

Statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia H.E. Nikol Pashinyan at the  
General Debate of the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the  
UN General Assembly  
September 25, 2018

**Distinguished President of the General Assembly,  
Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to congratulate Her Excellency María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés upon her election as the President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly and wish us fruitful deliberations under her able leadership.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honor to address you as a leader, who has recently become the Prime Minister of Armenia as a result of people's revolution, which is now known as the Armenian Velvet revolution. I would like to take a minute to share the story of our victory over the authoritarian rule. The people of Armenia succeeded in unpredicted and unprecedented revolution, without any violence, any victims or public disorder.

And it was not a coincidence. Our intention was to make a revolution of love and solidarity. From the very beginning, we declared that we ruled out any violence. We declared that, even if violence was used against us, we would not respond with violence. We declared that our response would be with raised and open hands, smile and love.

When we started this political process, there were only dozens of us marching from the second biggest city of Armenia, Gyumri to the capital Yerevan. When we reached Yerevan, and showed our determination and devotion to the principle of non violence, our entire nation rose against the ruling regime, in unity and solidarity.

And we won without a single shot and without any victims only through the peaceful demonstrations. We succeeded against all expectations: even well-known experts and think-tanks were sceptical about our victory.

Against all odds, I was elected Prime Minister. I was elected in a Parliament, where I had only four reliable votes, including my own. Yet it was possible. It happened, because people were firm in their demand and the parliament, elected just a year ago, had no other choice than to follow the people's will.

Today, that parliament continues to work, however it does not represent our people's will, as it was not before and during the revolution. Why is it so? The answer is short. Because it was elected through the elections with massive vote buying process and use of administrative resources and oppression.

An important test for holding genuinely free and fair and competitive elections was the Yerevan city council election which took place just before my departure to New York.

The fact that all the candidates for the first time since Armenia's independence congratulated the winning candidate, speaks about the establishment of a completely new political culture in Armenia.

In the same spirit We are now getting ready for snap parliamentary elections in Armenia. Free, fair and transparent elections will become an irreversible reality in Armenia and will bring strong and vibrant democratic institutions, the functioning system of checks and balances.

Protecting our citizens' rights and ensuring freedom of speech, expression and assembly is very high on our government's agenda. From now on, there will be no possibility to manipulate the electoral process and undermine the trust of citizens.

I would also like to stress that the current situation in Armenia is not just a change of a government or a ruling party. It is an establishment of a new political and governance system, which we name people's direct rule and people's direct governance.

In order to institutionalize this system we intend to guarantee expression of the people's will not only through elections, but also through local and national referenda, to engage our people into the decision-making process. Having been a political prisoner myself, I do understand how significant it is to be able to speak out and decide your own future.

Having assumed the responsibility, our team has a clear vision and strong political will to launch fundamental reforms aimed at eradicating corruption, creating transparent, accountable and efficient governance, safeguarding human rights and the rule of law, ensuring independence of judiciary and advancing economic growth through

a free and competitive business environment and a favorable atmosphere for investments.

**Madam President,**

Despite the radical transformations in the internal political life, our foreign policy agenda does not have U-turns. The continuity of Armenia's foreign policy depicts Armenia as a predictable and reliable partner. Our international commitments are not subject to revision.

Our position is clear - Armenia stands ready to have a constructive dialogue and cooperation with all partners. However, we do not intend to develop our relations with one partner at the expense of another. We underline the role of multilateralism on global and regional levels.

Armenia's cooperation under the umbrella of the United Nations is both comprehensive and vibrant. Without entering into all the details, let me mention our contribution to the global peace under the auspices of the UN led and UN supported peace operations in an impressive geographical scope that extends from Afghanistan to Lebanon, Kosovo and Mali.

This has a particular importance to our country: while itself facing serious security concerns, it realizes that the security of one country is inseparably linked to that of all others, and that the global peace requires concerted actions.

We have a truly global nation with hundreds of communities all around the world. Hence comes the sensitivity of Armenia to the global threats that may put our fellow Armenians at risk in different parts of the world.

The sizable Armenian community in Syria faces an existential threat from the ongoing crisis. Armenia has tried to contribute through dispatching humanitarian assistance to most vulnerable regions. We stand ready to enhance Armenia's humanitarian mission aimed at meeting the most pressing needs of our community in Syria. As a nation that has passed through the horrors of Genocide, Armenians have higher security consciousness when it comes to our fellow people and are ready to do their utmost for their protection.

**Madam President,**

The peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict continues to prevail our foreign policy agenda. The status and security of the Republic of Artsakh is an absolute priority of the Republic of Armenia in the negotiation process. Any attempt to resolve the conflict through military means represents a direct threat to the regional security, democracy and human rights.

Armenia will continue its constructive engagement in the peaceful resolution of the conflict within the format of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, which has the only internationally recognized mandate to deal with the conflict. Azerbaijan should change its behavior of disrespect towards the negotiations and abandon the idea of any military solution and implement all the previous agreements.

Furthermore, if Azerbaijan is truly committed to the peace process it should start talking to the main subject of this conflict - Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan declares on every occasion that Karabakh should be a part of its territory. At the same time it announces that it will not negotiate with Nagorno Karabakh.

The question is how Azerbaijan can make a claim over Nagorno-Karabakh without even speaking to NK? Is that possible? This is possible only if Azerbaijani government wants the territory and not the people.

Thus, it becomes obvious that the intention of Azerbaijani leadership is to cleanse Armenians from Karabakh, like they did in Nakhijevan. This entitles Nagorno-Karabakh to make the argument, that to be a part of Azerbaijan for Karabakh means to be totally exterminated. Hence Karabakh must not be a part of Azerbaijan, unless one wants to trigger a new genocide of Armenian people.

Summing up, let me reiterate: the conflict can and should be settled only through mutual compromises by all sides, in an atmosphere conducive to peace and not war.

Last but not least; let me also express my satisfaction to the Secretary General of the United Nations for his unwavering support to the efforts and approaches of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship

**Madam President,**

The topic of our deliberations “Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies” demonstrates our consistent approach to the Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals. Indeed, the United Nations and its Development Agenda should be relevant and accessible for all. No one should be left behind as we keep repeating in our collective efforts.

Earlier in July this year, Armenia presented its first Voluntary National Report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the High Level Political Forum. This important exercise coincided with the decisive political period determined by vibrant democratic processes and the launch of a wide-range of reforms.

Armenia is committed to the creation and development of knowledge-based and innovative platforms that will leverage the impact and accelerate the implementation of the development agenda. In this regard, we recognize the indispensable role of the UN and its specialized agencies as well as the role of the cooperation with other potential partners. As a newly-elected member of the ECOSOC and a candidate for the Human Rights Council for the term 2020-22 Armenia will do its utmost to contribute to the realization of Sustainable Development Goals and to protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

2018 is the year when we will mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of two of the most important human rights documents - the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Each of these documents has its own history and each of them has become a cornerstone for the development of international law.

They served as a basis for Armenia to start the series of Global Forum Sessions against the Crime of Genocide. This year it will be dedicated to the issues of genocide prevention through education, culture and museums. I encourage you to bring your contribution to the work of the Forum.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, Mesdames et Monsieur**

« Vivre ensemble » est le thème du 17<sup>ème</sup> Sommet de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie qui va se tenir en octobre prochain à Erevan, Capitale arménienne, âgée de deux-mille-huit-cents ans. C'est un grand honneur et un privilège pour l'Arménie de faire partie de la grande famille francophone, de promouvoir la tolérance et le respect mutuel à travers la coopération dans le domaine de la culture, de l'éducation et de l'innovation. Je réitère une nouvelle fois nos invitations au Sommet de la Francophonie avec plusieurs manifestations prévues dans le même cadre.

Thank you.