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Statement to the ICC ASP Working Group on Amendments

Presented by Maria Gevorgyan, a lawyer at the Center for Truth and Justice (CFTJ).

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this critical dialogue. I speak today on behalf of the Center for Truth and Justice, an international organization carrying the voices of those who have already paid the price of unchecked aggression.

Over the years, my colleagues and I have documented hundreds of first-hand testimonies from victims and survivors of the most egregious war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh by the Azerbaijani regime. We have heard accounts of legs and ears being cut off, hours of inhumane treatment in detention facilities, and the loss of consciousness from torture inflicted on ethnic Armenians. Victims have described the constant, paralysing fear that every second could be their last. We have documented executions and beheadings. And we have documented the forced displacement of 120,000 ethnic Armenians. Most of these atrocities were made possible by sustained acts of aggression.

This aggression is now spilling over into Armenia itself. In recent months, we have documented incidents where Azerbaijani forces opened fire on Armenian villages. Eyewitnesses tell us of children jolted awake at night by the sound of tracer bullets cutting through the dark.



We join our colleagues in expressing deep frustration with the opposition of some States, who focus on procedural technicalities while overlooking the unfolding reality on the ground.

We want to remind this room that the Rome Statute was designed to end impunity for the gravest international crimes, particularly the crime of aggression, described at Nuremberg as the “supreme international crime,” one that contains “*the accumulated evil of the whole.*” While legal nuances may be complex, they are not insurmountable. The need to fight this “accumulated evil” is far too great to be hindered by legal hairsplitting.

We strongly emphasize the urgency of harmonizing the ICC’s jurisdiction over the crime of aggression with the regime that applies to other core crimes. This is essential not only for current situations unfolding in various countries but also for the prevention of future ones facing the persistent threat of full-scale aggression at their borders, such as Armenia.

In this spirit, the Center for Truth and Justice will convene an international conference dedicated to the crime of aggression this June in Yerevan, just ahead of the ASP Special Session. This conference, bringing together scholars, practitioners, and ICC representatives from around the globe, will seek to revive and advance dialogue on the Kampala Amendments and the need for a more coherent jurisdictional framework.

We urge you: to harmonize the Court’s jurisdiction now so that when the people of Armenia, or any nation, are confronted by tanks and tyranny, we can say with conviction that we did everything possible to protect them.

Thank you.
