

STATEMENT

by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

**General Debate of the 80th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 25 September 2025

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For many years, I spoke from this tribune about the tragedies of aggression, occupation, and injustice experienced by Azerbaijan. Today, I will speak about our long road to victory and peace, and a new era in Azerbaijan's history, about how we managed to end the occupation through a liberation war, and how we won peace by political means.

For nearly three decades, almost twenty percent of Azerbaijan's sovereign territory remained under military occupation by Armenia. One million Azerbaijanis were expelled from their homes as a result of the policy of ethnic cleansing and war crimes conducted by Armenia. Their fundamental human rights were grossly violated. Four United Nations Security Council resolutions, adopted in 1993, demanded the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories. Sadly, these resolutions were never implemented. Armenia demonstratively ignored them because no sanctions were imposed on it by the international community.

The OSCE Minsk Group, established in 1992 to facilitate a settlement, has failed in its mission. Instead of enforcing the norms and principles of international law, its co-chairs sought to preserve the status quo and keep the conflict frozen.

In 2020, after almost 30 years of ineffective negotiations, Azerbaijan was forced to exercise its legitimate right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. During the war, Armenia shelled our towns and cities with ballistic missiles and cluster munitions, killing more than a hundred innocent civilians. Azerbaijan, in its turn, conducted the war in strict compliance with international humanitarian law. We ensured the protection of civilians and refrained from targeting non-military infrastructure. In the 44-Day Patriotic War, our armed forces liberated occupied territories and restored Azerbaijan's territorial integrity in accordance with international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

The 10 November 2020 marked the capitulation of Armenia and restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity after nearly 30 years of occupation.

Right after our victorious war, Azerbaijan declared its readiness to open a new page in relations with Armenia based on mutual recognition of territorial integrity and sovereignty. We proposed five basic principles rooted in international law. We tabled the proposal for a Peace Treaty. Then we initiated a negotiation process on its draft text, which lasted from October 2022 to summer 2025. Despite several attempts to derail the process, the negotiations produced positive results, as they were conducted on a strict bilateral basis, free from any kind of external interference.

On August 8 this year, the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Washington, in the White House, in the presence of the leaders of the United States, Azerbaijan and Armenia initialed the text of the peace agreement. The same day, the President of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of Armenia signed the Joint Declaration. President of the United States Donald Trump also signed it as a witness. Moreover, Azerbaijan and Armenia jointly appealed for the closure of the OSCE Minsk Group and related structures, as an obsolete mechanism no longer relevant to the peace process. Accordingly, on 1 September, the OSCE adopted a decision to permanently close these structures.

Regional connectivity has been at the core of our vision for lasting peace. Another key outcome of the Washington Summit is the "Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity" (TRIPP), which will ensure unimpeded access through the Zangazur corridor and foster regional connectivity.

The recent Washington Summit has also signaled a new phase in Azerbaijan-US relations. Together with President Donald Trump, we signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the two governments regarding the establishment of a Strategic Working Group to develop a Charter on strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and the United States. It opens new horizons for partnership in political, economic, energy, regional connectivity, defense, security, and other fields.

The waiver by President Trump of the sanctions imposed on Azerbaijan in 1992, in the form of the Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, is a historic step as well. The permanent removal of Section 907 by the US Congress would eliminate a legacy of double standards and help strengthen trust and cooperation at a time when Azerbaijan is contributing to global security and stability.

Overall, the agreements reached during my August visit to the United States carry historic significance.

I want to express my gratitude to President Donald Trump for opening a new chapter in the US-Azerbaijan relationship, for his decision to elevate it to the strategic partnership level, and for his support to the peace process between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Right after the victory in the Patriotic War of 2020, Azerbaijan started the large-scale reconstruction program in the liberated territories. During the time of occupation, Armenia levelled to the ground hundreds of Azerbaijani cities and villages, deliberately ruined 65 mosques. That was the policy of Armenia, which was ruled by war criminals for almost 30 years. We are rebuilding villages and cities razed to the ground. Under the Great Return Program, already more than 50,000 people live, work, and study in the liberated territories.

One of the gravest humanitarian challenges facing Azerbaijan in the post-conflict period is the landmine contamination during the time of Armenian occupation. Since November 2020, more than 400 Azerbaijani civilians and military personnel were killed or seriously injured by landmine explosions. This massive

contamination obstructs the safe return of displaced persons and delays reconstruction projects.

Similarly, the tragic fate of nearly four thousand Azerbaijanis who went missing during the Armenian aggression and occupation since the early 1990s continues to require close attention and action.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Coming to the global challenges we are facing, we believe that the response must be inclusive, fair, and universal.

Back in 2022 at the Summit of the Caspian Littoral States I raised the issue of environmental degradation of the Caspian Sea. Today situation is much worse. Caspian Sea is shrinking rapidly. The main reason is not climate change. Joint efforts of littoral states are needed to stop ecological catastrophe with unpredictable consequences. Azerbaijan also is ready to cooperate closely with the UN to tackle this problem.

Through its many initiatives, Azerbaijan has shown its clear commitment to advancing sustainable solutions to global challenges.

Azerbaijan is proud to have hosted COP29 last year, where we achieved important outcomes in advancing climate action, the green transition, and equitable access to financing. As the host of COP29, we guided negotiations towards ambitious and balanced outcomes, ensuring that all voices, particularly those of the developing world, were heard.

The adoption of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) at COP29, also known as the Baku Finance Goal, is a historic milestone in global climate finance. This commitment brings the previous 100 billion USD annual climate finance goal to at least 300 billion USD per year through 2035 from public sources in developed countries to developing countries. Azerbaijan also successfully finalized the long-awaited framework for carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, making the Paris Agreement fully operational nine years after its adoption. Several key agreements were signed at COP29 to make the Loss

and Damage Fund fully operational, providing critical support for vulnerable communities impacted by climate change.

Being strongly committed to the green transition, we at the same time should not put unrealistic targets in front of us. The world cannot live without fossil fuels today and in foreseeable future.

Energy security is closely linked to peace, regional connectivity, and economic development. Azerbaijan continues to play a proactive role in advancing these objectives globally. Azerbaijan has established itself as a reliable and indispensable partner in providing energy security to many countries. We play a strategic role connecting the Caspian region with international markets through a diversified oil and gas pipeline systems.

As of today, we are supplying natural gas to 14 countries. This ranks Azerbaijan as the top country in the world in terms of the number of countries it supplies with pipeline gas. This reflects our strategic role in enhancing energy security and diversifying supply routes across Europe and beyond. Moreover, Azerbaijan and Syria have recently strengthened their bilateral partnership, focusing on energy supply, infrastructure development, and post-conflict reconstruction. Since August this year, Azerbaijan started to supply Syria with natural gas via Türkiye, significantly reducing its electricity shortages.

Azerbaijan also attracts large investments in renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro power. Almost 40 % of our energy will be generated by renewables by 2030.

Connectivity projects, like the East-West and North-South Corridors, cross our country. We have witnessed almost 90% growth in cargo volumes through the Middle Corridor since 2022. The transit time along the Corridor have been significantly reduced. The biggest trade fleet in the Caspian, Alat International Trade Port with its annual capacity reaching 25 million tons in the near future, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad, 9 international airports, the biggest air-cargo company in the region, and many other factors have turned Azerbaijan into one of the international transport hubs.

There is a great potential for cooperation in digital connectivity. Azerbaijan leads the digital transformation initiative through such ambitious projects as the Digital Silk Way. This project includes plans for an advanced fiber-optic cable network under the Caspian Sea, establishing Azerbaijan as a key regional digital hub.

Azerbaijan achieved significant economic growth by focusing on diversifying its economy beyond oil and gas, developing the non-oil sector, and improving the investment climate through reforms and transparency. Reducing poverty and unemployment to a historic low of 5% is another achievement of our country.

Recently, two major international rating agencies (Moody's and Fitch) have increased Azerbaijan's ranking. Azerbaijan was provided with a favorable investment-grade status, citing very strong external balance, low public debt, and substantial sovereign wealth assets as key strengths. This underscores our economic resilience, strong fiscal discipline, and favorable investment climate. Our foreign debt is only 6.5% of GDP, which is one of the lowest in the world. Azerbaijan's foreign exchange reserves exceed its foreign debt almost 16 times.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Azerbaijan is proud of its global humanitarian assistance efforts. We are providing aid to countries affected by natural disasters, conflicts, and public health emergencies. Azerbaijan contributed to the COVID-19 response, donating and financing protective equipment, medical devices, and vaccines to over 80 countries in need.

Azerbaijan has entered a new era. We won, both war and peace. We ended the occupation and started reconstruction. Justice has triumphed, sovereignty has been consolidated, and peace is de-facto reached. We stand prepared to share our positive experience.

The achievements of recent years are not only a victory and success for Azerbaijan. They are also a demonstration that international law must ultimately prevail.

Our vision is clear: peace and development based upon international law, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, mutual respect, and cooperation.

Let us together build a world without double standards, where justice is not selective, the rule of law is respected, and peace is achieved not through words alone, but through actions.

Thank you.