

APPEAL

of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the international community regarding the 21th September- International Day of Peace

Peace- refers to a life, to live and healthy generations. All these mean sustainable development and multilateral cooperation among the different countries of the world.

Peace plays a significant role in the settlement of conflicts and in supporting the intercultural and interreligious dialogues, peace processes, and in the elimination of the factors threatening peace and security, in particular.

Sustainable development of mankind and enforcement of the human rights and fundamental freedoms depend on the promotion of peace and security. The way to the sustainable development passes through the peace, justice, tolerance, rule of law and human rights.

The 21st September-the International Day of Peace, celebrated as a significant day at the international level by the UN decision, embodies the rights of peoples to truth, to the society without violence and conflicts and a prosperous life.

This right, adopted by the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace (Res. 39/11, 12 September 1984), which is the 30th anniversary as well, is declared as a holy right of peoples having a special status that shall be promoted without any discrimination. This also evidenced the necessity of the promotion of the right to peace.

Tolerance as a main ground for the peace, justice, mutual understanding and respect is *“the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace”*, as stated in the 1995 UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. The

abovementioned Declarations oblige every State to promote and protect the peace.

The current political, economic and cultural processes in the globalized world demand every State be answer to the urgent challenges adequately, but this is possible with the development of the interstates cooperation, supporting the new creative thinking and the innovative environment, also with the respect for the religious beliefs of a person and abolishment of any manifestations of racism and discrimination.

Unfortunately, the conflicts between states, confessions and civilizations are extended and new centers of war are appeared.

The twenty-five year period of the history of Azerbaijan, which always enjoys the friendly environment of citizens with various religious and beliefs for ages, committed and supported the peacekeeping position, is resulted in the occupation of 20 percent of the country territories due to the aggression policy of Armenia and ethnic cleansing policy against the Azerbaijanis, facing the war horrors by our nation, finding shelters in refugee settlements and camps by our hundred thousands refugees and IDPs expelled from their historical lands, mass and severe violation of their human rights.

Although the ceasefire agreement between the parties, the Armenian armed forces regularly violate the requirements of the agreement, by committing mass fires, damaging the civilians of the villages located in the frontline by shooting on them, captivating the civilians which threat to their life and violates their rights to life, freedom of movement and the other rights.

All of these resulted at the severely breaking the provisions of the international legal documents on protection of the rights of civilians, children, women, the elderly and the persons with disabilities during the armed conflicts, including the 1975 UN Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions concerning the protection of civilians during armed conflicts (warfare), 1949 Geneva Convention on war victims and its Optional Protocols I and II (1977), and 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Continuation of such cases creates numerous impunity precedents. The impunity paves the way to commitment of the grave crimes against humanity and put the lives of civilians under the threat.

The Resolutions #822, 853, 874 and 884 of the UN Security Council of 1993, the settlement of the conflict on Nagorny Karabakh that is the integral part of Azerbaijan, the cessation of all military operations threatening to peace and security in the region, provision of the ceasefire and cessation of the hostile acts, and also the provisions of the UNGA Resolution adopted on 14 March 2008, requiring unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Azerbaijani territories, have not been fulfilled. Disrespectful attitude and non-constructive position towards the universal norms and principles of international law are continued, the hostile policy against Azerbaijan has been continued, the ceasefire is being regularly broken, our cultural heritage located on the occupied territories, are being misappropriated and rare historical monuments are being destroyed mercilessly. All of these factors negatively affect the restoration of the peace in a whole.

We call the world community, international organizations, including the UN to give their support to the stability and peacemaking processes in the South Caucasus, also to support the just position of Azerbaijan for the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh by peaceful means and to assist in the restoration of the territorial integrity of our State.

From this point of view,

Emphasizing that taking measures of strengthening the universal peace, maintenance of the international peace and security and peaceful settlement of the armed conflicts, threatened to peace as well as their regulation in compliance with the international legal principles are among duties of the UN, Council of Europe, OSCE and the other international organizations,

Noting that the punishment of the impunity for committing ethnic cleansing policy and of those committed such criminal acts is necessary,

Proclaiming the initiative "Religions as Peace bridges",

Emphasizing that support to the countries faced with atrocities of war and living in extreme poverty conditions are important,

Being a State with 20 percent of the occupied territories, having more than one million refugees and IDPs, and waiting for the protection of

their rights, return of those persons to their homes, and with civilians suffering from this armed conflict as a result of the conflict,

Proclaiming the right of peoples to peace, development and the truth,

Bearing in mind that the basic principles on the respect for human rights, sovereign equality and the territorial integrity of States, also States' fulfillment of international obligations in good faith, settlement of the armed conflicts by peaceful means, avoiding the threat and use of force as universally recognized norms of the international law,

We call the international community and organizations, scientists and religious leaders, representatives of civil societies, all categories of populations to focus their efforts to the settlement of conflicts at the national and international levels as well as to ensure the solidarity for sustainable development.

Elmira Suleymanova

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

20 September 2014

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