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وزير خارجية جمهورية أرمينيا

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**The Speech of Mr. Ararat Mirzoyan,  
the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia  
on the 159<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the League of Arab States  
at the Ministerial level  
*Cairo, March 8, 2023***

Honorable Secretary General of the Arab League,

Dear Ministers, Excellences, friends,

Let me first express my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Aboul Gheit, the Secretary General of Arab League and to the President of the current session, His Excellency Foreign Minister of Egypt Mr. Shoukry as well as to all member states for the opportunity to address today this distinguished audience. I consider it a symbolic gesture of friendship and mutual respect and, of course, shared history.

I would like to start with praising the centuries-old relations between Armenian and Arab nations. We are connected to each other by strong bonds of historical and cultural ties which continue serving as a basis for current friendly relations, cooperation and warm people-to-people contacts. Throughout history, our nations have lived side by side and shared each other's joys and griefs.

During the tragic events of the early 20th century thousands of Armenians, escaping the Genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire in 1915, found a safe shelter in the Arab countries. During those challenging times, the Armenians were given the freedom to live and create in the host Arab countries. It will never be forgotten by the Armenians. And I am proud to note that our compatriots contributed greatly to the progress and development of those Arab countries in various spheres.

I would like to note that Armenia, being a cradle of ancient civilizations, has been preserving also the Islamic heritage a vivid example of which are the thousands of manuscripts, kept in the Armenian Mesrop Mashtots

Institute of Ancient Manuscripts – Matenadaran. In the heart of our capital city Yerevan we proudly preserve and exhibit Arabic Manuscripts including masterpieces of Arabic calligraphy, such as the first scripts of the Holy Quran, the rare books of religious, philosophic, historiographic, philological content.

Armenia and Arab countries also developed close relations and fruitful cooperation on state level. There is full understanding between Armenia and the Arab countries on important issues, including the peace process in the Middle East.

Dear colleagues,

In our region, Armenia is engaged in talks with Azerbaijan discussing normalization of relations between our two countries, aimed at establishment of peace in the region.

I do not want to go into the details of the full-fledged aggressions against the peaceful population of the Nagorno-Karabakh and the sovereign territory of Armenia. Neither I do want you to find yourselves in the middle of the accusations and fighting. Instead, I would like to draw the general picture of the overall process.

I want to emphasize that Armenia rejects the use of force or the threat of force and is trying to negotiate with the neighbors in good faith and is committed to finding fair solutions to all outstanding issues through diplomatic means. Instead of reciprocating our genuine efforts Azerbaijan continues its hate speech and xenophobic rhetoric and, as well as aggressive and maximalist actions.

In this regard, I would like to touch upon the latest developments. As you know, it has been more than 2 months since the Lachin corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to the outside world, was illegally closed by a group of so-called eco-activists obviously orchestrated by the Azerbaijani government. Furthermore, Azerbaijan regularly disrupts the electricity and gas supply to Nagorno-Karabakh. As a result, the

Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh are on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe. Instead of engaging with local authorities in talks on the rights and security guarantees of the Nagorno-Karabakh, the highest leadership of Azerbaijan calls on the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to leave their homes aiming to deprive them of their homeland and realize its policy of ethnic cleansing.

In the context of the blockade of Lachin corridor, I would like to underline that on 22 February the International Court of Justice issued a legally binding provisional measure against Azerbaijan. In the mentioned order, the Court has found that there is an imminent risk of irreparable harm to Armenians' rights and ordered Azerbaijan to take all necessary measures to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin corridor in both directions.

Distinguished Ministers,

Unfortunately, our neighboring Azerbaijan continuously manipulates the Armenia-Azerbaijan relations and Nagorno-Karabakh issue on various international platforms, especially those organizations where Armenia is not represented, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Non-Aligned Movement, trying to give it a religious tone and using the delicate concept of Muslim solidarity. We expect that such attempts will be rejected and will not drag our friendly Arab countries into the field of religious discord. We should prevent any further attempt of giving a religious tone to the pure political and humanitarian disputes.

And once again, in this platform of the League of Arab States I emphasize that Armenia attaches great importance to the relations with the Arab states and reiterate our readiness to broaden the prospects of our cooperation with all of you.

I thank you.