

SPEECH

**by Ms. Tsovinar Vardanyan, member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia at
the General Debate
145th IPU Assembly
Kigali, 13 October 2022**

Honourable chair, dear colleagues,

In 2018 a peaceful velvet revolution took place in Armenia. The people of Armenia chose democracy as the only guarantee for peace and prosperity. The participation of women and youth in the revolution was enormous and unprecedented. The involvement of women in the political life and decision-making process of Armenia is the normal development of democratic processes, which we put on institutional foundations by making reforms in the legislation. Today, 34% of our parliament is represented by women, and 70% of it are young parliamentarians.

Dear colleagues,

Unfortunately, today the young democracy of Armenia is in danger. On the 13th of September 2022, Azerbaijan launched a large-scale attack on the sovereign territory of our country. With these totally unprovoked acts of aggression Azerbaijan targeted civilian infrastructure in the towns and villages of Armenia, causing hundreds of human life losses, including civilians. There is appalling evidence of cases of murder of unarmed Armenian prisoners of war, torture and mutilation of captured and dead soldiers, including women.

Critical infrastructure and houses in several Armenian regions were destroyed or heavily damaged, causing serious material and environmental losses. Around

30,000 Armenian schoolchildren cannot attend school because of the interrupted educational process.

On September 15, 2022, an extraordinary meeting of the UN Security Council was convened to discuss the issue. During the discussion many strong and addressed statements were made, especially by women.

Armenia continues to use all possible international mechanisms to restore our territorial integrity and ensure peace in the region. Today, thanks to our international partners, there is a fragile ceasefire and an important decision of establishment of an EU civilian mission in Armenia, which is a necessity for Armenia.

Dear women parliamentarians,

I am appealing to you on behalf of my fellow parliamentarians. We expect to hear your voices of condemnation for Azerbaijan and believe that strong statements by our international partners will make Azerbaijan withdraw the troops from our sovereign territory, will make Azerbaijan return all Armenian prisoners of war and will prevent further aggression from their side. We really believe in the importance of women's participation in the process of bringing peace to our countries.

Once again, we would like to reiterate our commitment to peace and security.

Thank you.