

Statement by the Ombudsman Sabina Aliyeva regarding the 33rd anniversary of the Khojaly Genocide

33 years have passed since the Khojaly genocide, committed by Armenia, based on the long-lasting policy of ethnic cleansing, hatred, and genocide carried out against Azerbaijanis, which has been carved in the history of mankind as one of the bloodiest pages.

On the night of February 25-26, 1992, the Armenian armed forces, with the support of the 366th Motorized Regiment of the former Soviet Army, invaded the city of Khojaly and committed the crime of genocide against the peaceful population.

613 Khojaly residents, including 63 children, 106 women, and 70 older persons, were mercilessly murdered and 5,379 residents of the city were forcibly evicted as a result of this genocide committed not only against the Azerbaijani people but against all mankind. Furthermore, the fate of 150 people, including 68 women and 26 children, from the 1275 residents who were held hostage at the time is still unknown.

As a result of the commission of the Khojaly genocide, the norms of the 1949 Geneva Conventions related to the Protection of Victims of War, the Genocide Convention, the Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel or Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Right of the Child, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, especially the right to life, the right to personal integrity, the right to property, the right to be free from torture, and other fundamental rights have been seriously violated.

The first political and legal recognition of the Khojaly genocide was given by the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the initiative of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader, and 26 February was proclaimed as the Day of Khojaly Genocide.

The campaign "Justice for Khojaly", which has been implemented by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in many countries around the world, is aimed at the international dissemination of the Khojaly genocide, recognition of this tragedy by the world community, and establishment of its political and legal evaluation. As a result of this campaign, the legislative bodies of 18 countries, 24 states in the United States, as well as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Organization of Turkic States, condemned this heinous mass killing, recognized it as genocide, and adopted relevant decisions and resolutions.

During the building and reconstruction works and forensic excavations that have been carried out in the liberated areas that started after the Second Karabakh War and local anti-terror operations conducted in 2023, the mass graves discovered in those areas, as well as in the vicinity of the Asgaran fortress in Khojaly district once more evidently demonstrate that in the period of occupation, as well as during the commission of the genocide in Khojaly, the Armenian servicemen killed Azerbaijanis mercilessly.

I would like to again point out that, despite our repeated requests, Armenia has failed to take any serious measures to determine the fate of the nearly four thousand Azerbaijanis who went missing during the First Karabakh War, as well as to provide accurate information about the mass graves where our compatriots who were killed by torture have been buried.

Former Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's statements about the Khojaly genocide at the time, as well as the notes about the indiscriminate crimes committed by the Armenian military in the book "My Brother's Way: One American's Fateful Journey to

Armenia” by Markar Melkonian, brother of international terrorist Monte Melkonian, further demonstrate that this massacre was carried out on purpose as a result of the policy of ethnic hatred against the Azerbaijani people. As well as Armenian writer Zori Balayan's book “The Revival of Our Soul”, the depiction of the events that took place in Khojaly and the crimes committed against the Turks relentlessly as heroic shows once again that the current ideology in Armenia is formed by hatred of other nations.

Furthermore, persons of Armenian origin accused of war crimes and other serious crimes against peace and humanity confessed their participation in the crimes committed in Khojaly in February 1992 in their testimonies. In addition, the places where grave crimes were committed against the civilian population and where they were massively buried were visually demonstrated. This is all further evidence that Armenia has committed the brutal crimes of genocide against the peaceful population.

International organizations and world states should not be indifferent to this crime of genocide, give legal evaluation to the Khojaly genocide, and increase efforts to make sure that those persons who committed this crime get the penalty they deserve.

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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 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 (IOI) and European Ombudsmen Institutions (EOI), Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Association of Ombudsmen of member states of this institution (OICOA), Association of Ombudsmen and National Human Rights Institutions of Turkic States (TURKOMB), OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (OIC-IPHRC), European Network of Ombudspersons of 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.