

STATEMENT

Of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan On the 31st of March – the Day of Genocide against Azerbaijanis

An aggression of Armenians against Azerbaijanis, which is known as one of the incidents severely violated of international legal norms and acts in the history of world conflicts, is an act repeated time to time.

Due to purposefully committed massacre, ethnic cleansing and deportation policy carried out by Armenian nationalists and their supporters against Azerbaijanis during more than two centuries, our nation encountered grievous sufferings and rights of our nationals have been severely violated. The aim of this repulsive policy was to banish Azerbaijanis from their native lands by force and to establish “Great Armenia” state that was made up by Armenian historians and ideologists. From the beginning of XIX century, thousands of Armenian families were moved from Iran and Turkey to historical Azerbaijani lands –Iravan province, Nakhchivan, Karabakh, Zangazur and other regions of our country.

As a result of the chaos started since 1988 by the next aggression against the country on the eve of disintegration of the former Soviet Union, Armenia occupied the Nagorno-Karabakh and its seven adjacent regions, which cover 20 percent of our territories. Moreover, thousands of our people became refugees and IDPs.

Genocide and deportation policy carried out by Armenians against Azerbaijanis were especially extended in 1918-1920 years and the evidences in historical documents regarding the national slaughter in Azerbaijan, committed by Armenians, prove ruthless annihilation of Azerbaijanis in Shamakhi, Guba, Mugan, Zangazur, Garabagh, Iravan province and other districts, as well as plunder and destruction of cities and villages.

These bloody events on March 31, 1918 committed by Armenians are the genocide acts against Azerbaijanis. On March 30 of that year, following the incidents of opening drum-fires from ships by Armenian-Bolshevik allies in Baku, the bloodsheds, committed on the 31st of March and 1-2nd of April gained a massive scale and armed Armenian soldiers killed the civilians mercilessly.

Armenian savagery has been committed in hundreds of towns and villages, including Nagorno-Karabakh. More than 150 Azerbaijani villages have been destroyed in this region. Shusha city and Muslims living villages of Shusha district were more damaged and unprecedented slaughters were committed. Armenian armed forces also attacked Azerbaijanis living villages of Jabrayil district of this

region and killed innocent women, children and the elderly, robbed houses and livestock. 115 villages in Zangezur and 211 villages in Irevan province were ruined and the inhabitants was murdered.

Hundred thousands of people, including about 30 thousands of Azerbaijanis in Baku and surrounding villages were exterminated with cruelty, mosques and school buildings were burned and destroyed.

During March slaughters Armenians fired at and destroyed a number of ancient monuments, including Juma and Thazapir mosques, Ismailyya building, considered as one of pearls of world architecture.

Only in the Quba district Armenian armed forces burnt 122 villages, killed 60 men, women and children and injured 53 persons.

The evidences proving mass human annihilations committed in 1918 Quba incidents have been revealed recently. Countless human bones found are visual evidence of the Armenian vandalism. Quba massacre museum is being created as evidence and respect to the memory of ten thousands of persons killed there.

In accordance with the international law, genocide being severe international crime belongs to the group of crimes as the aggression aimed against peace and world security, also as war and international crime against humanity. The legal basis for the crime of genocide was determined by the Convention "On Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" adopted by the Resolution of the UN General Assembly No. 260 (III) dated 9 December 1948. As it is specified in the Convention, genocide is an act committed with intention to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, religious, or racial group. Each action that is a part of crime against humanity, and is envisaged in this document was committed by Armenians against Azerbaijanis during March incidents in 1918 and shall be recognized as genocide from the perspective of law.

Armenia is still one of those rare states of the world that choose terrorism as an integral part of its state policy. Today in Armenia, the criminals of thousands Azerbaijanis during 1918 March slaughters and other committed massacres, are recognized as national heroes, monuments were built to their memory.

Occupied Nagorny Karabakh and surrounding regions are the integral part of Azerbaijan. Despite the fact that the UN Security Council adopted four Resolutions on territorial integrity and unconditional liberation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan UNGA adopted the Resolution titled "Situation on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" from March 14, 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (PACE) adopted Resolution and Recommendation No. 1416 and 1690 confirming the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Armenian military forces and governing of Nagorno-Karabakh by separatists, Armenia refuses to implement them till now.

However, in these Resolutions Armenia was recognized as an aggressor and was demanded to withdraw its military forces from occupied Azerbaijani territories, as well as to create conditions for one million Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs to return to their native lands.

“The Decree on Genocide against Azerbaijanis” dated 26 March 1998 by National Leader of Azerbaijan, ex-president Haydar Aliyev gave the political recognition to these incidents and the fact of the genocide against Azerbaijanis by Armenia was officially declared for the first time. It has already passed 14 years that each year, 31 March is commemorated as the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis at the governmental level.

The Azerbaijani side seeks a peaceful solution to the conflict. President Ilham Aliyev declared several times that we would achieve restoration of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan and subjecting the persons committed genocide to criminal responsibility.

The European Union declared its intent to participate in peaceful solution of Nagorny Karabakh conflict and to establish trust between the conflicting sides several times.

The representatives of Azerbaijani and Turkish Diasporas in the USA addressed to the Congress in relation to 31 March-the Day of Genocide against Azerbaijanis and asked to provide support for commemoration of this day, to adopt the statement and further inform the world community in this regard.

Recently, the New-Jersey State Assembly of the US adopted the Resolution regarding 95th anniversary of the 31 March Genocide of Azerbaijanis. It was stated in the Resolution that the events resulted at murdering of ten thousands innocent Azerbaijanis in March of 1918 are as the most reproached savagery in the history of humanity. Pursuant to this Resolution, the 31st of March was declared as a Day of Commemoration of Genocide of Azerbaijanis. It must be reminded that last year, the New York State also recognized the massacre of Azerbaijanis.

The position of Azerbaijan at the international level and real international situation have been totally changed what enables justified resolution of Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict and withdrawal of Armenian invaders from our lands.

Ninety four years have passed since the 1918 March genocide, however, it is impossible to forget those atrocities committed by Armenian nationalists. International community, combating acts of terrorism, shall finally give unbiased political and legal evaluation to the still continued abuse against Azerbaijani people.

We declare once more that this genocide act was accompanied with gross violation of human rights. We believe that the world community and international organizations will support justified demands of Azerbaijan, this strict crime committed against humanity will be internationally recognized as an act of genocide and perpetrators will be punished.

Urging international organizations to support the fair position of Azerbaijan, I believe that, justice will be restored, relevant sanctions will be applied to against Armenia, which assumed genocide as a state policy, as well as the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and grossly violated rights of refugees, IDPs will be restored, prisoners of war and hostages will be set free. I hope that influential international organizations, peace-loving persons will join efforts for the restoration of peace and security in Azerbaijan and in the region.

Elmira Suleymanova



**Commissioner for Human Rights
(Ombudsman)
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

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The Statement is addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, United Nations Security Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, European Commission, Council of Europe, OSCE, International Ombudsman Institute, European Ombudsman Institute and Asian Ombudsman Association, International Peace Bureau, International Peace Federation, Ombudspersons of foreign countries, Embassies of Azerbaijan abroad, as well as the foreign Embassies in Azerbaijan, and organizations of Azerbaijani Diaspora.