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**Human Rights Council**

**Forty-first session**

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Agenda item 4

**Human rights situations that require the Council’s attention**

Note verbale dated 2 July 2019 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honour to draw attention to the following.

Starting from the end of 1991, the Republic of Armenia has used its military force to seize the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent administrative districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which constitute 20 per cent of the internationally recognized territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The use of force by the Republic of Armenia against the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been accompanied by the ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani population living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The occupation and ethnic cleansing carried out by the Republic of Armenia made the realization of, among others, the social and cultural rights of the Azerbaijani population impossible.

During the course of the aggression and the ongoing occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan by the Republic of Armenia, the historical and cultural heritage of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been destroyed.

Among them, 1,891 cultural resources, comprising 738 monuments, 28 museums with more than 83,500 exhibits, 4 picture galleries, 14 memorial complexes and 1,107 cultural establishments have been destroyed, amounting to a great cultural loss for the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Architectural monuments of national importance in the occupied territories include the sixth-century Albanian Aghoghlan cloister and the fourteenth-century Malik Ajdar tomb in Lachyn, the fourth-century Albanian Amaras cloister and a considerable number of Albanian temples in Khojav, the eighteenth-century Asgaran castle, fourteenth-century tombs and a number of Albanian temples dating back to the Middle Ages in Khojaly, the sixth-century Albanian Saint Jacob cloister, the thirteenth-century Albanian Khatiravang cloister and the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Lekh castle in Kalbajar, the fifth- and eighth-century Albanian cloister in Gazakh, the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mirali tomb and the seventeenth-century caravanserai in Fuzuli, the fourteenth-century tomb in Zangilan, the seventeenth-century mosque complex in Jabrayil, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Yukhary and Ashaghy Govharagha and Saatly mosques, caravanserais and houses in Shusha, the nineteenth-century mosque in Aghdam, and archaeological sites like Garakopaktapa, Khantapa, Gunashtapa, Uzuntapa, Meynatapa and Zargartapa, the Neolithic and Bronze Age residential areas of Fuzuli, the Bronze Age residential areas of Chyragtapa and Garaghajy, and those of the medieval areas of Gavurgala, the Bronze Age mounds of Imangazantapa and the Gyshlag mounds in Jabrayil, the Bronze Age rock drawings in Kalbajar, the Bronze and Iron Age stone box necropolis in Khojaly, the Bronze Age residential area and necropolis in Sadarak, the Bronze and Iron Age mounds in Lachyn, a Stone Age cave, a Bronze and Iron Age mound and stone box graves in Shusha, and the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Shahri-Sharifan residential area in Zangilan.

The monuments of world-level importance in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan include the 11- and 15-arch medieval Khudafarin bridges and the Bronze Age Niftaly mounds in Jabrayil, the medieval Albanian Ganjasar and Khudavang cloisters in Kalbajar, the fourteenth-century Gutlu Musa oghlu tomb and the Bronze Age Uzarliktapa residential area in Aghdam, the Paleolithic Age Azykh and Taghlar caves in Khojavand and the Bronze and Iron Age mounds in Khojaly.

The ongoing policy of deliberate destruction of this legacy following the occupation has been and continues to be an irreparable blow to both Azerbaijani culture and world civilization. As has clearly been demonstrated in the deliberate change of the cultural appearance of towns and settlements in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, by destroying the monuments, changing architectural features and making “archaeological” excavations, the Republic of Armenia pursues the far-reaching target of removing any signs of their Azerbaijani origins. An analysis of the more than 20 years since the declaration of a ceasefire in 1994 shows that the armed hostilities did not destroy as many Azerbaijani monuments as what has been subsequently done by the Republic of Armenia.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva kindly requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to circulate the present note verbale as a document of the forty-first session of the Human Rights Council, under agenda item 4.