

Statement by
H.E. Mr. Ashot Hovakimian, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Armenia
at the World Humanitarian Summit,
Plenary session
May 24, 2016, Istanbul

Dear Ms/Mr. Chair,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The abhorrent barbarity committed recently by the armed forces of Azerbaijan, including intentional and indiscriminate targeting of the peaceful population, especially children, women, and the elderly, as well as civilian objects, including schools and kindergartens, killings, beheadings, torture and mutilation of bodies is incompatible with the elementary norms of a civilized world. It is a product of a long standing policy of racism, intolerance and incitement to hatred against Armenians, condoned and directly executed by the authorities of Azerbaijan. The grave and systematic violations of international humanitarian law committed by Azerbaijan and the glorification at the highest political level of persons directly involved in the atrocities constitute a crime against humanity and a war crime.

Azerbaijani President, who bears personal responsibility in initiating the aggression and glorifying the terrorists and ISIL-style brutalities' perpetrators, yesterday used this august body to disseminate fabricated allegations against Armenians. None of those lies have any connection with reality. Armenia certainly has no plans of creating a nuclear bomb, and Armenian forces have never used chemical weapons. Since the President of Azerbaijan enjoys quoting former Armenian officials, he could have surely referred to one of his predecessors, who claimed the responsibility of the then Azerbaijani political leadership for killing of their own people in Khojalu.

Armenia has been among the first to strongly condemn the barbaric acts committed by ISIL, Al-Nusra and other terrorist groups, against ethnic and religious minorities, including our fellow Armenians and their cultural and religious heritage, which has for centuries defined the region's multicultural and multiethnic mosaic. Armenia received about 20.000 refugees from Syria, thus becoming third largest per capita host country in Europe. Many of them are the descendants of the survivors of the Genocide in the Ottoman Empire.

We believe that the plight of refugees and the humanitarian response in addressing challenges associated with unprecedented numbers of displaced people should by no means become subject to political trade-offs and manipulations. It is Armenia's profound conviction, that there is no need to revise the existing Humanitarian Law, but to strictly implement it, while enhancing compliance with its implementation, by constant tracing and reporting of any acts of violations of the Law, the revelation of cases of violent extremism, crimes of genocide and the war crimes.

The way forward must be based on common values of dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as universality of applicability of these values. We believe that the rights of individuals must be guaranteed and must not be dependent on the status of the territory where peoples live.

Thank you