

THE STATEMENT of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan commemorating the Khojaly Genocide

Thirty-four years have passed since 26 February 1992, when a total of 613 peaceful and unarmed civilians, including 106 women, 63 children, and 70 elderly people were intentionally murdered in the Khojaly city by subjecting them to severe tortures on the ground of ethnic identity.

The brutal killing of the civilian population in the Khojaly city by the armed forces of Armenia, with the direct participation of the former USSR-backed 366th Motorized Rifle Regiment, solely on the basis of their Azerbaijani ethnicity, constituted an integral part of Armenia's systematic and purposeful policy of genocide against Azerbaijanis.

The Khojaly Genocide resulted in the complete destruction of eight families; 130 children lost one parent, and 25 children lost both parents, and 1,275 civilians, including 68 women and 26 children were taken captive and subsequently, severe war crimes had been committed.

This serious criminal act encompassing elements of the crime of genocide, constitutes one of the tragic pages in the history of mankind and a gross violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms. These premeditated acts were intended to kill ethnic Azerbaijanis on the basis of their national identity, and forcibly expel them from their ancestral lands, and instill fear and panic among the population.

As a result of the Khojaly Genocide, the norms of international human rights and international humanitarian law were violated, including the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims. Consequently, the rights to life, personal security, property, freedom from torture, and other fundamental human rights were seriously violated.

The Milli Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the initiative of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev, made the first political and legal assessment of the Khojaly Genocide and declared 26 February as the Day of Commemoration of the Khojaly Genocide.

The "Justice for Khojaly" campaign, carried out consistently by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation to inform the world community about the Khojaly Genocide and to ensure its legal and political recognition, is of great importance in raising international awareness of this act of genocide and in the restoration of justice.

Following the Patriotic War and the local counter-terrorism operation, reconstruction works are being rapidly carried out in the territories liberated from occupation, including the Khojaly city, and residents are returning to their native lands.

In the course of restoration and reconstruction works carried out in those territories, mass graves were discovered, and the remains of individuals who had been tortured and killed were identified and buried. These facts constitute undeniable evidence of the Khojaly Genocide and the commission of serious war crimes.

A number of individuals who participate in the Khojaly Genocide and other crimes committed against our people were apprehended during the measures carried out

following the local counter-terrorism operation, and they are being tried in accordance with international and national legal frameworks.

I deeply respect the dearest memory of the victims of the Khojaly Genocide and urge international organizations and the world community to take decisive measures for the legal recognition of this crime of genocide, one of the bloody massacres perpetrated of the XX century, and to bring all persons responsible for this crime to justice.

Sabina Aliyeva

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

23 February 2026
Khankendi city

The statement has been sent to the UN Secretary-General (UNSG), UN Security Council (UNSC), UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the heads of the European Union (EU), Council of Europe (CoE), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), International Ombudsman Institution (IOI) and European Ombudsman Institution (EOI), Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Association of Ombudsman of member states of this institution (OICOA), Association of Ombudsman and National Human Rights Institutions of Turkic States (TURKOMB), OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (OIC-IPHRC), European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC), International Peace Bureau (IPB), ombudspersons and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) of different countries, diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan in foreign countries and the diplomatic missions of foreign countries in Azerbaijan, and diaspora organizations of Azerbaijan.