

STATEMENTS

- The Statement of the Chairman of Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR E.Gafarova (January 21, 1990)2
- Statement of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the 17th anniversary of the tragedy on January 20, 1990 (January 19, 2007)3
- The statement Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the 21th Anniversary of the Tragedy of January 20, 1990 (January 19, 2011)6
- The Statement of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the 22th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20, 1990. (January 19, 2012).....9
- Azerbaijani ombudsman issues statement on 26th anniversary of January 20 tragedy (January 15, 2016) ..12
- US Congressman issues statement on 26th anniversary of 20 January (January 30, 2016)13
- US Congressman makes statement on January 20 and Khojaly tragedies (February 4, 2016).....14
- Azerbaijani ombudsperson issues statement on 27th anniversary of January 20 tragedy (13 January 2017)15
- Azerbaijani Ombudsperson issues statement on 29th anniversary of January 20 tragedy (11 January 2019)16

**The Statement of the Chairman of Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR
E.Gafarova
(January 21, 1990)**

On behalf of the Azerbaijani people, all citizens of the republic I make the resolute protest in connection with the rough violation of the sovereignty of the Azerbaijani SSR and declaration by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of USSR of the State of Emergency in the capital of the republic - Baku city for implementation of which the cruel action against the peaceful population with using the hard military equipment and automatic weapon was carried out, which led to the numerous victims, among them were young people, women, old men and children.

I state with all responsibility, that the top bodies and administration of the Azerbaijani SSR didn't take the decision to declare the state of emergency in Baku and didn't give consent for adoption of such decision by the Presidium of the Supreme Council of USSR. Those bodies and officials of USSR, which took this decision and provided its implementation, are responsible for the shed blood.

The Azerbaijani people will never forgive anyone the death of its daughters and sons.

Baku. January 21, 1990

Statement of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the 17th anniversary of the tragedy on January 20, 1990 (January 19, 2007)

Seventeen years have passed since the terrible day which was

the part of the genocide policy of Soviet Empire against Azerbaijan, resulted in gross violation of human rights and freedoms and remained in the history as January 20 tragedy. This tragedy is one of the most heinous crimes, violent and inhuman treatment and torture actions ever seen in the history of the XX century which resulted in and was observed as the gross violation of human rights reflected in the memory of Azerbaijani people. As it was not only an aggression against separate individuals, but a military aggression against Azerbaijani people.

Armenian separatists have intensified their violent policy beginning from 1987 in Nagorny Karabakh that is inseparable constituent part of Azerbaijan. Unlawful decision of the Supreme Council (parliament) of Armenia about connection of Nagorny Karabakh to Armenia led the events to critical level. While Azerbaijan waited for reaction from Kremlin, situation was developing in favor of Armenian separatists. The patience of our nation began to weaken by process of forced expulsion of all Azerbaijanis from Armenia beginning from 1988 as a result of ethnic cleansing. Numerous meetings were held all over the country.

At such a situation on the night from 19 to 20 January 1990 military forces and armed troops attacked Baku city, Sumgayit and other regions of Azerbaijan by order of Michael Gorbachov, USSR president. Hundreds of civilians who struggled for independence and protected their land, women, the elderly and children were killed and injured with special cruelty and violence, a lot of people were missing; many of the administrative and domestic buildings and transportation facilities were destroyed.

Soldiers attacked brutally and crushed even the ambulance cars and medical servants who came to help the injured. Trying to hide the number of the killed people they dissolved the corpses.

The former Soviet Union that considered it a democratic and legal state, having signed international human rights conventions at the same time allowed itself to violate the norms of the International Law and the Constitution of the USSR. On the night from 19 to 20 of January, 1990 unbelievable military actions were realized against Azerbaijan without any sanction of the Supreme Council of USSR and as well as the permission of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijan SSR, grossly violating right to life that is one of the fundamental human rights acknowledged in the international documents and national legislation. Civil population including elderly, disabled people, women, and children were hideously murdered regardless of their national, ethnic, religious belonging, gender and age.

Although, with the aims of curtaining and legalizing these crimes the leaders of the former Soviet Union tried to explain the lawfulness of these actions as being intended to provide public safety and security, the unlawfulness and criminal nature of these actions were clear and indisputable.

Only in Baku city over 130 civilians were killed, more than 600 were injured and widespread destructions were carried out in accordance with the orders of the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Committee of the USSR.

January 20, 1990 can be considered to be the beginning of the terror policy and was one of the gravest strikes in the list of terror acts against Azerbaijani people. As a result of Armenian long term aggression against Azerbaijan the ethnic cleansing, followed by the genocide acts in Khojaly city and other settlements, has been carried out; twenty percent of the country territory have been occupied, more than one million people, every eighth of the country population, have become refugee or internally displaced person in their own country being withdrawn from Nagorny Karabakh and surrounding regions of Azerbaijan.

In order to affirm its power in Azerbaijan the empire which organized this terrible event faced the opposite results. This event had been exposed to the whole world as the evidence of the Soviet regime's cruelty, falsity and incompetence, as well as disappointed the belief to the Soviet Union, Soviet army and to the statement that Soviet people was an inseparable and friendly family. It strengthened our nation's struggle for liberty.

By initiative of the national leader Mr. Heydar Aliyev Azerbaijani Parliament (Milli Majlis) gave the official, political and legal assessment to this event and proclaimed that this massacre was directed against nation's struggle for freedom and independence.

Nowadays we can state with great pride that the Soviet military forces using inhuman treatment against our people could not stop their fight for freedom and did not turn them back from the way on which we gave martyrs. The Alley of Martyrs and the monuments in the name of martyrs in cities and regions of the country had been founded to memorize their spirit and are now considered holy places for us and our guests.

This bloody event is an unforgettable and honorable page of our nation's history of struggle for liberty. The tragedy of the January 20 is also recognized as an example of heroism. All the great monuments founded in memory of martyrs, the land where they are committed to earth are regarded as holy place by every country citizen. Saving the memory of our martyrs we are honoring our people. To carry the great memory of martyrs through the generations is our noble duty. According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan from January 17, 2000 victims of this event were granted the honorary title of "January 20 Martyrs" for the outstanding example of heroism. According to the Order "On improving state care for the persons disabled during the events of January 20, 1990" dated January 15, 2003, the monthly payments for them have been raised. These persons also receive certain payments from the State Fund for Social Protection. The families of January 20 martyrs are also granted the presidential stipends.

Order given these days have affirmed plan of events concerning organization of the 17th anniversary of January 20 tragedy. Day of national sorrow will be commemorated as a symbol of Azerbaijan's struggle for independence and liberty. Our Diaspora in Europe and worldwide are also arranging commemoration days to attract the attention of international community to the January 20 tragedy.

The principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other International Acts on Human Rights were violated as a result of this crime against humanity and violence against peaceful inhabitants.

It is well known that one of the significant achievements of International Law is ensuring the protection of human rights at the international level. Thus, protection of human rights becomes not only national, but also international responsibility of every state. But unfortunately an international acknowledgement of this event as

gross violation of human rights has not been given yet, although this tragedy directed against humanity has a particular gravity and significance among acts of terror resulted in mass loss of life taken place in the world and we hope that this horrible crime of gross violation of fundamental human rights will get its international legal admission.

Our people will never forget the solidarity that was demonstrated by martyrs of the January 20 tragedy and will reinforce its national solidarity for today and future, for solving main issues of priority, for providing the primacy of law and protection of human rights.

E.Suleymanova
Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman)
of the Republic of Azerbaijan

January 19, 2007

The statement Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the 21th Anniversary of the Tragedy of January 20, 1990 (January 19, 2011)

21 years have passed since the terrible day which was the part of the genocide policy of Soviet Empire against Azerbaijan, resulted in gross violation of human rights and freedoms and remained in the history as 20 January tragedy. The tragedy that was one of the most terrible acts of torture, inhuman treatment committed against humanity in the XX century engraved in memory of our nation forever and became the day of honour as the first martyrdom summit of the independence of Azerbaijan.

At the night from 19 to 20 January, 1990, according to the Orders of the leaders of the USSR, armoured military forces consisting also of Armenian officers attacked Baku city, Sumgayit and in districts of Azerbaijan. Civil population was annihilated with special cruelty and torments, everything was destructed by tanks and armoured military cars.

Hundreds of civil people who struggled for independence and protected their land, including women, the elderly, and children were killed, injured or missing, a lot of administrative buildings, houses and transport facilities were seriously damaged.

In order to conceal the exact number of the killed persons the military offenders annihilated even their corpses. Only the next day people were informed about the state of emergency proclaimed in Baku by military commandant of Soviet Empire to Baku.

Only in Baku city over 130 civilians were killed, more than 600 were injured and extensive destructions were carried out as a result of military operations jointly conducted by the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Committee of the USSR.

During the attack prohibited bullets were used, ambulance cars and doctors were fired at; tens of medical servants were injured and killed.

Soviet Union violated the fundamental right of persons – the right to live, in mass scale, breaking the norms of international law and the constitution of the USSR and committing unprecedented military aggression against Azerbaijan.

This tragedy is one of the dark pages of the disgraced history of the Soviet authority as one of the grievous crimes, unprecedented savagery committed by the state against its citizens and as an act against the humanity. The slaughter committed by the Empire with the intention of affirming its dictatorship in Azerbaijan gave contrary result and strengthened persistent struggle of our people for the independence and demonstrated their determination towards it.

It was national leader Haydar Aliyev who for the first time gave political-legal appraisal to this tragedy. Yet on January 21,

1990 in his sharp statement he called criminals those who organized slaughters and demanded to give political assessment to the crimes committed in Baku and to punish the perpetrators.

On the recommendation of the national leader who proclaimed that date as the Day of National Mourning, the Azerbaijan Parliament (Milli Majlis) for the first time gave the official, political and legal assessment to this event and declared that this tragedy was against struggle for freedom and independence of the Azerbaijani people.

Every year 20 January is commemorated as the Day of National Mourning and the Azerbaijanis recall heroism of courageous sons of our nation with respect, besides a range of events are conducted all over the country in this regard, martyrs' families are given special allocation in accordance with the relevant Decree of the country President.

The Alley of Martyrs became a holy place and sanctuary for our nation, also a monument accusing the perpetrators of the tragedy. Each time when the foreign guests, public-political figures, the representatives of international organizations visit the Martyrs Avenue, they once more witness the offensive actions of the persons committed the slaughter against our people, and get information about the truth of Azerbaijan and this bloody tragedy.

By committing this crime Soviet Empire supported uncontrolled political forces of Armenia. As a result, the Armenian long term aggression, ethnic cleansing policy were carried out, massacres were committed against Azerbaijanis, twenty percent of the country territory was occupied, more than one million people became refugees and IDPs in their own country being banished from Nagorny-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts of Azerbaijan.

Today when all progressive humanity, nations strive for peace, development, Armenia carries out the policy of violence. Consequently, this has a negative impact on stability, peacebuilding and development processes in the South Caucasus and in Europe.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev makes every effort for peaceful solution of the conflict. In the press conference held during the visit of the President of European Commission José Manuel Barroso to Baku, the President of Azerbaijan noted the fact that Azerbaijani lands are under long-term Armenian occupation is a matter of anxiety and this is a potential threat to regional security. He emphasized that the European Parliament adopted a Resolution in this regard, last year; this Resolution complies with the Resolutions of the UN, Council of Europe and other influential organizations.

He noted the resolution of the conflict in near future will lead to returning of Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs to their lands, to restoration of our territorial integrity recognized by the world and of security in the region.

Head of European Commission noted it is the time for peaceful resolution of the conflict, and European Commissioner makes its efforts towards it.

Upcoming days, the issue of resolution of Nagorny-Karabakh conflict will be an agenda item for discussion once more, restoration of violated rights of Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs will be raised in the session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

As it is seen from the above mentioned, today influential international organisations recognize Armenia as an aggressor and demand vacation of Azerbaijani lands and restoration of Azerbaijani territorial integrity. World

community already acknowledges the fairness of the Azerbaijani position, that its territorial integrity should be restored; refugees and IDPs should return their native lands.

One of the main achievements of modern international law was the raising protection of human rights and freedoms to the level of international cooperation, and creation of international maintenance in this regard. Thus, human rights exceed the boundaries of internal power of states and attain international importance.

The principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other International Acts on Human Rights were violated as a result of crime committed against civil population on January 20, 1990. It makes bringing the guilty to international legal responsibility inevitable. Nevertheless, international legal appraisal was not given to this bloody tragedy till now.

Recently, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon announced the priorities for UN for 2011. These priorities include inclusive and sustainable development, advancing human rights, improving responses to humanitarian crises, promoting a more safe and secure world, etc.

We believe that world community, international organizations will support the justified demands of Azerbaijan, considering these priorities and this horrible act of crime which was committed against our people, planned beforehand and accompanied with anti-humanism, anti-democracy and with mass violation of human rights will receive international recognition and the perpetrators will be punished soon.

Our people, who are persistent in their lawful demands, don't forget the unity demonstrated by the tragedy victims who fought for the national independence and will further strengthen the solidarity of the Azerbaijanis now and in future for sustainable development, solution of prior problems of our country, the Rule of Law, democratization, protection of human rights in the name of powerful Azerbaijan.

Prof. Elmira Suleymanova

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

19.01.2011

The Statement is addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, European Commission, 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.

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.az/view.php?lang=en&menu=95&id=725>

The Statement of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the 22th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20, 1990. (January 19, 2012)

As the years have passed since January 20, 1990 different aspects, the essence of that bloody event, identity and the aims of the perpetrators become much clearer.

At the night from 19 to 20 January 1990 armoured vehicles, military forces, entered Baku city, Sumgayit, different regions of Azerbaijan without any prior notification. As a result the norms of international law, relevant provisions of the Constitutions of former USSR and Azerbaijan SSR were grossly violated. Our nation who protested against never ending territorial claims of Armenian nationalist against Azerbaijan Republic and fought for their land, were subjected to special cruelty and torments.

As a result of special military operation held following the Orders of the leaders of the USSR, the military forces entering Baku from different directions killed 132 civilians with special cruelty regardless their nationality, age and sex. In the capital, surrounding settlements, and districts 612 innocent persons were injured, hundreds of persons went missing, 841 persons were imprisoned unlawfully.

Baku reminding front-line, being under siege, and surrounded with military forces and vehicles was destroyed, hundreds unarmed, peaceful persons including women, elderly, and children were annihilated, administrative buildings, houses and transport facilities were seriously damaged. In order to conceal committed savagery the exact number of the killed persons, inhuman war criminals annihilated even their corpses.

During the attack prohibited weapons and supplies were used. Soldiers, who lost their sense of mercy, killed seriously wounded persons on spot. Even ambulance cars and doctors were fired at; medical servants were injured and killed.

22 years have passed since the terrible day which was the part of the genocide policy of Soviet Empire against Azerbaijan, resulted in gross violation of human rights and freedoms and remained in the history as 20 January tragedy. This tragedy that was one of the most terrible acts of violence, torture, inhuman treatment committed against humanity in the XX century engraved in memory of our nation forever.

Soviet Union leaders who carried out “perestroika” policy, committed unprecedented military aggression against Azerbaijan, grossly violated the supreme right of persons – the right to live, breaking the norms of international law. This terrible event was the beginning of the organized terror policy and one of the gravest blows among the terror acts committed against the Azerbaijani people. By committing this crime Soviet Empire supported uncontrolled political forces of Armenia. As a result, Armenian long term aggression, ethnic cleansing policy, massacres were committed against Azerbaijanis, twenty percent of the country territory was occupied, more than one million people became refugees and IDPs in their own country being withdrawn from Armenia, Nagorny Karabakh and seven surrounding rayons of Azerbaijan.

The savagery committed by the state against its citizens committed by the Empire with the intention of affirming its dictatorship in Azerbaijan gave contrary result and strengthened the persistent struggle of our nation for the independence.

In his sharp statement National Leader Heydar Aliyev demanded to give political appraisal to the crimes committed in Baku and to punish perpetrators yet on January 21, 1990. With the recommendation of the National Leader who proclaimed that date as the Day of National Mourning, the Azerbaijan Parliament (Milli Majlis) for the first time gave the official, political and legal assessment to this event and declared that this tragedy was against struggle for freedom and independence of the Azerbaijani people.

Every year 20 January is marked as the Day of National Mourning and the Azerbaijanis recall heroism of courageous sons of our nation with respect. Plan of Actions with regard to conduction of series of relevant events in capital and regions was approved this year as well. According to Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the honorary title of “Martyrs of January 20” was conferred on victims of the tragedy for the outstanding example of heroism. According to the relevant Decree “On improving state care for the persons who became disabled as a result of the events of January 20, 1990”, the monthly allocations for them have been raised and this care is being continued.

President Ilham Aliyev who successfully continues the political course of National Leader, attaches special attention to honouring 20 January martyrs and to solution of social problems of their family members. The persons who became disabled during this tragedy are provided with relevant allocations from State Social Protection Foundation annual budget, as well as with the presidential pensions in accordance with the Presidential Decree from 19 January, 2011.

Our Diaspora organizations in Europe and worldwide also organize different actions, ceremonies, commemoration events to draw the attention of international community to the January 20 tragedy and to the realities of Azerbaijan in whole.

Azerbaijan and Turkish Diasporas in USA addressed a letter to Congress, drawing the attention to 20 January tragedy asked to commemorate the victims of the tragedy.

Mayor of Washington Vincent Gray issued statement on the anniversary of the slaughter committed in Azerbaijan on January 20, 1990 and on commemorating martyrs.

The victims of the tragedy were buried in the Martyrs Alleys in Baku and in regions of the country that became a holy place and sanctuary for us.

Our nation don't forget the unity demonstrated by the tragedy victims who fought for the national independence and will further strengthen the solidarity of the Azerbaijanis now and in future for sustainable development, solution of prior problems of our country, the Rule of Law, democratization, protection of human rights in the name of powerful Azerbaijan.

One of the main achievements of modern international law was the raising protection of human rights and freedoms to the level of international cooperation, and creation of international maintenance in this regard. Thus, human rights exceed the boundaries of internal power of states and attain international importance. The principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other International Acts on Human Rights were violated as a result of crime committed against civil population on January 20, 2009.

Tragedy of January 20 is terrible crime among the terror acts resulted in mass annihilation of people according to its essence and scale. Nevertheless, international legal appraisal was not given to this bloody tragedy till now.

We once more declare that this slaughter planned in advance and committed against our people, with the aim of total or partial annihilation of people on the ground of their ethnic origin and constituting the crime of genocide under international and domestic law was accompanied with gross and mass violation of human rights.

We hope that the world community, international organizations will support the justified demands of Azerbaijan, and this grievous crime against humanity will receive international recognition as a genocide act and the perpetrators will be punished soon.

Elmira Suleymanova

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

19.01.2012

The Statement is addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, United Nations Security Council, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, OSCE, Council of Europe, International Ombudsman Institute, European Ombudsman Institute and Asian Ombudsman Association, International Peace Bureau, International Peace Federation, Embassies of Azerbaijan abroad, as well as the foreign Embassies in Azerbaijan, Ombudspersons of foreign countries and organizations of Azerbaijani Diaspora.

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.az/view.php?lang=en&menu=95&id=1025>

Azerbaijani ombudsman issues statement on 26th anniversary of January 20 tragedy (January 15, 2016)

Azerbaijani Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) Elmira Suleymanova has issued a statement on the 26th anniversary of the January 20 tragedy, the Ombudsman's Office told APA.

“On the night of January 19-20, 1990, military units and armored vehicles of the Soviet Army, without warning, burst into Baku, Sumgayit and other cities and regions of Azerbaijan. Under the instructions of the former Soviet leaders, 147 civilians regardless of nationality, age and gender were killed, 744 were wounded, hundreds went missing and 841 people were arrested illegally. Even after declaring a state of emergency on 20 January, 21 more people were killed. Soldiers attacked even the ambulances and medical servants who came to help the wounded, they were also killed and wounded,” the statement reads.

The statement says that one main task lying ahead is to bring the truth about the January 20 tragedy to the world community.

“Though, as a result of this crime against humanity, the provisions of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other international legal documents on human rights were flagrantly violated, the January 20 tragedy which is one of the most horrible crimes of XX century was not legally assessed and the perpetrators and benefactors of this crime have not been yet punished,” the statement reads.

“There are sufficient legal documents and norms to declare the events of January 20 as a crime against humanity – one of the most serious forms of international crimes in accordance with the international law. There are sufficient grounds to bring the personnel who committed these atrocities, those who gave order in this regard and leaders of former Soviet Union to justice,” said the statement.

“We hope that the world community and international organizations will support the right demands of Azerbaijan, this bloody act will soon receive its international legal assessment as a crime against humanity, the perpetrators will be punished,” the statement said.

The statement has been sent to the UN Secretary General, UN Security Council, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, European Commission, OSCE, Council of Europe, Institute of International and European Ombudsmen, Asian Ombudsman Association, International Peace Bureau, human rights commissioners of various countries, Azerbaijan’s diplomatic missions abroad, diplomatic missions of foreign countries in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani Diaspora organizations.

**US Congressman issues statement on 26th anniversary of 20 January
(January 30, 2016)**

Member of the U.S. House of Representatives and Co-Chair of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus Steve Cohen made a statement on the 26th anniversary of 20 January tragedy.

The statement provides detailed information about the tragedy.

The US congressman said that on 20 January 1990, Soviet troops stormed Azerbaijan's capital city of Baku and attacked civilians in the city.

The congressman said that the January 20 tragedy united the Azerbaijani people and resulted with the declaration of independence in Azerbaijan. He also said Azerbaijan turned to rapidly developing country, adding democratic values and free market economy were established in the country.

AZERTAC

**US Congressman makes statement on January 20 and Khojaly tragedies
(February 4, 2016)**

US Congressman from New Jersey Donald Payne has made a statement on January 20 and Khojaly tragedies. He said he would like to recognize January 20, 1990 as “Black January”, adding Soviet troops invaded the capital city of Baku and surrounding areas killing tens and injuring hundreds of civilians.

He also asked congressmen to join him in recognizing the horrific atrocities that took place during the month of February in Khojaly, Azerbaijan, 24 years ago. On that day, Payne said, more than 600 people, mostly elderly men, women and children, were brutally killed.

The Congressman also described Azerbaijan as a strong ally of the United States in a strategically important region of the world.

Yusif Babanli

Special Correspondent

AZERTAC

**Azerbaijani ombudsperson issues statement on 27th anniversary of January 20 tragedy
(13 January 2017)**

Azerbaijani Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsperson) Elmira Suleymanova has issued a statement regarding the 27th anniversary of the January 20 tragedy, the Ombudsman's Office told APA on Jan. 13.

“That bloody history that was engraved in the memories as a Black January night is not only the day which is remembered with bitterness, but martyrs’ Memorial Day, and a day of unity, pride and honor of the people who fought for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The armed forces, which burst into Baku, killed 147 civilians regardless of nationality, age and gender, 744 civilians and innocent people were wounded in the capital, settlements and districts, hundreds went missing and 841 people were arrested illegally. Soldiers attacked even the ambulances and medical servants who came to help the wounded, they were also killed and wounded. Even after declaring a state of emergency on 20 January, 21 more people were killed,” the statement reads.

The statement has been sent to the UN Secretary General, UN Security Council, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, European Commission, OSCE, Council of Europe, Institute of International and European Ombudsmen, Asian Ombudsman Association, International Peace Bureau, human rights commissioners of various countries, Azerbaijan’s diplomatic missions abroad, diplomatic missions of foreign countries in Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani Diaspora organizations.

APA

Azerbaijani Ombudsperson issues statement on 29th anniversary of January 20 tragedy (11 January 2019)

Azerbaijani Commissioner for Human Rights (ombudsman) Elmira Suleymanova has issued a statement on the 29th anniversary of the January 20 tragedy.

The statement reads: Twenty-nine years pass from the bloody 20 January tragedy. This unforgettable crime against humanity is commemorated each time with a heavy heart. This bloody event, engraved on the memories as Black January, is both the day of commemoration of our martyrs and the day of solidarity, pride and honor of our people fighting for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. These events once again demonstrated that our people are determined to fight for the independence and restoration of their violated rights.

Thus, as a result of the support by former USSR leadership to the raising Armenian separatism in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, which is an integral part of Azerbaijan and biased position towards our country, gradual removal of the departments and organizations of the mentioned oblast from the subordination of our republic, deportation of the Azerbaijanis from their historical-ethnic lands in Armenia, exposure of compatriots to severe torture and violence exhausted our people's patience. 20 January massacre was committed upon the instruction of the Soviet government of the period in order to suppress the rightly protest of our people, to prevent the expanding liberation movement in Azerbaijan.

According to the official facts, we report that in the night from the 19th to the 20th January 1990, troops of the Soviet army were deployed to Baku and Sumgait, other cities and regions of the country as well, fired the people using descent groups brought by military vessels, tanks and other heavy military equipment, thus international law norms, provisions of the former USSR and Azerbaijan SSR Constitutions were grossly violated, a violent crime against humanity was committed against our multinational people which stood in defense of freedom of their homeland and their own rights.

Armed forces entered Baku, killed 168 unarmed civilians mercilessly regardless of their nationality, age or sex, including children, women and elderly, 744 peaceful, innocent persons in the capital, suburban settlements and surrounding areas were injured, hundreds of people went missing, 841 persons were illegally arrested. Even the ambulances and physicians carrying the injured persons were subjected to fire, therefore medical staff members became martyrs or were injured. Use of prohibited weapons and supplies resulted in immeasurable destructions. The energy bloc of the state television was exploded as a result of the sabotage organized by the USSR Committee of State Security with the purpose of concealing the event from the population.

At that period, a harsh statement was made by the National leader Heydar Aliyev in the city of Moscow on behalf of the Azerbaijani people and he demanded legal assessment of the massacre committed against the Azerbaijani people on January 20 and punishment of the perpetrators.

It should be noted that those events couldn't break the will of our people and the fight for freedom resulted in restoring the independence of Azerbaijan in 1991.

At the initiative of the president Heydar Aliyev special session of the Milli Majlis was held and this bloodshed was given its political-legal assessment. Every year the date of January 20 is commemorated as the National Day of Mourning in our Republic and on this day the martyrs are remembered by hundreds of thousands people with deep respect.

According to the Presidential Decree, citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan being of different nationalities killed during the tragedy were awarded with honorary title “Martyr of the January 20”, and different measures are taken in accordance with the Decree on “Increasing the State care to the persons who became disabled during January 20 events”, and these persons are entitled to relevant allowances by the state, and the martyrs’ families are provided with Presidential pensions.

As in previous years, the Action Plan on “Commemorating the 29th Anniversary of the January 20 tragedy” has been approved this year and is being implemented by the relevant Decree aiming to draw the international community’s attention to those bloody events.

This horrible tragedy caused the massacre of the civilian population. Consequently, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international legal documents were grossly violated. Nevertheless, despite being one of the most horrible crimes of the 20th century for its nature and scale, January 20 events has not been given international legal assessment so far, those ordering and perpetrators of the bloodshed have not been punished.

Under the international law, the tragedy of January 20 should be classified as a crime against humanity. Thus, according to the article 7 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, extermination, enforced disappearance of persons, other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great sufferings, serious injury to body, to mental or physical health are classified as crimes against humanity.

At that time the leaders of the Soviet state supported Armenia with that crime grossly violating the international legal norms, which resulted in the long-lasting Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan, ethnic cleansing, genocides were committed, twenty percent of our country territories was occupied, local Azerbaijani population was forcibly expelled from the territory of Armenia, as well as from the Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts, which are integral part of our republic. These actions resulted in massive violation of the fundamental rights of the civilian population and still more than one million compatriots live as refugees and IDPs.

The Azerbaijani side constantly strives for the peaceful settlement of the conflict, proposes initiatives. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has stated the crucial importance of the peaceful settlement of the conflict only within the territorial integrity of our republic, withdrawal of the occupant forces from the Azerbaijani lands repeatedly and resolutely in the platforms of the influential international organizations, including UN General Assembly. It is reflected in the corresponding decisions of the influential international organizations, including European Parliament resolution adopted on December 12, 2018, in which the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan was emphasized once more.

It should be mentioned that there are enough legal documents to classify the January 20 events committed twenty-nine years ago as a crime against humanity, being one of the most grave kind of the international crimes, at the same time sufficient evidences for bringing to justice the persons who ordered and committed this massacre and first of all, the leaders of the Soviet state of that period.

Impunity of persons committed such kind of deeds is contrary to the targeted universal priorities, UN Principles and Sustainable Development Goals.

We call the world community and international organizations to support justified demands of the Azerbaijani people and, in order to bring the perpetrators of this crime against humanity to deserved punishment, to assist in giving this bloody action an international legal assessment.

The Statement is addressed to the UN Secretary-General, UN Security Council, UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Office of High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Human Rights Council, UNICEF, UNESCO, European Union, European Council, OSCE, International and European Ombudsman Institutions, Asian Ombudsman Association, European Network of Ombudsmen for Children, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Network of Ombudsmen Offices in its member states, International Peace Bureau, foreign ombudsmen, embassies of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the foreign embassies to Azerbaijan, also the Azerbaijani Diasporas.