



Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations

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THE BLACK JANUARY: 18th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET INVASION OF BAKY

Eighteen years have passed since the Soviet regime perpetrated an atrocious crime against the people of Azerbaijan. On 20 January 1990 ten thousands of Soviet troops, including Special Forces invaded the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, in brutal and yet futile attempt to strangle the growing independence movement and to prevent the fall of the Soviet regime in Azerbaijan as well as to punish ordinary people that rallied on the streets to voice their legitimate protest against violation of the territorial integrity of their motherland.

At that period by the support of the USSR the Armenian separatists, who claimed a part of the territory of Azerbaijan, began to expulse Azerbaijanis from Karabakh, from the historical homeland of Azerbaijanis. Such policy of the Soviet leaders led also to expulsion by Armenian authorities of 200 000 Azerbaijanis from Armenia in 1987-1989. Not a single Soviet mass media entity touched upon this tragedy and crime passed over in silence. All these facts and the prejudiced and biased policy of the Soviet Communist Party and the Government of the USSR towards the people of Azerbaijan caused the strong protest of the people of Azerbaijan.

In the fall of 1989, national independence movement had reached an incredible momentum with hundreds of thousands of people struggling for freedom, independence and sovereignty. The national movement in Azerbaijan became one of the strongest in the former Soviet Union to courageously express the highest level of political discontent with the regime. The Soviet regime responded with violent crackdown.

The invasion on 20 January 1990 was launched at midnight and committed ferocity and no mercy even to children, women, and elderly as well as the medical personnel, ambulances and even hospitals. As a result, more than 130 civilians were killed and 700 wounded, 5 people disappeared, 841 civilians were arrested and subjected to various forms of physical pressure, 200 houses were burned, 80 cars even ambulance cars were destroyed. Hundreds of civilians have been detained, harassed and tortured by Soviet army in that days. This massacre entered the history of Azerbaijan as the "Black January".

Bloody events of 1987-1990 and the tragedy of Black January opened a new tragic chapter in the policy of genocide against Azerbaijanis, which has been executed by the Bolshevik regime and their proxies in the region- the Armenian nationalists and extremists.

However, this did not stop the people of Azerbaijan from continuing their just struggle until the achievement of the national independence of the country, which in itself stands as the best memorial for the victims of the “Black January”.

A memorial meeting with the participation of Azerbaijani Diaspora in New York, consecrated to the victims of the “Black January” was held in the Office of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The participants expressed their deep regret with the crime against Azerbaijani people. They underlined the importance of this honourable day in the history of independent, free and sovereign Azerbaijan.