

**OPEN LETTER: How Baku Intentionally Undermines the Credibility of Russia's
Mediation Mission as OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair**

Dear Colleagues,

I have the honor to draw your attention to the deliberate steps taken by the Baku authorities to undermine the international community's confidence in Russia's mediation mission in the peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani relations and in the South Caucasus region. Another irrefutable evidence of this, among many facts, is the provocation of the Azerbaijani authorities with the violation of the Republic of Armenia's state border regime, which defiantly followed right after the visit of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Azerbaijan on May 10-11, 2021 and his departure from Baku. We are talking about the trespass of the state border of the Republic of Armenia (RA) by the Azerbaijani armed forces in the Syunik region around the Black Lake on May 12, 2021, with the military force moving 3.5 kilometers deep into the territory of Armenia.¹

The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs are known to be ready to use the consensus between the Russian Federation, the United States and France in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict following the 44-day military aggression of Turkey and Azerbaijan against the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic - in violation of the OSCE Madrid Principles.²

In this regard, Russia's position on the current military aspects of the conflict settlement, which was clearly stated by the Russian Foreign Ministry during talks with the Azerbaijani president two days before the provocation of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, is worthy of attention. According to Lavrov, Russia, together with the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group and the parties to the armed conflict, should conduct the settlement in the following way *"so that everyone proceeds from the fact that the military aspects are closed. Now we need to deal with the details "on the ground", issues relating delimitation and demarcation. Not everything is simple, but it can be resolved. Military experts with the participation of diplomats can agree on mutually acceptable solutions"*.³

The fact of the provocation by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces was officially confirmed and assessed by a phone call of Acting Foreign Minister Ayvazyan to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov,⁴ as well as by a discussion at the meeting of the Government and the National Security Council of the Republic of Armenia.⁵

The indisputable choice by the Baku authorities to target Russia's mediation role, as OSCE Minsk Group co-chair, following the visit of the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Baku is obvious. Regarding the above-mentioned, the international security experts responsible for advising the authorities of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs will have to fine-tune the response scenarios to the infringement of the RA state border regime after the military aggression of Turkey and Azerbaijan against the NKR and the RA - in violation of the principles of non-use of force and of the threat of the use of force.

Yours sincerely,

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¹The Armenian Ombudsman reported on the intimidation of residents and the provocation by the Azerbaijani military in Syunik: a security zone is urgently needed. Yerevan, Armenian News (Novosti Armenii), May 13, 2021. <https://newsarmenia.am/news/politics/ombudsmen-armenii-soobshchil-o-zapugivanii-zhiteley-i-provokatsii-azerbaydzhanskikh-voennykh-v-syuni/>

²Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. Vienna, OSCE Secretariat, Moscow/Paris/Washington 5 May 2021. <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/485558>

³Opening remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov during the meeting with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev, Baku, May 10, 2021. Moscow, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 10.05.2021. https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4725585

⁴On the telephone conversation between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov and the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia A. Ayvazyan. Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry, May 12, 2021. https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4731042

⁵Azerbaijan's actions are an encroachment on the sovereign territory of Armenia: N. Pashinyan on the situation in Syunik. Yerevan, Armenpress, May 13, 2021. <https://armenpress.am/rus/news/1052147.html>