

**Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
at the Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism 2022**

**Breakout session 2 B: Terrorist attacks based on xenophobia,
racism, and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of
religion or belief (XRIRB)**

8 September 2022

Thank you for the floor distinguished Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen!

It's a great pleasure for me to greet the participants of the Congress on behalf of the leadership of the State Security Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan and on my own behalf. Our Service attaches great importance to cooperation with the United Nations and it is a great honor for us to join this Congress today.

First of all, I'd like to note that since the end of the 20th century, terrorism has become a traditional stimulus for the globalization of the geopolitical, economic and information spheres of human activity. Today, this phenomenon is one of the main reasons for such negative manifestations as religious fanaticism, nationalism, ethnic separatism, transnational crime, and even in some cases might lead to the loss of political etiquette in interstate relations. The changing nature of terrorism forces us to take a fresh look at its manifestations that threaten the existence of all mankind.

As you might know, over the past 30 years, our country has seriously suffered due to the territorial claims of a neighboring state, which caused a humanitarian and economic crisis in the South Caucasus at the end of the last century. After the liberation of the illegally occupied territories in the fall of 2020, Azerbaijan faced a new round of dangerous phenomena such as environmental and mine terrorism, both of which are obstacles on the way to achieving lasting

peace in our region. Let me focus the attention to these types of terrorism and share views on their threats with the distinguished delegates.

A clear example of environmental terrorism for us is setting fire to forests, laying mines and continuing other subversive activities in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, directed against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our country. All these actions of the Armenian separatists are supported by the nationalist and revanchist circles of Armenia. Those who set fire to forests both in Karabakh and in other regions of the world show by their actions that they are absolutely indifferent to the consequences of these acts of vandalism, leading to the destruction of valuable forest resources, rare flora and fauna, creating the preconditions for the destruction of all mankind. The forests set on fire do not only belong to the countries in which they are located, they are indeed belong to their entire humanity. Thus, we believe that, regardless of the place and motives, the burning of forests is a direct attack on humanity; it's a manifestation of acts of environmental terrorism.

[I would like our fellow colleagues to know that when the Azerbaijanis were forced to leave their native towns and villages 30 years ago, they did not damage a single house, not a single tree, did not mine any towns and villages as they knew well it belonged to them. It is for this reason that the burning of forests and houses causes justified indignation among our citizens, who demand that those responsible be punished to the fullest extent of existing laws. In addition, there are well-grounded claims against Armenia for burial of the radioactive wastes of Metsamor nuclear plant on our lands during the occupation and poisoning our rivers with toxic materials.]

Despite the high degree of public danger of environmental terrorism, unfortunately, today we see lack of any legal opinion on this issue. There is a need for the practical implementation of generally accepted criminal law measures to counter this phenomenon, driven by the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and freedoms. We believe that this problem shall be

included, inter alia, to the priority areas of activity of international organizations that take a leading role in the fight against terrorism. Due to this fact, the task of coordinating international efforts in the fight against environmental terrorism within the framework of such global institutions as the UN becomes critically important.

Another dangerous manifestation of terrorist activity against our country is the mining of roads, cemeteries and settlements by the Armenian military formations, committed after the signing in November 2020 of a trilateral declaration mediated by Russia between the leadership of Azerbaijan and Armenia [the last evidence of placing an explosive device by Armenians under the bridge to be used by Azerbaijani tracks and vehicles, was witnessed by Russian peacekeepers on August 23 this year in the Lachin district of Azerbaijan]. As a result of the inhumane and absolutely pointless from a military point of view, mining of the liberated territories, more than 240 innocent Azerbaijanis, including children and women, became victims of mine explosions only in the last two years. For this reason, at present, the Azerbaijani authorities are experiencing serious challenges in organizing the process of repatriation of internally displaced persons to their native lands freed from occupation.

In our opinion, mine terrorism serves not only as complimentary threat to armed confrontation. As an element of an asymmetric war, it might become a detonator of large-scale interethnic and interstate armed conflicts. Therefore, it is necessary to internationally recognize the unjustified mining of civilian objects as an act of terrorism, to condemn using the relevant framework of the UN and other international organizations. It is also critically important to work on a mechanism to explain the dangerous and inhumane nature of such crimes in order to prevent them in the future.

I would like to hope and believe that the format of the current Congress will contribute to solving the problems that arise in the process of international

cooperation in the field of combating terrorism and protecting the rights of victims of terrorist activities.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to address this prestigious audience. Should you have any questions or suggestions on the issues raised in our intervention, our delegation will be delighted to take them.