



Statement

by H.E. Mr. Edward NALBANDIAN

**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Armenia**

at the General Debate
of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly

New York, 1 October 2012

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating Vuk Jeremic on his election as the President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly. I would also like to extend our thanks to the outgoing President, Nasser Abdulaziz Al-Nasser.

This session of the General Assembly is an invaluable opportunity to bring together the United Nations member states in order to examine the challenges facing humanity and to join efforts to effectively address them and to realize internationally agreed goals. We all know that when decisions are based on common understanding, their implementation and success are more promising.

Armenia has committed itself to the strengthening of the institutional capacities of the United Nations. We support the United Nations reform processes and are ready to bring our feasible contribution to them. We believe that the reforms are an opportunity to make the role of the UN stronger on crucial issues facing the world and to accomplish both the Millennium Development and Sustainable Development Goals.

We welcome the fact that along with the agenda of the sixty-seventh session that encompasses the pressing issues of joint responsibility for maintenance of international peace, security, it is proposed to focus during this session on the settlement of disputes by peaceful means.

In this context we consider the goals of disarmament and arms control as major elements of global and regional security systems. We must also shoulder the responsibility to work together to counter militaristic threats.

Few days ago, in the framework of the UN the first-ever High-Level Forum on Culture of Peace took place urging for tolerance and building mutual understanding and mutual respect. Unfortunately nowadays hate and intolerance are continuing to spread in some parts of the world and we have yet to dig into the roots and causes of such situation, to have the courage to openly ask difficult questions on the reasons and face sometimes painful responses.

Mr. President,

Regrettably, we have witnessed intolerance and hatred in our part of the world, too. Year after year Armenia has been raising its concerns from this podium over the militaristic rhetoric, blatant violation of international commitments and anti-Armenian hysteria being instilled into the Azerbaijani society from the highest levels of its leadership.

Many international organizations on human rights alerted about flagrant cases of xenophobia, racism, intolerance and violations of human rights in Azerbaijan, alerted on the policy of hatred against Armenians.

What is the Azerbaijani response? It is not only ignoring the expectations of the international community, but is constantly making new and new steps going against the values of civilized world. The latest such case is the Azeri government's release and glorification of the murderer Safarov, who had slaughtered with an axe an Armenian officer in his sleep, during a NATO program in Budapest simply because he was an Armenian. The Azerbaijani leadership made him a symbol of national pride and an example to follow by youth. The world reaction was unanimous and very clear in condemning what was done by Baku. Azerbaijan expresses bewilderment on the stance of the international community. And what did they expect? That the international community would applaud the glorification of a heinous murderer? Azerbaijani leadership is continuing to pretend that this act corresponds not only to the Azerbaijani constitution and legislation, but also to the norms and principles of international law, the respective European Convention. The leadership of this country is claiming that what was done is just very good. It is very sad that the constitution and legislation of any country could allow the heroization of a murderer and salary payment for the years passed in prison by brutal criminal.

The Council of Europe Commissioner of Human Rights warned that "to glorify and reward such a person flies in the face of all accepted standards for human rights protection and rule of law". The European Parliament President and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe President alerted about the abuse of the European legal instrument. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said that "ethnically motivated hate crimes of this gravity should be deplored and properly punished - not publicly glorified".

It is very clear that there are different perceptions about international legal principles and laws, different perceptions in Azerbaijan and the rest of the world about what is good and what is bad. This is deeply irresponsible and shameful behavior of not only a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, but a member of the UN.

It is clear that international community should not tolerate the attempts of the Azerbaijani leadership to adjust the international law to their own racist ideology. Having a rich internal experience in corruption Baku is attempting to transfer it to interstate relations exploiting it as a tool to impose its own misperceptions on others. The international community could not tolerate the attempts of Azerbaijan to replace the rule of law with the rule of oil.

Safarov's scandalous affair has seriously undermined the Nagorno-Karabakh negotiation process and endangered the fragile regional security and stability.

Azerbaijan poses a threat to the security and stability in the region by its constantly menacing to use force against Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia along with unprovoked daily war-mongering by its leadership, by not only rejecting the proposals of the three Co-Chair countries

on the consolidation of the ceasefire agreement, on the creation of a mechanism of investigation of incidents on the line of contact, but also by systematic ceasefire violations not only on the contact line between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, but also by provocations on the border with Armenia, by ceaseless acts of vandalism towards the Armenian historical and cultural heritage.

While Armenia together with the international mediators is exerting efforts around the table of negotiations, Azerbaijan is multiplying its military budget, increasing it more than twentyfold during the last few years, and boasting about it. While Armenia and the international community are calling for withdrawal of snipers from the line of contact, Azerbaijani leaders are rejecting it and opening sniper schools for the youth. While Armenia is calling for regional economic cooperation, which could become a tool for increasing confidence between the parties, Azerbaijani authorities are declaring that together with Turkey, they will continue the blockade until there are no more Armenians in Armenia.

Armenia and the international community are speaking in one language regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. The documents on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict adopted in the frameworks of the OSCE Astana Summit of 2010 and Ministerial Conferences of Helsinki 2008, Athens 2009, Almaty 2010, Vilnius 2011, the statements of Presidents of the Co-Chair countries in the frameworks of the G8 Summits in L'Aquila in 2009, in Muskoka in 2010, in Deauville in 2011 and during the G20 Summit 2012 in Los Cabos are proofs of that. Armenia's position is in line with these documents, is in line with the position of the international community - to go for the settlement on this basis.

Despite the intensive efforts of the three Co-Chair countries it has been impossible to reach a breakthrough in the conflict resolution, because the Azerbaijani side rejected one after another all proposals presented by the mediators.

Regardless of Azerbaijan's destructive stance, Armenia will continue to exert efforts towards the settlement of the Karabakh issue exclusively through peaceful means and on the basis of the purposes, principles and norms reflected in the UN Charter and the international law.

Mr. President,

As many speakers, I should also express our concerns about the developments and worsening of the humanitarian situation in Syria, which directly affects also the large Armenian community in this country. This community was formed mainly by the survivors of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the 20th century. Today they are struggling for life as many Syrian citizens. Armenia is continuing to receive refugees from Syria that are full of worries about the escalation of violence in this country. It is impossible to reach a durable settlement without the cessation of hostilities by all parties and without an inclusive political dialogue taking into account the interests of all Syrians.

Mr. President,

The United Nations will mark the 65th anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide next year. That anniversary will become an important landmark to make it more effective instrument in combatting the crimes of genocide. The denial of genocide and impunity pave way for the repetition of new crimes against humanity. As descendants of the nation that survived the horrors of the first genocide of the 20th century we are convinced that independent of any kind of considerations, the international community should stand together in the recognition and strong condemnation of genocides to be able to prevent them. It is due to the absence of this unanimity that humanity witnesses new attempts of crimes against humanity. Our strong conviction is that we should keep this issue high on our common agenda. We should recommit ourselves to a world where the crime of genocide would never occur again.

Mr. President,

Armenia shares its part of our common responsibility to support the United Nations as the stage of dialogue, multilateralism and collective action to address the multiple challenges of today's world.