



# General Assembly Security Council

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Agenda items 34, 70, 71, 72, 114 and 135

**Prevention of armed conflict**

**Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia  
and related intolerance**

**Right of peoples to self-determination**

**Promotion and protection of human rights**

**Measures to eliminate international terrorism**

**The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide,  
war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity**

**Security Council  
Seventy-sixth year**

## **Letter dated 9 March 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I am writing regarding Azerbaijan's persistent efforts to deny its use of mercenaries and foreign terrorist fighters, as verified and confirmed by multiple international accounts, and its attempts to manufacture counter-allegations in a ludicrous campaign against the Republic of Armenia, Armenian nationals and individuals of Armenian origin.

One obvious manifestation of such efforts can be seen in a publication entitled "Report on the use of foreign terrorist fighters by the Republic of Armenia in its recent aggression against the Republic of Azerbaijan", an iteration of which was annexed to the letter dated 18 November 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan addressed to the Secretary-General ([A/75/625-S/2020/1161](#)).

The longer version of the so-called "report", which Azerbaijan has made available online<sup>1</sup> and shared through its official social media accounts,<sup>2</sup> makes bold conclusory statements without any credible supporting evidence. It moreover discloses personal information, such as the full name, place of residence, date of birth, phone numbers and email address, of most of the individuals carelessly labelled as "foreign mercenaries" and "foreign terrorist fighters" (or "FTFs") allegedly

<sup>1</sup> See <https://geneva.mfa.gov.az/files/shares/Report%20on%20the%20use%20of%20Foreign%20Terrorist%20Fighters%20by%20Armenia.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://twitter.com/azmissiongeneva/status/1328363625766064129>; <http://www.facebook.com/azmissiongeneva/posts/1424961781043082>.



“recruited by Armenia”. Even photographs of some individuals are included. Azerbaijan’s fraudulent manipulation of the facts on the ground in international forums are nothing short of an ill-advised attempt to engage in defamation with the purpose of deflecting the attention of the international community from its reckless and unlawful activities in the region.

Clearly, the “report” is yet another attempt to obfuscate the widely known facts confirmed by an extensive body of internationally verified evidence regarding Azerbaijan’s use of mercenaries and foreign terrorist fighters recruited and transferred to Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) with the direct assistance of Turkey.<sup>3</sup>

Even a cursory review of this false, unsubstantiated and intentionally deceptive publication shows that it cannot withstand the simplest of scrutiny.

As a threshold matter, there is no evidence to support Azerbaijan’s claim that Armenia has recruited mercenaries. While citing the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, the “report” fails to provide any facts to satisfy either definition of “mercenary” under article 1 of the Convention. Ironically, in arguing that Armenia is recruiting Syrian and Lebanese nationals, the “report” cites for support sources that actually provide evidence that it is in fact Azerbaijan and Turkey that recruited and/or used Syrian nationals as mercenaries against Armenia.

Indeed, the “report” does not cite a single independent, credible source to support Azerbaijan’s allegations. Most references in the “report” have either Azerbaijani or Turkish origin and can thus hardly be considered objective or credible. The rare non-Azerbaijani, non-Turkish sources referenced in the “report” either themselves rely on Azerbaijani or Turkish sources, or provide no support at all for Azerbaijan’s assertions. Notably, the “report” lacks independent, credible, first-hand accounts and largely relies on anecdotal information (mostly self-reported by Azerbaijan or Turkey). With respect to data obtained from the so-called “intelligence sources”, the “report” simply provides an unsourced list of names of individuals, whom the “report” labels as foreign terrorist fighters without citing any actual intelligence or data or providing any specific act or acts of terrorism carried out by the individual.

Despite claiming that “the evidence gleaned before and during hostilities leaves no doubt as to the organized recruitment of mercenaries and FTFs by Armenia and their transfer to the conflict zone for using in combats against Azerbaijan and its civilian population”, the “report” cites no clear, let alone credible, evidence of such activity by the Armenian Government. Rather, the so-called “report” is riddled with unsubstantiated claims of Armenian “terrorism” and alleged recruitment of terrorists with no proof.

Evidently, the “report” has been prepared and disseminated in order to offset the plethora of well-documented, credible evidence and independent reports substantiating Azerbaijan’s and Turkey’s recruitment and/or use of mercenaries. In the face of mounting evidence, also mentioned by the United Nations Working Group on the use of mercenaries,<sup>4</sup> Azerbaijan’s publication is nothing short of a desperate effort to divert attention from the fact that it has employed terrorists and mercenaries

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<sup>3</sup> See the letters from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General dated 3 October 2020 (A/75/489-S/2020/974 and A/75/491-S/2020/976); 7 October 2020 (A/75/501-S/2020/988); 17 October 2020 (A/75/524-S/2020/1028); 21 October 2020 (A/75/544-S/2020/1035); and 10 December 2020 (A/75/644-S/2020/1191).

<sup>4</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Mercenaries in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone must be withdrawn – UN experts”, 11 November 2020. Available at [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26494&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26494&LangID=E).

from Syria and introduced them into the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. Notably, the “report” not only intends to mislead the international community, but it also endangers hundreds of nationals from 23 United Nations Member States, who are haphazardly labelled as “foreign mercenaries” and “terrorist fighters”.

The promulgation of fabricated allegations put forward in Azerbaijan’s ill-constructed “report”, in all its available iterations, as well as the fact of disclosing personally identifiable information of individuals negligently labelled as “terrorists” or “mercenaries” in a defamatory publication with no proof, represent a source of grave concern that must not go unchecked by the relevant United Nations bodies.

In an atmosphere where ethnic Armenians worldwide have become targets of hate crimes due to the repeated and unpunished use of inflammatory language by the Azerbaijani and Turkish authorities, such irresponsible publications must be acknowledged for what they are: a clear invitation to harassment, bullying and even inter-ethnic violence. As I elaborated in my letter dated 30 July 2020 ([A/74/981](#)), instances of incitement to ethnic hatred, led and encouraged at the level of State authorities, represent a significant indicator of the risk of atrocity crimes and, as such, need to be effectively identified and adequately addressed, at all levels.

I kindly ask that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34, 70, 71, 72, 114 and 135, and of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Mher **Margaryan**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative