

Plenary Session 1: Humanitarian issues I, including,

- International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law**
- Humanitarian challenges, including in the context of armed conflicts**

Delivered by Mr. Hakob Sargsyan, Head of the OSCE and Conventional Arms Control Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia

Thank you, Mr. Moderator,

In today's world, where conflicts are increasingly characterized by their complexity the principles of International humanitarian and Human Rights Law remain as relevant as ever.

The IHL and IHRL, particularly during times of conflict are not abstract concepts; they are essential frameworks designed to protect human dignity, preserve life, and ensure justice even in the darkest of times - times of war, displacement, and turmoil. At the heart of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law is a fundamental recognition: that even in the chaos of conflict, there must be limits and legal boundaries, and that all human beings regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation are entitled to basic rights and protections.

Regrettably, even in the 21st century, and despite the scrutiny of the international community, we continue to witness serious violations of the fundamental principles of IHL by certain states without adequate accountability. Notable examples of such violations include Azerbaijan's actions during its military aggression in 2020 against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, illegal military interventions into Armenia's sovereign territory in May and November 2021, September 2022, and the most recent military assault and consequent ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians in September 2023.

Colleagues,

Unfortunately, the violations committed by Azerbaijan during the aforementioned military offensives are numerous and this session alone would not suffice to detail them all. However, I would like to highlight a few that represent some of the most serious breaches, that include targeting civilians and civilian infrastructures also with the use of cluster munitions, torture, execution of prisoners, other forms of inhuman treatment, various forms of violence, including physical and sexual abuses, dismemberment and mutilation of corpses, employment of hunger as a method of warfare, etc.

Mr. Moderator,

This list could continue, but the key point is, that it is our collective responsibility to ensure that those responsible for violating International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, whether individuals or states, are held accountable. Failing to do so would send a concerning political message to other states, suggesting that such crimes can be tolerated by the international community, ultimately undermining the rule-based international order.

On a final note, it is unfortunate that this platform was again abused and misused by Azerbaijani State funded NGOs, or its better to say GONGO's who tried to promote official propaganda and political agenda of their government and divert attention from the dire violations of human rights committed by their respective country.

We also fully refute all the allegations made by the Azerbaijani delegate and would like to state that Azerbaijan's usual practice of blame shifting will neither justify Azerbaijan's massive use of force nor crimes committed against Armenians.

I Thank you.