



# General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General  
19 January 2023

Original: English

**General Assembly**  
**Seventy-seventh session**  
Agenda items 18, 30, 58, 66, 68, 73, 84 and 132

**Security Council**  
**Seventy-eighth year**

**Sustainable development**

**Prevention of armed conflict**

**Peacebuilding and sustaining peace**

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

**Promotion and protection of human rights**

**Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts**

**The rule of law at the national and international levels**

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

## **Letter dated 19 January 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

During its nearly 30-year unlawful occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan, along with numerous atrocity crimes, the total ethnic cleansing of the occupied territories and the destruction and looting of Azerbaijani cultural and historical heritage and hundreds of cities, towns and villages there, Armenia caused significant damage to the environment and biodiversity of my country.

In this regard, I have the honour to transmit herewith a press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the inter-State arbitration commenced by Azerbaijan under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats to hold Armenia accountable for its extensive destruction of Azerbaijan's environment and biodiversity (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 18, 30, 58, 66, 68, 73, 84 and 132, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar Aliyev  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 19 January 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan on arbitration filed by Azerbaijan against Armenia for widespread environmental destruction**

**19 January 2023**

On 18 January 2023, Azerbaijan has commenced the first known inter-State arbitration under the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. This historic arbitration case aims to hold Armenia accountable for its extensive destruction of Azerbaijan's environment and biodiversity during its nearly thirty years of unlawful occupation of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan.

Upon liberating its territories in 2020, Azerbaijan collected all the evidence about Armenia's destruction of the environment during the unlawful occupation. These activities, while causing severe harm to the area's natural habitats and species, depleted natural resources and destroyed biodiversity.

Armenia's widespread deforestation, unsustainable logging, and pollution through significant construction and mining in the areas that were protected nature reserves prior to the occupation have put over 500 wildlife species at risk in Azerbaijan.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) noted in 2022 that "specially protected and valuable forests" in the areas of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia were not spared. There is visual evidence showing the shocking scale of deforestation, including destroying habitats to build the Damirli-1 mine, the Galacha hydropower plant in Lachin, and the Chardaghli mine.

Armenia's actions have caused extraordinary levels of river pollution, including in transboundary rivers that run from Armenia into Azerbaijan's territory.

The UNEP also noted in 2022 that Armenia's mining development in the region caused "chemical pollution of water, soil and biota" in river habitats, with hundreds of fish found dead in the Okhchuchay River and several protected fish and amphibian species threatened.

Azerbaijan's inter-State legal action notes that Armenia has violated its legal obligations under the Bern Convention to maintain populations of all wild flora and fauna, especially in the area of ensuring conservation, restoration and improvements to the habitats of wild flora and fauna, among others.

In keeping with the United Nations' Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, Azerbaijan calls on the international community to condemn Armenia's appalling destruction during the occupation of one of the world's most rich and biodiverse ecologies.

Within the framework of arbitration, Azerbaijan demands to order Armenia to cease all ongoing violations of the Bern Convention, and pay full reparation for its environmental destruction in the formerly occupied territories.