Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan addresses the nation

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Good day, dear compatriots, today around 13:00, the armed forces of Azerbaijan started shelling the entire territory of Nagorno Karabakh. And after some time, they also started an operation to break the line of contact in Nagorno Karabakh and take control of positions and, according to some reports, also settlements in Nagorno Karabakh.

Of course, we are in contact with Nagorno Karabakh, but there are certain communication problems. But the general information is that from the beginning, the Nagorno-Karabakh territory was attacked by various means, including rockets, and then a ground operation was launched against Nagorno-Karabakh from several directions. During this period, of course, Azerbaijan also carries out informational support of operations. And the information that Azerbaijan officially informed the Russian Federation about the start of these operations was also strange and puzzling for us. Of course, this is the version, the information of Azerbaijan, and I want to draw attention to this, but the fact is that we did not receive any information about this operation from our Russian partners. Of course, we cannot say that this situation was unpredictable, because as I said earlier in the Cabinet meetings, we could observe the escalation of the situation. And also today in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it was emphasized that the meeting held yesterday in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan with diplomatic representatives accredited in Azerbaijan was a diplomatic preparation for military operations against Nagorno Karabakh, and in fact this was true. Of course, we immediately convened an extended session of the Security Council with the participation of the President of the Republic and the President of the National Assembly, and we discussed the situation. Of course, we immediately convened an extended session of the Security Council with the participation of the President of the Republic and the President of the National Assembly, and we discussed the situation. And we must record that by this, Azerbaijan, in fact, launched the ground operation to subject the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh to ethnic cleansing. And, as already stated in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we believe that, firstly, the peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation should take measures and secondly, we expect the UN Security Council to take measures as well. Of course, during this period there are already comments, which, unfortunately, try to link this ongoing process with this or that decision of Armenia. But I want to repeat once again what I have said many times: the Republic of Armenia has not given anyone a mandate to carry out ethnic cleansing in Nagorno Karabakh, and our permanent task has been and continues to be ensuring the rights and security of the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh, and it has always been on our agenda. I consider strange Azerbaijan's statement that they will leave a humanitarian corridor for the civilian population to leave Nagorno Karabakh. This is a direct act of ethnic cleansing. But what is happening? If they announce that they are carrying out a so-called anti-terrorist operation and civilian infrastructure and

citizens are not targeted, then the question arises: why do they announce about opening a humanitarian corridor for people to leave Nagorno Karabakh? If what they said had anything to do with reality, on the contrary, they should have urged the citizens to take shelter, stay in the shelters and not go out to places where they could be wounded unintentionally. And this logic, brought forward by Azerbaijan, clearly indicates the beginning of a specific operation of ethnic cleansing.

But I also want to assess the situation from the point of view of Armenia. First of all, let me say that as of now, the situation along the borders of Armenia is relatively stable, that is, we do not have a visible and significant change in the situation. But as I said and I say now, I emphasize now that the main and key target and purpose of this operation is to immerse the Republic of Armenia into military operations. You see, today a number of Azerbaijani media and also official media, or media linked to the authorities, are spreading information that they are carrying out strikes in the direction of the units of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, referring to Nagorno Karabakh. And, unfortunately, this same information is repeated by a number of our partners who say that they call on Armenia and Azerbaijan to stop military operations.

I want to note that the Republic of Armenia is not involved in military operations, and I want to note once again that the Republic of Armenia does not have an army in Nagorno Karabakh.

And I also want to draw the attention of our public to a number of domestic and external forces that want to involve Armenia in large-scale military operations by all means. This is visible, and we stress with our position that the attempts to involve the Republic of Armenia in a military escalation are unacceptable for us and we will manage this process, no matter how much we understand, dear people, the emotional and many other aspects of all of us in this situation. But we should not allow some people, some forces, external and domestic, to put Armenia's statehood under attack. Unfortunately, I have to record that, as expected, calls for a coup d'état are already being heard from different places, even in Armenia.

And here, the Armenian statehood and the state must react in these conditions in accordance with the procedure established by the constitution of the Republic of Armenia. But, of course, in this situation, a lot depends on the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, the people of the Republic of Armenia, who, in my deep conviction, should treat the created situation soberly, without emotions, no matter how difficult it is. You should understand that as difficult as it is for everyone, it is at least as difficult for myself, for the members of the Security Council, for the leadership of the country, but we must not take any uncalculated, any drastic action, any adventurous action at this time.

Of course, I also understand that there is a certain lack of information, and the lack of information is also due to the fact that in Nagorno-Karabakh, as I mentioned, communication nodes are damaged due to artillery strikes and therefore there are certain difficulties in the information flow, but still, I think that our media and authorities are in contact with Nagorno-Karabakh as far as possible and will take the

necessary measures to provide them with humanitarian support, depending on the situation.

At this moment, I think this is all I have to say and once again I appeal, please, I urge you not to give in to provocations, to keep calm, to follow official information and official news. Of course, all possible measures will be taken so that the people of the Republic of Armenia are properly informed of all events. And, of course, it is very important that the legal system functions in full and stability is maintained in the Republic of Armenia, because we all understand that the disruption of the legal system and stability is the very goal that the forces that act and intend to act against the Republic of Armenia have set before themselves.

This is all for now, dear compatriots, as necessary, I will also personally give you information on the situation, share my assessments of the situation with you, and also the state bodies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other state bodies, as necessary, will issue a corresponding statement.