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The statements made by the highest authorities of the Republic of Armenia regarding the potential withdrawal of Armenia's lawsuits against Azerbaijan from international courts and other instances have raised serious concerns.

Such steps will cause irreparable damage to the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people. Here are the key points:

1. Statements made at the highest level of power are absolutely unacceptable.
2. The strategic aim of the lawsuits against Azerbaijan is to hold them accountable internationally for violations of the rights of the Armenians of Armenia and Artsakh, and the Armenian people in general. They are indispensable tools for the protection of our collective and individual rights and international justice.
3. Achieving stable and lasting peace, as well as preventing new Azerbaijani encroachments against the Republic of Armenia and its people through the occupation of Armenia's sovereign territories and other crimes, is not possible without international justice.
4. The proceedings in international courts are essential for investigating crimes committed against the people of Artsakh and protecting collective rights. They are also crucial for the collective return of the Artsakh people, safeguarding spiritual and cultural heritage, public and private property in Artsakh, and ensuring a safe and dignified life after their return by establishing international protection mechanisms.
5. Furthermore, through the submitted lawsuits, the Republic of Armenia has committed to protecting the rights of victims who have suffered from Azerbaijani crimes, including the property and other rights of forcibly displaced Artsakh Armenians, in international courts. As a result, persons have refrained from submitting individual complaints to international courts, and relinquishing legal remedies and transferring the issues to the political realm, there is no assurance that Azerbaijan will comply with the demands. Therefore, the withdrawal of the claims submitted by Armenia will inevitably render these crucial international instruments unusable for protecting the rights of affected individuals due to the formal requirements of such instruments.

6. There are also numerous individual lawsuits in international courts, in addition to interstate applications. If these individual lawsuits are dropped, the fate of individual complaints becomes uncertain. In such a scenario, the strength of individual complaints will be significantly diminished, or the international court could potentially consolidate them with interstate complaints that the country has withdrawn, leading to their rejection. Consequently, individuals will be deprived of international judicial protection of their rights due to an impermissible political decision by the government.

7. Complaints and demands presented in international courts hold immense significance for Armenia's diplomacy. The withdrawal of international demands could inflict irreparable harm on Armenia's standing in the global arena and weaken the foundations of its diplomatic resistance framework.

8. The Azerbaijani government has long perpetuated a policy of deep-seated racism and animosity towards Armenians, extending from Armenia and Artsakh to the Diaspora. Azerbaijan not only neglects to protect Armenians or prevent violations of their rights but, at times, at the state level, actively endorses and condones harm against Armenians under the guise of "peace." This includes heinous acts such as murders, torture, abductions, arbitrary detentions, and inflicting psychological trauma.

9. Furthermore, the current Azerbaijani genocidal policy exacerbates hostility after each offense, laying the groundwork for further atrocities. The threats against the collective existence of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people have escalated in general.

10. Compounding this issue is Armenian authorities' one-sided persistent acquiescence to Azerbaijan's demands, driven by the futile hope that Azerbaijan will cease its actions. Unfortunately, this has not occurred in the past and it will not happen in the future.

11. The Azerbaijani authorities have never genuinely pursued peace; their international claims against Armenia were merely artificial gestures;

mirroring steps aimed at deceiving the international community, creating a facade, and concealing their own crimes.

12. Withdrawal from lawsuits against Azerbaijan in international courts by the Armenian government would legitimize Azerbaijan's policy of hatred and serious crimes against Armenians, potentially resulting in new violations of our rights and further crimes.

13. In light of the aforementioned, we strongly urge the Armenian authorities not to make any statements or take actions to withdraw from ongoing lawsuits against Azerbaijan in international courts. Furthermore, we urge to initiate new legal actions based on all relevant conventions.

This includes exploring avenues for seeking justice through the International Criminal Court to address the grave crime of forced displacement of the people of Artsakh.

Signatories:

Gegham Stepanyan, Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Artsakh

Arman Tatoyan, former Human Rights Defender (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Armenia

Artak Beglaryan, former Human Rights Defender (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Artsakh

Siranush Sahakyan, Head of the NGO "Center for International and Comparative Law"

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