



MISSION OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Press release

30 March 2007

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE GENOCIDE OF AZERBAIJANIS

Every 31st of March, millions of Azerbaijanis around the globe commemorate the tragedy of their people, oppressed and persecuted through the last two centuries.

It started with the expulsion of Azerbaijanis by Armenians, who were settled in the ancestral Azerbaijani lands, following the peace treaty of 1828 that ended the Russian-Persian wars. Perpetrated by the Armenian nationalists gross human rights violations, ethnic cleansing and deportation of Azerbaijani population continued throughout the 20th century, in 1905-1907, 1918-1920, 1948-1953 and 1988-1993.

On 26 March 1998, in commemoration of all the tragic acts perpetrated against the Azerbaijani people, the late President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev signed the Decree proclaiming March 31st as the Day of Genocide of the Azerbaijanis.

Addressing his people today, the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said: "Objectives of the policy pursued by Armenian nationalists against our nation over nearly two hundred years were using military, political, ideological and other methods to oust Azerbaijanis from their native lands, annihilate them physically to seize new territories and, finally, create the mythical state of "great Armenia". It was also stressed that as a result of this crafty policy, historical Azerbaijani lands were seized by Armenians, with hundreds of thousands of our compatriots turned into refugees and internally displaced, and tens of thousands of them killed.

Armenians, who ethnically cleansed the surrounding territories, in their quest of territorial expansion, have the audacity of claiming a status of "genocide victim". They persistently play the factor of their Diaspora in many countries around the globe, seeking foreign governments' official recognition of their version of reality.

Commemoration of 31 March is the demonstration of the national memory about the tragic events in the history of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani people. During Soviet domination, Azerbaijan was unable to commemorate this tragedy but after the restoration of independence, the people of Azerbaijan take serious steps on the path of researching and preventing genocide as well as education about its history.

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