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No:129/20, Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The recent statements by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia trying to accuse Azerbaijan of hate speech reveal once again its practice of arbitrary and selective interpretation of the decisions adopted by international bodies. By reciting the usual groundless allegations, Armenia pursues the goal of misleading the international community and distracting the attention from its own racist policy and hate crimes, manifested in the unlawful military occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and surrounding seven districts of Azerbaijan, and gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis in the course of the aggression.

Armenia, which bears full responsibility for unleashing the war against Azerbaijan, seizing 1/5 of its internationally recognized territory, carrying out ethnic cleansing in the occupied territories, committing other heinous crimes during the conflict, advocating undisguised racist ideology and blatantly disregarding the binding resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) of the United Nations Security Council, the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the decisions and documents of other international organizations, cannot lecture others on the standards and values that it has consistently violated itself.

Armenia has become a mono-ethnic country, having achieved this by expelling all non-Armenians, including Azerbaijanis. It has applied the same policy and practice of creating ethnically homogeneous areas to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, from which all non-Armenians were expelled and where it has set up a puppet racist regime.

Hatred, animosity and intolerance on ethnic and religious grounds, which are at the core of Armenia's policy is evidenced in the unconcealed conviction of its leadership in the "ethnic incompatibility" between Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The international community has repeatedly stated its indignation with the overt promotion by Armenia of such odious ideas and expressed serious concerns about the spirit of intolerance prevailing in Armenia and the discriminatory policies and practices pursued in that country.

Armenia must put an end to its hypocrisy and selectivity with regard to the human rights standards and the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, starting with the implementation of the same Court's leading judgment of 16 June 2015 in the case of *"Chiragov and Others v. Armenia"*. As is known, having examined the evidence presented, the Grand Chamber of the European Court has ascertained that Armenia exercises effective control over the Nagorno-Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, established the responsibility of Armenia for violations of the rights of the Azerbaijani internally displaced persons and reaffirmed their right to return to their homes or places of habitual residence in the occupied territories.

The primary cause of the continuation of the conflict and, as a result, of tensions and sporadic escalation on the ground is the unlawful occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan and Armenia's attempts to consolidate that situation. Peace, security and stability are achievable, first and foremost, only if the consequences of Armenia's aggression are removed, thus ensuring that its armed forces are immediately, unconditionally and completely withdrawn from the territories of Azerbaijan, as it is demanded by the above mentioned UN SC resolutions, the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is restored within its internationally recognized borders and the human rights and fundamental freedoms of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani internally displaced persons, including the right to return to their homes and properties, are guaranteed and implemented without delay.