

THE STATEMENT

of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Ombudsman) on the 100th anniversary of 1918 Genocide of the Azerbaijanis

100 years have passed since the genocide committed by the Armenians against the Azerbaijanis in March and April 1918. Among the bloody tragedies faced by our people, these acts of genocide are distinguished for the grave and terrible consequences.

The purpose of ethnic cleansing, genocide and deportation policy of the Armenian nationalists and their supporters against the Azerbaijanis lasted over two centuries was to banish them from their historical lands and to create a mythical "Great Armenia" state on these territories. As a part of this policy, genocide of the Azerbaijanis in 1918 can be shown as an obvious example. From the beginning of XIX century, thousands of Armenian families were moved from Iran and Turkey onto historical territories of Azerbaijan such as Karabakh, Nakhchivan, Zengezur, also Iravan and other provinces.

Since March of 1918, thousands of the Azerbaijani civilians have been killed, burned alive only on the ground of their nationality and religion. Rare historical monuments, also schools, hospitals, mosques were ruined by the armed dashnak-bolshevik troops, the Armenian nationalists.

The massacres committed in Baku, also other cities and districts of Baku province on March 31 and on April 1-2, 1918, gained mass scale, the Armenian troops murdered 30 000 civilians mercilessly. During that period many historic buildings, including Ismailiyya, which is one of the pearls of the world architecture, worship places were scattered shelling; the minarets of Juma and Tazapir mosques were severely damaged.

Later on, the acts of the genocide and plunder were committed against the Azerbaijanis with special cruelty mainly in Shamakhi, Guba, Kurdamir, Salyan, Karabakh, Zangezur, Nakhchivan, Irevan, Shirvan, Lankaran and other provinces.

During these events more than 70 villages of Shamakhi were totally destroyed, 7,000 persons were annihilated. According to the historical sources, sending of 2000 Armenian armed forces and 60 trucks of ammunition to Shamakhi in the middle of March is an evidence of preparation to this massacre in advance. In Guba province 122 villages, in Lankaran province 40 villages were burned and destroyed, numerous houses were plundered and hundreds of innocent people were killed.

Though the years passed, those bloody events were not forgotten and they left indelible impress in memory of our people.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, the 100th anniversary of which is celebrated this year, has created the Emergency Investigation Commission to investigate the grave crimes committed by the Armenians and has taken a number of measures for keeping the truth revealed by the commission in the memory of the people and delivering it to the world community. However, after the collapse of the first Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, this process was interrupted; the investigation of what

happened and the corresponding political and legal assessment of these events were cancelled.

After the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the opportunity to learn more about our past has been gained, the truth hidden for many years has been gradually revealed, and thus, distorted events happened became more evident, including the genocides, committed against our people from time to time that has never received international legal-political assessment.

On March 26, 1998, only 80 years after those bloody events, the Decree signed by President Heydar Aliyev "On the Genocide of the Azerbaijani people" provided political assessment to those tragic events; 31 March was declared the "The Day of Genocide of the Azerbaijanis" and every year is commemorated in our country at the state level.

As a result of recent studies, numerous new facts and documents have been collected, it has been proven that the geography of the bloody acts of the Armenian nationalists in 1918 and later was far more extensive and the number of victims of tragedy was much higher.

The facts revealed during last years ascertained mass slaughters of 1918 committed by the Armenian separatists in Guba province. Innumerable human bones and other material evidences found are obvious proofs of their vandalism during these slaughters. Guba Genocide Memorial Complex was created as evidence and in memory of savagely murder of people in this region. This historical monument is visited by the country citizens and foreign guests.

It should be noted that according to the Decree signed by Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on "The 100th Anniversary of the 1918 Genocide of the Azerbaijanis" in order to convey the truth about the crimes committed by the Armenian-Bolshevik armed troops against the Azerbaijanis 100 years ago, relevant Plan of Actions was approved and is being implemented.

The UN General Assembly Resolution No. 96 (I) dated December 11, 1946, states that genocide, besides violating the right of people to life, is one of the gravest crimes.

Elements of the crime of genocide were determined by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 260 (III) dated December 9, 1948.

According to the Convention, genocide is a criminal act planned in advance with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, national, ethnic, religious or racial groups of population.

Each of the criminal acts reflected in this Convention were committed by the Armenians against the Azerbaijanis, thus these events should be assessed as genocide from the legal perspective.

The history showed that the Armenian nationalists did not give up their notorious intentions, massacred civilians mercilessly and in order to curtain their crimes falsified the historical facts in favour of their interests.

As a result of the next ethnic cleansing and aggression policy started since 1988, Armenia occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as seven surrounding rayons, which are an integral part of the lands of Azerbaijan, thus 20 percent of the country territories were occupied, one million of the Azerbaijanis became refugees and IDPs, their rights were grossly violated. During the years of occupation, the Armenian nationalists and terrorists committed genocides in Khojaly city, Karkichahan, Malibeyli, Gushchular, Garadagly, Agdaban villages and in other settlements of Azerbaijan.

The international law, as well as UN Security Council Resolutions 822, 853, 874, 884 from 1993, the UNGA Resolution titled "The Situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" of March 14, 2008, Resolution 1416 from 2005 and Recommendation 1690 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, European Parliament's Resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh from October 23, 2013, re-affirm once again that Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent seven rayons are an integral part of Azerbaijan territories. However, the Armenian side ignores the decisions adopted by the respected international organizations, doesn't fulfil them, regularly violates the ceasefire regime and creates obstacles to the peace in the region demonstrating unconstructive position as always.

The genocide policy of Armenia continues up to now that results in the killing of civilians, including children.

The Azerbaijani side always tries for peaceful solution to the conflict. From the tribunes of the influential international organizations, including the UN General Assembly. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, has repeatedly stated the necessity of resolution of the conflict in accordance with the norms and principles of the international law, with the restoration of the territorial integrity of our country, withdrawal of occupying troops from the Azerbaijani lands.

Nowadays the world community provides more support for the just position of Azerbaijan and is interested in a peaceful settlement of this conflict within the international legal norms. This should be noted that the US New York State Senate and New Jersey State General Assembly passed Resolutions recognizing 31 March as a Day of Genocide of the Azerbaijanis. In addition, the Parliaments of 15 states recognized Khojaly Genocide committed by the Armenians on 26 February 1992 from the perspective of international legal norms and twenty two states of the USA have passed the similar Resolutions.

Paying tribute to the memory of martyrs and those who were killed during that tragedies and guiding with the above mentioned, as well as with norms and principles of the international law, I urge to all states and international organizations to recognize the massacres of the Azerbaijanis in 1918 as a genocide in the name of restoration of peace and justice, to support our just position, to consolidate and increase efforts in this regard.

These severe crimes against humanity should be legally and politically assessed at the international level as genocide acts, sanctions should be applied against Armenia that committed those acts, Armenia should fulfil the requirements of the international acts on this conflict, the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the violated rights of refugees and IDPs should be restored, captives and hostages - liberated and return to their homes. Also

the criminals who killed innocent civilians and committed genocide should be prosecuted before the tribunal and punished.

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(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, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Human Rights Council, UNICEF, UNESCO, European Union, Council of Europe, OSCE, International and European Ombudsman Institutes, Asian Ombudsman Association, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Ombudsman Association of members States of this Organization, European Network of Ombudsmen for Children, International Peace Bureau, ombudsmen of different countries, embassies of the Republic of Azerbaijan abroad, as well as the foreign embassies in Azerbaijan and organizations of the Azerbaijani Diaspora.