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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. SERZH SARGSYAN  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA  
AT THE  
69<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

*New York, September 24, 2014*

Distinguished President of the General Assembly,  
Distinguished Secretary General,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate cordially the newly elected President of the General Assembly, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda Sam Kahamba Kutesa on his election to that honorable office. I express gratitude to Mr. John William Ashe for his outstanding Presidency over the preceding session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, Armenia reiterates its unequivocal willingness to support all your initiatives directed at the realization of the UN objectives. I welcome that “Delivering on and implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda” was chosen as the theme for the current General debate. The Republic of Armenia reiterates its commitment to support the realization of the Agenda’s goals.

Mr. President,

We conduct this meeting in a symbolically significant period between the centennial of the World War I and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the World War II, the two turning points in the history of humanity. The United Nations Organization established almost seventy years ago at the end of the World War II, and its mission was to form new civilizational environment and culture of preventing the repetition of the past tragic pages.

2015 bears particular significance for the all Armenians around the world. On April 24 Armenians around the globe will commemorate the most tragic page of the nation’s history – the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. It was an unprecedented crime, objective of which was to eliminate the nation and deprive it of its homeland: a crime that continues to be an unhealed scar for each Armenian. The 1915 Genocide was a crime against civilization and humanity, and its inadequate condemnation paved the way for similar crimes of mass murder in the future.

Addressing the Assembly ahead of that Centennial year of the Armenian Genocide from this prominent podium, which I would call the podium of Honor and Responsibility, I declare vociferously:

Thank you Uruguay, France, and Russia.

Thank you Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Sweden.

Thank you Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Greece, Slovakia, and Cyprus.

Thank you Lebanon, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Canada, and Vatican.

Thank you for the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide regardless of the format and language adopted. I thank the U.S.A., European Union, and all those personalities, state bodies, territorial units and organizations in numerous countries, who publicly called things by their proper names. That is indeed extremely important since denial is a phase of the crime of genocide.

For a whole century now Armenians around the globe as well as the entire progressive international community expects Turkey to demonstrate the courage and face its own history by recognizing the Armenian Genocide, thus relieving the next generations of this heavy burden of the past. Alas instead, we continue to hear ambiguous and ulterior messages, in which the victim and the slaughterer are equalized, and the history is falsified.

Armenia has never conditioned the normalization of the bilateral relations with Turkey by recognition of the Armenian Genocide. In fact, Armenia was the party that initiated such a process, and in 2009 culminated in signing of the Zurich Protocols. However, those Protocols have been shelved for years now awaiting ratification in the Turkish Parliament. Ankara declares publicly that it will ratify those Protocols only if Armenians cede Nagorno Karabakh, the free Artsakh to Azerbaijan. In Armenia and Artsakh ordinary people often just retort to such preconditions: "To hell with you ratification." This phrase in vernacular concentrates age-old struggle of the entire nation, and it unequivocally explains to those who attempt to bargain the others' homeland that the motherland is sacrosanct, and they better stay away from us with their bargain. It is in these circumstances that currently the official Yerevan seriously considers the issue of recalling the Armenian-Turkish Protocols from the Parliament.

The tragic events in Syria and Iraq, which we currently witness, demonstrate how the groups whose creed is hatred are targeting the religious and national minorities. Two days ago the Independence Day of the Republic of Armenia, the Church of All Saint Martyrs in Deir-ez-Zor, Syria, dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, where their remains were housed, was mined and blown up by the terrorists. Such a barbarity is a criminal Godlessness in no way or shape related to any faith. The catastrophic situation in Syria and north of Iraq continuously deteriorates, and today hundreds of thousands of people are directly imperiled. Among them are tens of thousands Armenians of Aleppo. It is an instance of a peril to consider in the context of our joint commitments to preventing the crimes against humanity. Armenia has voiced on numerous occasions the necessity to defend the Armenian population of Syria and Yezidi population of Iraqi North West, and we are encouraged by the unified stance of the international community in this regard.

The very essence of our organization is the preservation of the global peace and security. In recent years, Armenia has consistently consolidated its peacekeeping capabilities thus preparing ourselves for a more proactive engagement in that field. Armenian peacekeepers will very soon be dispatched to the South of Lebanon in the framework of the UNIFIL mission under the auspices of the United Nations. It became possible due to close collaboration we enjoy with our Italian colleagues. I strongly believe that our servicemen will fulfill their mission with dignity and high professionalism also utilizing the extensive experience they have garnered in the last decade in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Distinguished colleagues,

It has been more than twenty years that our neighboring State aborts the efforts of the international community directed at the just and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by its unconstructive and maximalist stance. The failure of an adequate international assessment of the bellicose declarations and various threats put forth at the highest level in Azerbaijan has resulted in all-out permissiveness. The President of Azerbaijan designates the entire Armenian nation as the "the enemy number one", and what is considered in the rest of the world to be a crime, in Azerbaijan is considered to be a glorious deed.

Despite the fact that each conflict is unique, the fundamental human rights and freedoms, including the people's right to free expression of will and self-determination, continue to evolve as a determinant to their resolution. The vote held a few days ago in Scotland, once again proved that nowadays the institute of referendum is more and more widely perceived as a legal model for the peaceful settlement of ethnic conflicts. It was no coincidence that the right to govern one's own fate through referendum is in the core of the proposal put forward by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group for the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While discussing the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement I cannot but address the four UN Security Council resolutions, which were adopted during the war, that every so often are being exploited by the Azerbaijani authorities in order to justify their obstructive policy.

It is about those four Resolutions that demanded unconditionally as a matter of priority cessation of all military hostilities. Azerbaijan failed to comply. Azerbaijan's own non-compliance with the fundamental demands of these Resolutions made impossible their full implementation. The Resolutions contained calls upon the parties to cease bombardments and air strikes targeting the peaceful civilian population, to refrain from violating the principles of the international humanitarian law but instead Azerbaijan continued its indiscriminate bombardments of the civilian population. Azerbaijan did not spare children, women and old persons thus gravely violating all legal and moral norms of the international humanitarian law.

Now Azerbaijan cynically refers to these Resolutions – refers selectively, pulling them out of context as a prerequisite for the settlement of the problem. The adequate interpretation of the UN Security Council Resolutions is not possible without correct understanding of the hierarchy of the demands set therein.

The Resolutions inter alia request the restoration of economic, transport and energy links in the region (UN SC Resolution 853) and removal of all obstacles to communications and transportation (UN SC Resolution 874). It is no secret that Azerbaijan and Turkey imposed blockade on Nagorno Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia from the outset of the conflict. The Azerbaijani President in his statements even takes pride in this fact promising his own public that direction would remain the priority of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

The abovementioned UN Security Council Resolutions called upon Azerbaijan to establish direct contacts with Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan refused to establish any direct contacts with Nagorno Karabakh, which was a legally equal party to the Cease-fire Agreement concluded in 1994 as well as a number of other international Agreements; moreover, Azerbaijan preaches hatred towards people it claims it wants to see as a part of their State.

None of the UN SC Resolutions identifies Armenia as a conflicting party. Our country is called upon only "to continue to exert its influence" over the Nagorno Karabakh Armenians (UN SC Resolutions 853, 884) in order to cease the conflict. Armenia has fully complied, and due to its efforts a Cease-fire Agreement was concluded in 1994. All UN SC Resolutions recognize Nagorno Karabakh as a party to the conflict.

Azerbaijani authorities have failed to implement the fundamental demands of the Security Council resolutions, including abiding and sticking by the humanitarian norms. Incidentally, Azerbaijan has been gravely violating this demand every now and then. Azerbaijan's cruel and inhumane treatment of the Armenian civilian prisoners of war regularly

results in their deaths. Although, I think, one shall not be surprised about it because it is the same State that suppresses and exercises the most inhumane treatment of its own people. A clear proof of it was the decision of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to suspend its visit to Azerbaijan due to obstructions it encountered in the conduct of the official Baku.

The Co-Chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group is the only specialized structure that has been dealing with the Nagorno Karabakh issue according to the mandate granted by the international community. While Azerbaijan is very well aware that it could not possibly deceive or misinform the Minsk Group, which is very-well immersed in the essence of the problem, it attempts to transpose the conflict settlement to other platforms trying to depict it as a territorial dispute or exploiting the factor of religious solidarity. That is ironic, since Armenia traditionally enjoys very warm relations with the Islamic nations both in the Arabic world or, for instance, with our immediate neighbor Iran.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We highly value the indispensable role of the United Nations in the adjustment and implementation of the development goals. I strongly believe that through the new “Post-2015” development agenda we will continue our efforts seeking solutions and responding to challenges of global nature stemming from the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that we have passed substantial part of the road leading to shaping the “Post-2015 Development Agenda” and we will continue our endeavors in this regard by displaying necessary flexibility in order to bring this process to its logical conclusion.

I thank you.