, gender-based sexual violence, torture and mutilations.

These systematic attacks against Armenia and the Armenian people in Nagorno-Karabakh have involved multiple instances of violent and hostile conduct, in flagrant violation of the international law and the legally binding orders on the indication of provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice upon Armenia's request in 2021 and 2023.

Just recently, on 19 September, Azerbaijan unleashed yet another large-scale offensive against Nagorno-Karabakh which took lives of hundreds of people, including children, and resulted in mass forced displacement of the entire population. It was preceded by humanitarian crisis that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh had been undergoing since the blockade of the Lachin Corridor in December 2022, an action that has been identified by the first Prosecutor of International Criminal Court Luis Moreno Ocampo as “the archetype of genocide through the imposition of conditions of life designed to bring about a group's destruction”. The premeditated and well-planned aggression against a population under blockade, which drove the entire population into forced displacement, is an explicit case of an ethnic cleansing, perpetrated under the UN's watch.

Mr. Chair,

A new UN convention defining the crimes against humanity, including extermination, forcible transfer of population and intentionally causing great suffering, is essential in strengthening prevention toolbox of the international community, not to let such heinous acts go unpunished, as the impunity for past violations only serve to embolden the perpetrators to commit new crimes.

Armenia is committed to effectively address and combat impunity, including through the mechanisms of the international criminal jurisdiction. To this end, we have recently launched the process of accession to the International Criminal Court – an important step towards promoting justice and accountability in the face of persistent widespread attacks, threats and use of force.

Mr. Chair,

The prevention of crimes against humanity is not optional; it is an essential duty that the Member States and the relevant international structures owe to the countless victims of past crimes and past inaction. I would like to reiterate Armenia's steadfast determination to support efforts towards the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity and to ensure tangible progress in this regard.

I thank you.