

STATEMENT

OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OMBUDSMAN) OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN REGARDING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCCUPATION OF SHUSHA

Armenian nationalists, who had purposeful territorial claims to neighbor states and dream of creating "Great Armenia", regularly committed terrible crimes, and conducted the policy of terror and genocide against mankind. The aim behind such policy of Armenian nationalists, who didn't have a state historically, exploited the kindness and humanism of our nation and took a refuge in Azerbaijani lands, was to banish Azerbaijanis from their historical lands and to move to those lands Armenians from other countries.

As a result of over 20 years long Armenian military aggression against Azerbaijan, 20,000 Azerbaijanis were killed, 50,000 were wounded, became disabled being subjected to different injuries, 4,500 women, children, the aged went missing, were subjected to merciless torture, became prisoners or were taken hostages, and one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and IDPs, their rights were grossly violated. Nagorno- Karabakh that is an integral part and historical land of Azerbaijan also seven surrounding rayons - Lachin, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Gubadli and Jabrail were occupied by Armenian armed forces. In general 17,000 square km of the most fertile soil area was captured.

Twenty years have passed since the occupation of Shusha city, the historical cradle of culture of Azerbaijan, which presented numerous well-known persons, writers, poets, musicians to world, was only a part of the aggression policy of Armenia against Azerbaijan that resulted in gross violation of the norms and principles of the International Law.

The President of Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev issued an Order on the 20th the Anniversary of Occupation of Shusha city by Armenian Armed Forces dated April 9, 2012. The Order says: "The Republic of Azerbaijan has faced Armenian aggressive ethnic policy as a result of Nagorny-Karabakh conflict. Armenian forces who absolutely armed occupied Shusha city on May 8, 1992. 195 Azerbaijanis were killed, 165 were wounded, 58 became prisoners and taken hostages as a result of fight for defense of Shusha. Armenian vandals plundered museums that had thousands exponents during the occupation, destroyed hundreds of historical-cultural monuments, outraged holy temples and mosques, ruined numerous manuscripts, destroyed education and health building". In the Order it was decided to organize relevant commemoration events regarding the 20th anniversary of occupation of Shusha city, to develop and implement Plan of Actions in this regard.

The anniversary of occupation of Shusha city will be marked in all regions of the country where IDPs from Shusha are settled, outside of the Republic, as well as during the events organized by Azerbaijani Diaspora Organizations.

On May 01 2012, the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan made appeal to the European Parliament, PACE and world Parliaments with regard to the 20th Anniversary of occupation of Shusha city by Armenian armed forces. The Milli Majlis called for joining their efforts for resolution of the conflict which threatens peace and stability not only in Caucasus, and in whole Europe and to drawing the Republic of Armenia in stopping the policy of aggression.

It should be noted, before the occupation 24,900 inhabitants lived in Shusha city that had 289 square km area.

The tragic results of this aggression are not limited only to occupation of the Azerbaijani lands. About five thousands of exhibits of Shusha Historical Museum, the local branch of State Museum of carpets and national fine arts, State Historical, National Applied Art, Ethnography Museums of Karabakh, as well as Palace of Azerbaijani poetess Khurshudbanu Natavan, castle of Aghabeyim Aga, Complex of Garabakh khanligi, Madrasa of Ibrahim Khalil khan, as well as the Agoglan temple near of Shusha, the Azikh cave – an archeological monument of a world-wide importance, expositions of art galleries were destroyed, plundered, libraries were burnt.

It is noteworthy that yet in 1977 upon the initiative of national leader Heydar Aliyev, ancient Shusha was announced historical and architectural reserve. Construction work was carried out in the city that had charming nature, was known as the center tourism, home museums of Uzeyir bay Hajibeyli, Khurshudbani Natavan and Bulbul, tomb of M.F. Vagif was opened, monuments of these virtuosos were built.

As a result of occupation Armenian nationalist, who attempted not only people but also monuments, didn't only expose persons to the gross moral – psychological ltrauma, shot at them, but also fired and destroyed the monuments that are the pearls, samples of the world culture as well as the monuments of worldwide known Azerbaijani artists in Shusha.

Armenian nationalists benefiting from the existing impunity, change numerous toponyms, conduct archaeological excavation in hundreds of caves, related to the Bronze Age, around the Shusha, violate the norms of international law and thus, demonstrate once again irrespective attitude. They destroy the graves, even plunder the marble stones and tombstones On the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The forests and natural reservations are being plundered; the rare plane groves were destroyed, hewed down and taken out of the country in mass scale.

The Republic of Armenia continues to loot and destroy Azerbaijan's cultural heritage that is witnessed by the world. Thus, 927 libraries, 464 monuments and museums, more than 100 cultural monuments and 6 state theatre and concert halls

were destroyed. In the plundered museums, more than 40 thousands valuable things, and rare exponents were stolen. A number of historical ethnography museums were destroyed. Gold and silver jewelries, carpets knitted in past century were carried to Armenia. The destiny of famous historical museum in Shusha was the same.

The Republic of Armenia plunders the cultural properties of Azerbaijan, violating the provisions of Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and Paris Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

Besides the material cultural monuments, Armenian nationalists regularly and systematically misappropriate the Azerbaijani folklore, music, samples of literature, thus, extend the occupation policy up to the level of cultural values. They also misappropriate the compositions of Azerbaijani composers, our national music and dances. Appeal with regard to unlawful actions of Armenia, was addressed to the International Organization of Intellectual Property several times.

Unfortunately, the policy of aggression and terrorism conducted by Armenian nationalists is witnessed by the international community for years. Whereas, according to the norms of international law, inviolability of state borders should be respected, and violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty is inadmissible.

Territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and its jurisdiction over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh was approved many times by the UN, OSCE, the Council of Europe, as well as other influential international organizations and all states. However, the Republic of Armenia neglects the norms of the International Law and ignores the opinions expressed by the international community. In spite of adoption of four UN Security Council Resolutions № 822, 853, 874 and 884 on unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, as well as the UN General Assembly Resolution on "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan" dated March 14, 2008, the Resolution No. 1416 and Recommendation No.1690 of the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (PACE) confirmed the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Armenian military forces, and governing of Nagorno-Karabakh by separatists, Armenia does not leave the occupied territories.

However, the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan makes efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and several times said that we would achieve restoration of our territorial integrity, and sovereignty, exposure of the persons who committed genocide, and caused enmity among persons and nations.

As the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I declare, that violation of the Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, occupation of its historical lands, destruction and misappropriation of architectural monuments that are the pearls of world culture and perfect samples of civilization

mass violation of human rights, as well as cultural rights by the Republic of Armenia fully contravene the universal norms and principles of the International Law.

Considering the abovementioned facts, I urge the world community, influential international organisations, to support putting an end to the long-lasting Armenian aggression and terror policy conducted against Azerbaijani people, gross violation of human rights, peaceful resolution of this conflict through the negotiation process, to intensify their efforts for returning the occupied territories, repatriation of hundred thousands of refugees and IDPs to their lands and for restoration of their rights. This could give a push to restoration of peace, as well as co-existing and sustainable development in Caucasus.

The Armenian terrorists and their supporters should be soon brought to criminal responsibility. The efforts of international institutions targeted at resolution of the long-lasting conflict should be realized without double standards, in full compliance with norms and principles of international Law; Armenia that became monoethnic state should implement the provisions of international documents adopted with regard to the conflict, to stop the, policy of aggression, occupation, ethnic cleansing, territorial claims; Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, the violated rights of refugees and IDPs should be restored and they should return to their home lands, captives and hostages should be set free, competent international organizations should impose sanctions on Armenia.

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Commissioner for Human Rights
(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, Director-General of UNESCO, European Commission, Council of Europe, Council of Europe, OSCE, International Ombudsman Institute, European Ombudsman Institute and Asian Ombudsman Association, International Peace Bureau, International Peace Federation, ombudspersons of foreign countries, embassies of Azerbaijan abroad, as well as the foreign embassies in Azerbaijan, and organizations of Azerbaijani Diaspora.