

Statement in the exercise of the right of reply  
by Ambassador Vahram Kazhoyan,  
Secretary General of the  
Armenian National Commission for UNESCO  
at the General Policy Debate  
of the 38th Session of the UNESCO General Conference  
*November 7, 2015*

Thank you Mr. President,

Azerbaijani representative yesterday was preaching about the necessity of not politicizing UNESCO, but today their own representative was doing the opposite, once again trying to drag UNESCO into political processes that are beyond this organization's mandate.

Speaking of historic Azerbaijani lands is simply ironic. No one has ever come across "Azerbaijan" on any historic map. There was not a single true word in the Azerbaijani statements. When I say something, I speak with proof and evidence. Every historic monument in Armenia is preserved and protected by the Government, regardless of their ethnic or religious belonging. But the attempt to incriminate Armenia in religious hatred makes no sense. Armenians have been living all over the world, peacefully coexisting with every nation and religion. And today Armenia is home to 12 national minorities, including many without a kin state.

Speaking of aggression – the only true aggressor is the Azerbaijani Government that practices hate speech against anything Armenian, has organized massacres of Armenians in Baku, Sumgait, Kirovabad and has launched a full-scale war against the peaceful population of Nagorno Karabakh.

The so-called multi-ethnic Azerbaijan has no Armenian population today, despite the fact that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Baku was an Armenian, Russian and Jewish populated city where oil industry was started by Armenians. Every Armenian was either massacred or had to flee the country. Thus, no official of the most xenophobic state has any moral right to speak of tolerance, making totally false accusations.

The model for today's cultural genocide in the Middle East has begun many years ago when Azerbaijan started policy of cleansing of Armenian culture. Monasteries, churches and cross-stones have been destroyed there. We have raised the issue of the destruction of several thousand Armenian cross-stones of the medieval Armenian cemetery in Jugha, Nakhijevan, on a number of occasions, including in this very hall. UNESCO has the photo and video evidence of the destruction. In 2008 ICOMOS 16<sup>th</sup> General Assembly adopted a Resolution condemning the barbaric destruction of those monuments. The call contained therein to the Azerbaijani Authorities to facilitate access of a UNESCO/ICOMOS expert delegation to study the site and the destruction has been since rejected by Azerbaijan. Armenia, on the other hand, has always expressed its readiness to receive such an expert team in our region.

Thank you.