

**APPEAL of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, jointly with the Azerbaijan Peace and Development Alliance, to the international community on the occasion of 21 September — the International Day of Peace**

*We, as the Azerbaijan Peace and Development Alliance, which brings together dozens of non-governmental organisations, various groups of the population and religious communities, and cooperates with State institutions and international organisations in promoting a culture of peace and implementing peace initiatives,*

*taking into consideration* that among the main tasks of the United Nations are to take the necessary measures to strengthen universal peace; to maintain international peace and security; to take effective measures for this purpose to prevent threats to peace and to eliminate acts of aggression and other breaches of peace; and that the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts that may lead to a breach of peace, through peaceful means and in accordance with the principles of international law, occupies an important place,

*Noting* the need to prohibit the practice of ethnic cleansing at the global level and to punish those who perpetrate it;

*Re-emphasising* the need to provide support to countries facing the threats created by wars and disasters and experiencing dire conditions;

*As a country* whose 20 percent of territory has been occupied as a result of Armenian aggression, which has more than one million refugees and internally displaced persons awaiting the protection of their violated rights and their return to their native homes, and whose civilian population is suffering as a result of armed conflict;

*Advocating the idea* of "Religions — a bridge to peace";

*Taking into consideration* the appeal of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the States of the world on the occasion of the International Day of Peace and his call for peace,

**We adopt this Appeal:**

All members of the United Nations have undertaken to refrain, in their international relations, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the Organization. However, in many countries, civilian populations continue to live through wars and conflicts; people are displaced from their native homes, killed, subjected to violence, and grossly deprived of their rights and freedoms.

The concept of peace, which lies at the foundation of human rights, equality, development, a free society and human values, is today one of the most important issues awaiting resolution in our society.

This is one of the most important issues awaiting resolution in our society. As a result of double standards, Muslim States are turned into centres of conflict, and their populations suffer heavy losses.

In this regard, as a result of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan, which has continued for more than 20 years, one-fifth of the country's territory has been seized; up to one million people have been displaced from their native homes and turned into refugees and internally displaced persons; tens of thousands of our compatriots have become victims of acts of genocide, mass killings and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Armenians; and thousands of residential settlements, educational, healthcare and other public facilities, as well as historical and cultural monuments, have been destroyed.

At the same time, thousands of our compatriots have gone missing or have been taken captive and hostage. Despite the ceasefire regime, this process continues to this day, while children, women, elderly people and the population as a whole have been suffering from this armed conflict for a long time.

The killing, on 8 March of this year, of nine-year-old Fariz Badalov as a result of sniper fire opened from the territory of the Agdam district occupied by Armenia, as well as the tragic death of 13-year-old Aygun Shahmaliyeva in Tovuz on 14 July, caused by the explosion of a toy fitted with an explosive device that

had been sent into Azerbaijani territory by Armenians via the river, once again demonstrate Armenian brutality. Numerous other examples could be cited.

Thus, as a result of the policy of occupation and genocide pursued by Armenia against Azerbaijan, the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, particularly the right to life, as well as the right to peace and the right to development, which are among the fundamental collective rights, continue to be massively and grossly violated.

To date, the long-standing peace negotiations and the mediation efforts of influential international organisations (the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the OSCE Minsk Group and other institutions) in resolving the problem have still failed to produce a positive outcome.

In this regard, the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 of 1993, as well as the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 14 March 2008 concerning the resolution of the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, which is an integral part of the Republic of Azerbaijan, providing for the cessation of all military operations threatening peace and security in the region, the establishment of a ceasefire, and the unconditional withdrawal of all occupying Armenian forces from the territory of Azerbaijan, as well as the international legal instruments adopted by the Council of Europe and the OSCE, have still not been implemented.

At present, relying on its supporters, Armenia continues to violate the universally recognised norms and principles of international law and to demonstrate an unconstructive position. The policy of ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijan continues to be pursued to this day, the ceasefire regime is repeatedly violated, and, as a result, Azerbaijani military personnel and civilians living in border areas are killed. The rich natural resources existing in our occupied territories and our cultural heritage are being appropriated, forest areas are being burned, and our rare historical and religious monuments are being ruthlessly destroyed and subjected to vandalism.

At such a time, support must be provided to peace-building processes, and all efforts must be united to preserve peace and security and to improve the well-being of peoples. The direct path towards sustainable development lies precisely through peace, justice, tolerance and the rule of law.

The aforementioned "21 September — International Day of Peace" is commemorated as a significant day throughout the world, including in our country, precisely because the fulfilment of people's desire for peace and of all human rights and freedoms is possible only in conditions of peace.

The Declaration adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 39/11 of 12 November 1984 also accorded special status to the right to peace, declaring this right to be a sacred right of every human being, without any discrimination. This once again confirms the necessity of ensuring the right to peace.

As stated in UNESCO's 1995 Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, tolerance, which serves as a fundamental basis for peace, justice, mutual understanding and respect, "makes peace possible and promotes the replacement of a culture of war with a culture of peace."

These Declarations place an obligation on every State to ensure and preserve peace. Unfortunately, Armenia and a number of other countries are failing to comply with this obligation today.

As the Azerbaijan Peace and Development Alliance, a member of the International Peace Bureau and an organisation that has been continuously active at both national and international levels, we condemn all wars, acts of terrorism and tragedies perpetrated throughout the world, as well as Armenia's long-standing aggression against our country and our people. We regard this as a negative factor affecting stability in the world and in the South Caucasus region and the peace-building processes. We call upon the international community and international institutions, including the United Nations, one of the world's most influential international organisations, to take practical measures towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict, to support Azerbaijan's just position, and to assist in restoring its territorial integrity.

We expect the United Nations, as well as representatives of various States, to demonstrate a firm position during the discussion of the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict included on the agenda of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly, which commenced its work in recent days, and we

hope that a resolution will be adopted reflecting the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, the restoration of the violated rights of our refugees and internally displaced persons who have been displaced from their native homes, and the rights of our compatriots who have been taken captive or remain missing, and that this document will not remain merely on paper.

Taking into consideration the peace message of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "We, the United Nations, will work to realise our shared aspirations for dignity, security and opportunity for all," we demand that international organisations demonstrate the political will to put an end to Armenian aggression against our country and to resolve conflicts taking place around the world.

At the same time, a firm demand must be made of the State of Armenia, which has violated the norms of international law for many years, to comply with these norms as a member of the United Nations.

The entire international community and international organisations must take more decisive measures to establish peace and must strongly condemn acts of aggression taking place around the world.

***This Appeal was adopted at a round-table discussion jointly organised by the Ombudsman and the Azerbaijan Peace and Development Alliance.***

Baku, 12 September 2011

### **Appeal**

The Appeal was sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; the UN Security Council; the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; the European Union; the Council of Europe; the OSCE; the International and European Ombudsman Institutes; the Asian Ombudsman Association; the International Peace Bureau; the Universal Peace Federation; ombudsmen of various countries; the embassies of the Republic of Azerbaijan in foreign countries; the embassies of foreign countries in the Republic of Azerbaijan; and Azerbaijani diaspora organisations.