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DECISIONS OF THE PARLIAMENT

**The Decree of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR "about the cancellation of the state of emergency in Baku city"
(January 22, 1990)**

The Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR noting that according to the article 71 of USSR Constitution the normalization of the situation in NKAO and the restoration of sovereign rights of the Azerbaijani SSR is the only aim of entering of Soviet Army troops into the republic, expressing the indignation and anger of the Azerbaijani people in connection with the bloody massacre implemented against the peaceful population of Baku city, the capital of republic, by troops of Defense Ministry of USSR, Interior Ministry of USSR and Committee of State Security of USSR, which led to the death and injuring of many hundreds people, noting, that the top authorities of USSR violated the conditions of Agreement on creation of USSR and Constitution of USSR and the decision about the declaration of the state of emergency in Baku city and entering of troops, that led to the violation of sovereign rights of Azerbaijan SSR, was taken without consent of sovereign Azerbaijani SSR, decrees:

To consider the Decree of Presidium of the Supreme Council of USSR of January 19, 1990 about the declaration of the state of emergency in Baku city as act of aggression against the sovereign Azerbaijani SSR, and to consider the actions of USSR top authorities and the top officials, who ordered to implement this Decree, and which led to the death and injuring of many hundreds people in Baku city and its suburbs as the crime against the Azerbaijani nation.

On the basis of the article 6 of the Constitutional Law of the Azerbaijani SSR about the sovereignty stop the implementation of the Decree of Presidium of the Supreme Council of USSR of January 19, 1990 about the declaration of the state of emergency everywhere except NKAO and regions bordering with Armenia because it violates the clause 14 of article 119 of USSR Constitution and it was adopted without consent of the top authorities of the Azerbaijani SSR.

To demand the immediate cancellation of the Decree of Presidium of the Supreme Council of USSR of January 19, 1990 about the declaration of the state of emergency in Baku city and regions of republic taking into account the exclusion, which is showed in the item 2 of the Decree, withdraw all troops and units from Baku city and other regions of the republic.

To create the deputy commission with participation of representatives of public organizations to identify the direct organizers who are guilty of the bloody massacre implemented in Baku city and other regions of Azerbaijan against the citizens of the Azerbaijani SSR.

To adopt the appeal to the Supreme Councils of the Soviet republics, governments of all democratic states of the world calling to condemn the actions of vandalism and aggression, that are contrary to the principles of international law, and led to the death and injuring of many hundreds people.

To continue the work of special session and start the discussion of the issue about the advisability of keeping of the allied relations between USSR and the Azerbaijani SSR in case of default of positive answer from the Union bodies.

**The Chairwoman of Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR
E.Gafarova**

**The Secretary of Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR
R.Gaziyeva**

**Baku city,
January 22, 1990**

**The decision of the National Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan
"On tragic events taken place in Baku on January 20, 1990"
(March 29, 1994)**

Over the night from 19 to 20-th January, 1990 without preliminary declaration of state of emergency military units of former Soviet Union were entered Baku city and some regions of Azerbaijan, reprisals were inflicted toward the peace population, hundreds people were killed, wounded, missing. The invasion into Baku of a large contingent of Soviet Army units, interior troops and special destination detachments was accompanied by particular cruelty and unprecedented atrocities.

Before declaration of the state of emergency 82 men were cruelly killed and 20 men were fatally wounded by military forces. After the declaration of the state of emergency on January 20 and the following days another 21 men were killed. In the districts, where the state of emergency was not introduced, 8 men were killed in Neftchala on January, 25 and in Lenkoran on January 26.

In total as a result of illegal entering of troops into Baku city and regions of the republic 133 men were killed, 744 men - wounded, 841 men - illegally arrested. The soldiers sacked and burnt 200 houses and apartments, 80 automobiles, including ambulance cars, the state and personal properties was destroyed. Women, children and old men, as well as ambulance and police employees also were among the killed persons. The USSR Constitution, Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR, the sovereign rights of the Azerbaijan Republic was brutally violated.

The purpose of this beforehand elaborated and prepared act of aggression was suppression of struggle of the Azerbaijani people for democracy and national freedom, humiliation and insult of the dignity of the people. Policy of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, biased and prejudiced line of the Center, and personally of Mikhail Gorbachov, directed against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in a period preceded January 20, became the reason of anger of broad masses.

Activity of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and its first secretary Abdurahman Vezirov also raised harsh discontent of the people. In the republic the judgement was generated, that the leadership of Azerbaijan, concerting with the Center on Nagorno-Karabakh problem, realized clandestine treacherous plans against its people.

By their inept and inefficient activities, leaders of Azerbaijan have created insuperable discrepancy between the people and authorities. Just in this period during several months at the mass-meetings in Baku, other cities and regions of the republic the demands on resignation of the Azerbaijani leadership were put forward.

The leadership of the Azerbaijani SSR has not taken advantage of available possibilities for settling by political means the opposition created in the society. The work of ruling circles with opposition was characterized by political games and intrigues, and was ineffective. The Azerbaijani leadership has appeared to be helpless in solution of many important issues that has led to the deep authority crisis in the republic.

Analysis of the measures implemented by party and state agencies and contradictory processes taken place in Baku on the eve of the 20th of January shows that the January tragedy was the result of prepared military operation. The irrefutable evidence of that are encoded telegrams signed by leaders of the republic Abdurahman Vezirov and Ayaz Mutallibov, which were sending to Moscow from the end of 1989 right up to the January events. These encoded telegrams contained appeals for sending to Baku additional units of interior troops and forces of the Soviet Army. In this connection the various preparatory measures for billeting and security of military subdivisions were taken in Baku, beds in the hospitals were quickly freed several days before the events, the preparation for receptions of great amount of injured men was carried out, members of families of the servicemen of the Soviet Army urgently were evacuated from Baku. Thus, all conditions for realization of military aggression and entering of troops were created. Entering of troops into Baku pursued the purposes of preservation of communist regime and suppression of national-liberation movement. Suggestions about introduction of the state of emergency put forward on meeting of the bureau of Azerbaijan Communist Party's Central Committee on January 14, 1990, were caused by fear to lose the power. On January 15, 1990 under conditions of lack of quorum, when the chairwoman of Presidium of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan SSR Elmira Gafarova was on her official trip in Moscow, illegal meeting of Presidium of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan SSR was held, and the decision on consent for introduction of the state of emergency in Azerbaijan was accepted under pressure of the first Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Abdurahman Vezirov. It once more confirms that the January tragedy was a beforehand planned criminal act.

The illegal declaration of the state of emergency in Baku, invasion of the armed forces into the city

and savage punishment of peaceful population with use of armored vehicles and weapons under conditions of full lack of any resistance of the population were the crime against the Azerbaijani people. These retaliatory measures were consciously planned and brutally realized.

The basic purpose of this action was suppression of the national movement in Azerbaijan, prevention of the collapse of the existing regime and destruction of forces struggling for independence.

This aggression against the Azerbaijani people was implemented stage by stage: the provocations resulted in pogroms were carried out; under the pretext of disarmament of the population, on the eve of the tragedy, arms were seized even from the police employees etc.

The next stage of military operation became an explosion of the power block of the Azerbaijani television and full stopping of broadcasting in the republic on January, 19. Since the day of the tragedy the activity of other mass media was suspended and the people were deprived of their rights to get information.

For realization of this planned criminal action, the Soviet defense minister Dmitriy Yazov, interior minister Vadim Bakatin and other former soviet high rank military officials arrived in Baku.

Acceptance of the Decree of Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council "On introduction of the state of emergency in Baku" in violation of item 14, clause 119 of the USSR Constitution and clause 71 of the Constitution of Azerbaijani SSR, its publication after introduction of the state of emergency and after the blood of hundreds of peaceful inhabitants of Baku city was shed, confirms that this military and political action was barefaced aggression and crime against the Azerbaijani people committed by the leadership of CPSU, Soviet state and personally by Mikhail Gorbachev.

In these tragic days for Azerbaijanis the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist Party Abdurahman Vezirov, who betrayed his own people on January 19, was at the building of KGB (Committee of State Security) with KGB chairman Vagif Huseynov instead of being on January 19 and 20 on his working place. After that he secretly arrived at the Defense Ministry in Baku and over the night from 19 to 20-th January together with Dmitriy Yazov and Vadim Bakatin supervised the military operation here. And finally, on January, 21 he secretly flew on a military plane to Moscow with the only purpose to secure his own safety.

Former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Abdurahman Vezirov, who tried to keep power by any means, was the direct organizer and participant of this grave crime. The second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Viktor Polyanichko, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijani SSR Ayaz Mutalibov, chairman of the Committee of the State Security of the Azerbaijani SSR Vagif Huseynov were also guilty because they held the posts and had the appropriate powers.

During the entering of the military units of the Soviet empire into Baku city the chairwoman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR, Elmira Gafarova, the first secretary of Baku City Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Muslim Mamedov didn't take any concrete measures and didn't secure protection of citizens, and they as the persons held top state posts, couldn't cope with the duties, assigned to them.

This grave crime committed as a result of traitorous policy of the communist leadership of the Azerbaijani SSR, didn't break the will of freedom - loving Azerbaijani people, but caused even more indignation. The hatred of the people against Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the existing regime reached its extreme bounds, the members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union discarded their Party - membership cards in a mass order and left ranks of the party.

The tragedy of January 20, which brought sorrow and suffering to the Azerbaijani people and evoked response from all over the world, anger and indignation of the progressive forces. The radio stations of many countries broadcasted full information about January tragedy and damned imperial forces.

In contrary to the norms, adopted in the civilized states, the political leadership of Azerbaijan didn't resigned, but they took position of silence in this situation. In those tragic days, when the people sacrificed their martyrs, they didn't express their official attitude to this tragedy. Fearing anger of the people they didn't participate in the ceremony of funeral and didn't express their condolences to the mourning people. In this situation the statement of Elmira Gafarova gave hope and faith to the people. However the leadership of Azerbaijan pursuing the political line of the Center didn't support this statement in their further activity.

Most of political and state leaders of the republic didn't participate at extreme session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR held on demand of the people and with the initiative of a deputy group on January 22, 1990. Absence of the leadership of the republic at the session which convened clue to January tragedy, showed their indifference to the destiny of the people and their involvement in perpetration of this crime.

Despite of it the session tried to evaluate the January events and has accepted series of documents.

The appeals to the USSR Supreme Council, Supreme Councils of the Soviet Republics, parliaments of all world countries, Organization of United Nations, as well as to all nations and peoples living in the Azerbaijani SSR were adopted. At the same meeting the question on legal evaluation of events was raised and investigation commission is created.

The decisions of the session held in such extreme circumstances were not implemented by political leadership of Azerbaijan. The state of emergency in Baku city was not canceled in spite of the decision of the session. It is obvious from the materials of the Supreme Council that the Center agreed to cancel the state of emergency in Baku in 1,5 months after its introduction. However the leadership of the republic refused to cancel the state of emergency, fearing that it could allegedly lead to the stand off in the society. At the session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijan SSR held on February 9, 1991 chairwoman of the Presidium Elmira Gafarova answered to interpellation of the deputies: «When this decision was discussed at the union session on March 5 we have met Comrade Gorbachev. I have raised this question there. He answered us that beginning from tomorrow he would take off the state of emergency. I said: «Give us time». Later I called up Ayaz Mutallibov when I returned Baku, we discussed this question. I believe that we could not cancel the state of emergency in Baku because civil war could have flared up". The state of emergency was canceled only on August 30, 1991 on the eve of Ayaz Mutallibov's was being elected President. Thus, the leadership retaining the power by value of blood understood that they could rule the republic only through the mechanism of the state of emergency and tried to prolong it as long as it is possible.

The third session of the Supreme Council of USSR, held in March, 1990 instead of political evaluation of the January events in Baku accepted a rather peculiar resolution: "On situation in the Azerbaijani SSR and Armenian SSR and measures on normalization of situation in this region ". The Supreme Council of USSR taking into consideration the conclusion of the investigation commission of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR, gave instruction to the USSR Prosecutor Office, KGB and USSR Internal Ministry to investigate the crimes perpetrated on January, 20. On December 20, 1990 USSR Military Prosecutor Office had not considered actions of military servicemen during the January events in Baku as crime and had stopped the investigation. Thus, the Supreme Council of USSR, essentially, refused to give political and legal evaluation of the tragedy of the 20-th January. The political leadership of Azerbaijan didn't express its attitude to this unfair decision and two - faced position of the Center concerning the January tragedy. In fact the Supreme Council of the republic as the supreme body of power, according to the existing practice was the tacit executor of the instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Azerbaijan. Thus, the Supreme Council in its activity after January 22, 1990 could not undertake independently any decisive steps for disclosure of this grave crime.

Over the night from 24 to 25-th of January, 1990 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan held the plenum devoted to the organizational issues. Under the pressure of the participants of the Plenum, the political situation in the republic also was included in the agenda. A commission chaired by Afrand Dashdamirov was created to investigate the circumstances of the introduction of the state of emergency on January 19-20, 1990 in Baku. This commission was charged to study all issues connected with introduction of the state of emergency and to report at the next plenum. In spite of the fact that the question about existing situation was included in the agenda of the Plenum, the supreme body of communists of the republic didn't gave the political evaluation of the tragedy and didn't made any announcement on this issue. Such an attitude of the Central Committee to the tragedy continued also in its further activity. On March 31, 1991 a report about the work of the commission chaired by Afrand Dashdamirov was done at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and the decision about continuation of work was taken. Afterwards the commission without accepting any decision stopped its activity. As a result, the Central Committee completely evaded from political and legal evaluation of bloody January events.

The preliminary information of the commission of the Central Committee determined that the role of the former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Abdurahman Vezirov in decision on introduction of the state of emergency was not established. The primary party organization of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan on January 22, 1990 excluded Abdurahman Vezirov from CPSU and raised the question demanding him to account for the crimes committed against the Azerbaijani people. However Plenum of the Central Committee showed the unscrupulousness and was indifferent to the decision of the primary party organization, and only rebuked Abdurahman Vezirov and excluded him from the Central Committee. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, its bureau and first secretary of the CC Ayaz Mutallibov, who took over the political leadership in the republic in this severe period, didn't give any political evaluation of the events, so they systematically and sequentially carried out the line of concealment of the essence of the crime and its organizers.

Ayaz Mutallibov, one of the initiators of the tragedy of the 20th January, once again betrayed the people,

as a result of which on March 9, 1991 the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR under his pressure took the decision about participation of the Azerbaijani SSR in referendum on conservation of USSR, the Soviet empire that implemented so grave crime against the Azerbaijani people. This political line of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and its first secretary Ayaz Mutallibov had influence on the activity of the investigation commission. On February 11, 1990 commission issued its first statement. This statement did not exceed frameworks of decisions took by the extreme session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR on January 22, 1990. The tragic situation in Azerbaijan in that period required from the investigation commission political evaluation of the tragedy of the 20th January, identification of organizers and accomplices of the crime and submission of these materials to the Supreme Council. All opportunities for that were available.

There was direct evidence of the crime and its consequences: the society was aware that the organizers of the crime are political leaders of the Soviet Union and the Azerbaijan SSR. However the investigation commission delaying the decision and taking it only in two years after the tragedy - just only after liquidation of Communist Party of the Soviet Union and collapse of the Soviet state - submitted its conclusion to the National Council of the Supreme Council. The conclusion of the Commission despite of gravity of the crime had superficial character and in fact consisted of well - known judgments and conclusions. The evaluation of the tragedy in this document did not meet the degree of its significance. The document considered guilty the leadership and the government of the Soviet state which didn't exist any more, but there was attempt to pass by in silence the responsibility of the Azerbaijani leadership. There is no need to prove that it did not require two years to draw such conclusions. Despite of indicated shortages in the work and in the conclusion of the commission, actual materials and some inferences, contained in the submitted summery, gave the National Council the opportunity to give comprehensive political evaluation of the tragedy of the 20th January. However the National Council instead of evaluating the January events issued the resolution on January 19, 1992, which approved the conclusion of the investigation commission and admitted it as satisfactory.

Thus, the tragedy of the 20th January didn't get political and legal evaluation in the decision of the supreme legislative body of the Azerbaijan Republic. It is necessary to note, that the National Front of Azerbaijan repeatedly demanded the political evaluation of the tragedy during the period of the communist regime in the republic. Being in power for more than a year (former President of the Azerbaijan Republic Abulfaz Elchibey, former Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijan Republic Isa Gambarov) it did not use its opportunities to give political evaluation of the tragedy. Thus except the decision of the extreme session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR of January 22, 1990 the evaluation of the events of the Bloody January has not reflected in any decision, statement and other official documents at the state level. In spite of the fact that the actual materials selected by the investigation commission enabled to investigate this crime the law - enforcement agencies didn't take any concrete practical steps. During 4 years after these events, the grave crime committed against the people by the leadership of the former USSR and Azerbaijan, remained undisclosed.

In the Decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic Heydar Aliyev of January 5, 1994 "On commemoration of the fourth anniversary of the tragedy of the 20th January" it is noted that so far the legal evaluation of the tragic events in Baku on January 20, 1990 has not given, and holding of special meeting of the National Assembly is recommended. Materials available for the Supreme Council, Administration of the President, Prosecutor Office of the Azerbaijan Republic, Ministry of National Security, Interior Ministry, Central Archival Office, as well as the conclusion of the investigation commission were used by drafting committee created during consideration of this issue at the National Assembly of the Azerbaijan Republic. The National Assembly of the Azerbaijan Republic, taking into consideration the recommendations of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic about political and legal evaluation of the events of the 20th January and taking into account judgements and arguments expressed during the discussion of the issue, as well as detected facts, decrees

1. To consider the entering of the Soviet Armed Forces on January 20, 1990 into Baku city and some regions of the republic in order to suppress increasing national - liberation movement in Azerbaijan, to humiliate national dignity, to destroy faith and will of the people who stood up for creation of the democratic sovereign state, to demonstrate strength of the Soviet military machine to any people who embarks on this path and as a result to annihilate ruthlessly unarmed people who went into the streets to protect the truth and justice, as armed aggression and crime committed by totalitarian communist regime against the Azerbaijani people.

2. To note that the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Soviet state and government, and personally Mikhail Gorbachev, encroaching on the sovereignty of Azerbaijan and organizing the tragedy of 20th January for suppression of national movement with the purpose to realize their old imperial claims covered by notorious communist ideology, have committed grave crime against the Azerbaijani people.

3. Responsibility for the military aggression carried out against the people has to be taken by the leadership of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. To note, that Abdurahman Vezirov as the direct organizer and participant of the aggression, Ayaz Mutallibov, Viktor Polyanichko, Vagif Huseynov as the direct accomplices of the crime who gave a permission for entering the soviet troops into Azerbaijan and used them against the people with purpose to suppress the national movement, didn't provide the safety of the citizens for the sake of holding their position and thus are betrayals of the Azerbaijani people.

4. To note that the Chairwoman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan SSR Elmira Gafarova, the first secretary of the Baku City Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan Muslim Mamedov, being high - ranking officials, have political responsibility for not taking any concrete measures in connection with entering military units into Baku city and for not providing security of the citizens.

5. To note that the commission created according to the decision of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (the chairman Afrand Dashdamirov), purposely concealed from the people the essence of the crime and real organizers of the January tragedy.

6. To note that the investigation commission of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijan Republic (chairman - Mitat Abbasov, deputy chairman - Tamerlan Karayev) did some work for investigation of the tragedy of the 20th January. However with the purpose to cringe before the leadership of the republic it has delayed consideration of the issue and in the name of political situation it passed over in silence the fault of some persons.

To consider the conclusions of the Commission concerning the evaluation of the January events insufficient.

7. To note that the National Council later known as the National Assembly of the Azerbaijan Republic didn't express its attitude to the tragedy of the 20th of January which took place in the life of the Azerbaijani people, but only accepted the activity of the investigation commission as satisfactory.

8. To consider the activity of the former leaders of the law - enforcement agencies of the republic connected with investigation of this crime within four years after the events of January 20, 1990 as unsatisfactory.

To note that the activity of the law - enforcement agencies directed at defining the degree of fault of persons, who put obstacles in identification of the real organizers of the Bloody January which led to the death and injury of hundreds people in Baku and some regions of Azerbaijan, and at disclosure of the essence of this tragedy within last four years was unsatisfactory.

To charge the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Azerbaijan to ensure completion of this issue in the shortest possible time and bring to trial guilty persons according to the law.

9. Taking into account great political importance of the January tragedy in history of the Azerbaijani people, as well as with the purpose to perpetuate memory of persons perished for freedom and independence of Azerbaijan, to create memorial complex in Baku city.

Baku

March 29, 1994

DECREES AND ORDERS

**Decree
of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
about observing the fourth anniversary of the tragedy of January 20
(January 5, 1994)**

At the day of January 20, 1990, which went down in history of our nation as Bloody January, Azerbaijan sacrificed on the way to the liberty and independence. Since that day, that remained in the history as bloody, passed four years.

Unfortunately during these four years there was not done proper political and legal appraisal to the event, which took place on January 20, on the governmental level.

In connection with that the National Office of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan Republic issued Decree. However, there were not shown the true reasons and initiators in the Decree of January 19, 1992.

I consider it as the holy duty of every citizen of Azerbaijan to honor the memory of our sons and daughters, innocent victims. In connection with the fourth anniversary of the tragedy of January 20 I decree:

1. To create the State Commission on the preparing and holding of measures in connection with fourth anniversary of tragedy of January 20. The Commission is to prepare during three days the proposals on the carrying out of measures and submit to the President of Republic of Azerbaijan to consideration.

2. To recommend the Milli Majlis of Republic of Azerbaijan to give the full political and legal appraisal to events, that took place on January 20. With this aim to consider the issue on the carrying out of special sessions of Milli Majlis.

3. To the Cabinet of Ministers to solve the questions connecting with this decree.

**Heydar Aliyev
President of Republic of Azerbaijan**

Baku city, January 5, 1994

**The Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
about the 10-th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20
(December 16, 1999)**

On January 20, 1990 the cruel crime was committed against the Azerbaijani people. In Baku and some regions of the Republic the Soviet military units were illegally entered with the purpose of punishment of the peaceful population who went on streets in a sign of protest against attempts of violation of a territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, unfair and prejudiced policy which was carried out under the guidance of the former USSR against the Azerbaijani people, unable activity of local authorities. As a result of retaliatory measures executed with unprecedented cruelty, hundreds of innocent citizens of Azerbaijan were wounded and killed. Thus, against the Azerbaijani people the act of a mass terror was performed.

On the eve of events of January 20, the policy carried out by the leadership of the Communist party of the Soviet Union contradicting with the interests of the people, biased and prejudiced line realized by a center against the sovereignty and a territorial integrity of Azerbaijan caused boundless anger of the population of the Republic. Collusion of that time's leadership of Azerbaijan with a center on Nagorno-Karabakh problem became the reason of the sharp protests in the Republic.

Since 1987 artificially created so-called Nagorno-Karabakh problem from the first days was perceived by the Azerbaijan people as an attempt directed against the territorial integrity of the Republic, violation of the Constitutional rights of the citizens. Though the inviolability of our boundaries repeatedly and officially was confirmed by the State structures at various levels, stage by stage center started to carry out the policy pursuing to secede the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from Azerbaijan.

In March, 1988 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, by accepting the special decision about acceleration of social-economic development of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, in fact laid the basis of separation of Nagorno-Karabakh from the subordination of the Azerbaijan SSR. With this decision, without having any objective basis and adopted as a result of the self-thought reasons, Nagorno-Karabakh was submitted exclusive rights and large money allocations. The solution of many issues of the area was entrusted directly to Central ministries and structures. In the decision of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR dated June 17, 1988 it was said, that the measures realized by this decision of the center, "create favorable conditions for acceleration of development of productive forces, satisfying economic and moral needs of both Armenian and Azerbaijan population, as well as other nationalities of autonomous oblast".

The next step of the center aimed at separation of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from subordination of Azerbaijan was the Decree issued on January 12, 1989 by the Supreme Council of the USSR about introduction in Autonomous area of the special form of control. The leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh was entrusted to the Special Control Committee chaired by the representative of the center A.Volski. It actually meant a separation of Nagorno-Karabakh from a composition of the Azerbaijani SSR.

The leadership of the USSR in official documents tried to create such image, that they had the same attitude both to Azerbaijan, and to Armenia, realizing measures on normalization of situation in the region. At that time the prejudiced attitude of the center to Azerbaijan, to Azerbaijanis was evident. Till 1988 Azerbaijanis were subjected to ideological aggression realized in the purposeful form in central mass media of the USSR and various mass-media of Armenia. The basic purpose of the given campaign was creation of a negative image of Azerbaijan. It was possible to consider it as a preparatory stage of mass operation of ethnic cleansing started in 1988 in the Armenian SSR, and also in Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. During banishing with unprecedented cruelty of Azerbaijanis living in Armenia from the native places many of our compatriots, including old men, children and women were killed.

While official State structures, law - enforcement forces and mass media of the USSR paid extremely large attention to Nagorno-Karabakh problem, big tragedy of the Azerbaijani people was accompanied by full silence. The indifferent position of the Azerbaijani leadership to this problem became the real crime against our compatriots.

As a result of such a position of the leadership of Azerbaijan, the Supreme Council of the Armenian SSR was daring to accept on December 1, 1989 the decision to join Nagorno-Karabakh to the Armenian SSR. And on January 15, 1990, several days before events of January 20 the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR "About introduction of the state of emergency in Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Area and some other regions" as a matter of fact put an end to the hopes of Azerbaijanis to return back to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh. As it is obvious from the title of the Decree, the issue of belonging of the autonomous area and "some other regions" already became doubtful.

The realization by the center of a prejudiced policy against Azerbaijan, explicit demonstration by the leadership of the Republic of absolute indifference to destiny of the people created feelings of anger and protest of the broad national masses. All of them clearly realized that the leadership of Azerbaijan exhibited feebleness and indecision in suppression of encroachments on destiny of the republic and people, and occasionally even implemented secret treacherous plans against the people, striking a bargain with the center to preserve their own offices. In such a situation the people had to take on all responsibility and to express mass protest with the hope to prevent a realization of these treacherous plans.

Leadership of the USSR chooses the path of open punishment of the people, who dared to struggle for restoring of the justice in the Republic. Capture of Baku on January 20, 1990 without declaration of the state of emergency by a large contingent of the Soviet army, special assignment units and internal forces was accompanied by special cruelty and unprecedented atrocities.

Tragedy of January 20, made with the purpose to break a faith and will of the people dared to fight for their rights, to humiliate its national dignity and to demonstrate the force of the Soviet military machine, was military aggression and crime of the totalitarian communist regime against the Azerbaijani people.

While the crime and its results were vivid, the leadership of the Republic by all means tried to veil the essence of the tragedy. The fact that the majority of the political and State leaders of the Republic was not on the session of the Supreme Council of the Azerbaijani SSR, convened upon demand of the people and initiative of the Parliament members, on January 22, 1990 in connection with the January tragedy once again confirmed their indifference to destiny of the people and their complicity to some extent in the committing of the crime. The leadership of the Republic even didn't consider it necessary to participate at the funeral ceremony of martyrs.

Popular Front of Azerbaijan which repeatedly demanded to give the political assessment to January 20 events, also did not use its opportunities during the years when it was in power. So, in spite of the fact that a lot of time has passed after the event, the terrible crime committed by the leadership of USSR and Azerbaijan against the people is still not revealed.

Yet in the period of the Soviet rule in Azerbaijan concrete facts and proves, collected by the vast masses of people in connection with the January 20 tragedy and passed to the State Investigation Commission, were intentionally removed and taken from Azerbaijan. At that period law-enforcement forces of Azerbaijan did not take appropriate measures for investigation, on the contrary some secret documents connected with January 20 tragedy as well as important archive documents were partly or absolutely eradicated.

Despite the fact that events taken place in other regions of the USSR including Tbilisi and Baltic countries were discussed on the level of Soviet leadership and Congress of peoples' deputies, the January 20 tragedy intentionally distorted and were destined to oblivion.

Only in 1994 serious steps were made to give the right assessment of January 20 events. The Decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic of January 20, 1994 recommended Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan to give full political and legal assessment to January 20 events.

By devoting to the given problem a special session, Milli Majlis of the Azerbaijan Republic at the meetings continued for several days revealed the true originators and reasons of January events. The decision of Milli Majlis dated March 29, 1994 gave a political and legal assessment to tragic events of January 20, 1990.

The tragedy of January 20, being a crime against the Azerbaijan people, in fact was a terrible act, one of the bloodiest acts of a terror realized by totalitarianism in the history of XX century directed against mankind, humanism, humanity. The people who have committed this crime, until now have not bore punishments. Our people are sure, that the guilty persons will bear responsibility before the history, mankind, and also before the Azerbaijan people.

In spite of the fact that the Azerbaijani people on January 20 were subjected to military, political, and moral aggression, nevertheless they demonstrated to the world faith to historical traditions of heroism, determination to endure ordeal in the name of freedom and independence of the native Land, even at the expense of their lives. The sons and daughters of our Motherland, who became martyrs in the name of freedom and independence of Azerbaijan during bloody January 1990 events, have added a vivid page in the heroic annals of our nation by their self-sacrifice. And today Azerbaijani people are proud of its daughters and sons, who are ready to sacrifice their lives in the name of preservation of its national dignity.

On the eve of the 10-th anniversary of tragedy of January 20, remembering our compatriots, heroically sacrificing their lives in the name of freedom of Azerbaijan, with deep grief I order;

1. Taking into account an exceptional meaning of bloody January tragedy in the history of Azerbaijan as the top of heroism and selflessness to hold in all cities, regions and villages of the Azerbaijan Republic large-scale special ceremonies devoted to the 10-th anniversary of the tragedy.

2. To the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sports,

State Committee on Problems of the Women of the Azerbaijan Republic to hold mass events, conferences and lectures devoted to the tragedy of January 20 so that to grow up the young generation in the spirit of ideas of patriotism, independence, devotion to national - moral values.

3. To Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and Ministry of Education to ensure alongside with realization of fundamental scientific researches reflecting various stages of struggle of our people for freedom and independence over the history, objective presentation of the tragedy of January 20 from a scientific point of view, and to carry out special scientific sessions, conferences, and preparation of various articles devoted to this event.

4. To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijan Republic with the purpose to bring to a public of the various countries the authentic essence of the tragedy and in connection with its 10-th anniversary to prepare and to realize the program of measures describing bloody January as the act of aggression and terror, launched by Soviet totalitarian regime against the Azerbaijani people.

5. To the Ministry of Press and Information of the Azerbaijan Republic, State TV Committee, editorials of the newspapers and magazines to ensure issuing and featuring materials in the connection with the 10-th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20.

6. To Industrial Unit "Azerkinovideo" to develop a documentary chronicle devoted to events of January 20.

7. To Cabinet of Ministers to settle the problems resulting from the present Decree.

Heydar Aliyev
President of the Azerbaijan Republic

Baku, December 16, 1999

**Plan of measures on marking the 16th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20 approved
(14 January, 2006)**

According to the plan of activities to be arranged on the occasion of 16th anniversary of the 20 January tragedy, the date will be marked as the National Day of Mourning and as a heroic page of the history of struggle for freedom and independence of Azerbaijan.

Actions dedicated to 20 January will be carried out in all regions of the Republic, arranged gatherings and lectures, religious parties. It is envisioned wider media coverage of mass actions.

Appropriate actions are to be organized at the embassies and diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan in foreign countries to draw the attention of the world community to the 20 January tragedy.

As stated, on January 19, special classes dedicated to this Bloody January will be held in all educational institutions.

On January 20, on behalf of the President of Azerbaijan will be carried out a wreath-laying ceremony, and the nation will pay tribute to the national heroes in the Alley of Martyrs. On the same day, at 12.00 am, memories of the victims will be revered by a Moment of Silence and the ships, cars and trains will whistle to commemorate their memory.

14 January, 2006

**Plan of measures on marking the 18th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20 approved
(10 January, 2008)**

Head of Azerbaijan Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev issued order on the assertion of actions plan on 18th anniversary of 20 January tragedy.

The document covers holding events – conferences, meetings and lectures devoted to the anniversary of the tragedy in the cities and regions of the Republic, as well as offices and organizations, elucidating these events in media, broadcasting materials on January 20 in TV channels and websites of the world.

Humanitarian aids will be rendered to the families of those who became martyrs during January 20 events, cleaning works will be carried out in the Martyrs' Avenue due to the actions plan. Azerbaijani Embassies and diplomatic representations in foreign countries, as well as Azerbaijani communities will take proper measures for informing the world community about Bloody January tragedy. Proper actions plan was also adopted in the cities and regions of the Republic and their execution has started.

10 January, 2008

**Plan of measures on marking the 19th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20 approved
(6 January, 2009)**

The administration sources told APA the plan of measures includes events dedicated to the tragedy anniversary – conferences, meetings and lectures to be organized in the cities and regions of the country, as well as in the offices and organizations, large coverage of these events in the press, on TV channels and Internet.

According to the plan of measures, families of the 20 January martyrs will receive humanitarian aid, renovation and cleaning works will be provided in the Alley of Martyrs, special lessons will be organized in all education centers on January 19, and relevant measures will be taken by the embassies and diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani communities abroad to attract the attention of international community to this tragedy again.

Relevant plans of measures were adopted in the cities and regions of the country and already started to be executed.

6 January, 2009

**Plan of measures on marking the 20th anniversary of the tragedy of January 20 approved
(15 December, 2009)**

Chief of the Azerbaijan Presidential Administration has approved a plan of measures on marking the 20th anniversary of 20 January tragedy, according to official mass media of Azerbaijan.

The document envisions holding conferences, meetings and lectures on the anniversary of the tragedy in the cities and regions of the country including in departments and organizations, detailed coverage of these events in press, wide coverage of bloody 20 January in leading mass-media of the world as well as TV channels and Internet.

In line with the plan of actions, the Azerbaijani embassies, diplomatic representations and Azerbaijani communities in foreign countries will hold due arrangements to draw attention of the world community to the January tragedy.

The Martyrs families will receive humanitarian aid on January 20, cleaning and accommodation works will be held in the Alley of Martyrs, special lessons on this tragedy will be held in all educational institutions on 19 January.

The martyrs will be commemorated in a minute of silence and ships, cars and trains will beep at 12.00 Baku time on January 20.

The due plans of actions have also been adopted in the regions and cities of the country and their implementation started.

Azerbaijani flags will be lowered throughout the country as a sign of mourning.

15 December, 2009

**Plan of events to mark 21st anniversary of 20 January tragedy approved
(27 December, 2010)**

A plan of events to mark the 21st anniversary of the 20 January tragedy has been approved by an order of the Head of Azerbaijan`s Presidential Administration.

In accordance with the document, events – conferences, meetings and lectures will be organized in towns and regions, as well as enterprises, while spectacles, documentaries and feature films will be demonstrated.

Under the document, events to mark the tragedy will be covered by press, world`s leading mass media, as well as TV channels and Internet.

According to the plan of events, Azerbaijan`s embassies abroad, diplomatic representations, Azerbaijani Diaspora organizations will arrange relevant events to draw the world community`s attention to the Bloody January tragedy.

Martyr families will be provided aid, and improvement work will be done in the territory of Martyrs Avenue. Special lessons on the tragedy will be given in all education institutes.

On January 20, a moment of silence to honor the memory of martyrs will be observed at 12:00 (local time) across the country.

Relevant plan of events were adopted in towns and regions of the country, as well.

The same day, Azerbaijan`s state flags will be lowered to half-staff throughout the country.

AzerTAc

**Plan of actions to mark anniversary of 20 January approved
(31 December 2011)**

Baku, The action plan to mark the 22nd anniversary of the 20 January tragedy has been approved by the order of the head of the Presidential Administration.

The document envisages organization of conferences, roundtables, discussions in all cities and regions, their media coverage, actions to be taken diplomatic missions and Azerbaijani communities to educate the world community about the tragedy and wide coverage in world`s media outlets including TV channels, websites.

Under the plan of actions, shahid families will receive humanitarian aid, the special class dedicated to the tragedy will be held on January 19 in all educational institutions, special religious ceremonies will be conducted by major religious confessions and organizations of the country.

AzerTAc

Head of Azerbaijani Presidential Administration approves plan of events on 23rd anniversary of 20 January tragedy (28 December 2012)

Baku, December 28 (AzerTAc). Head of the Azerbaijani Presidential Administration has issued a relevant order on approval of the plan of events on 23rd anniversary of 20 January tragedy.

The document envisages holding events, conferences, meetings, delivering lectures, covering these events in media, spreading materials about the bloody 20 January in the leading mass media of the world, TV channels and internet.

According to the plan of events, to draw the attention of the world community to the bloody January tragedy, events will be held by Azerbaijan's embassies, diplomatic missions and Azerbaijani communities abroad to bring the truth about the 20 January to the world nations.

Humanitarian aid will be rendered to the families of the 20 January victims, redevelopment works will be carried out around the Ally of Martyrs, a special lesson will be given at all educational institutions, and the country's major religious confessions will hold special religious ceremonies dedicated to the victims.

The victims will be commemorated by a minute of silence, the ships, cars and trains will sound horns at 12.00 on January 20.

Appropriate plan of events has been adopted in the cities and regions of the republic.

State flags of Azerbaijan will be lowered in the country that day as a sign of mourning.

Head of Azerbaijani Presidential Administration approves plan of events on 24th anniversary of Black January tragedy (2 January 2014)

Baku, (AzerTAc). Head of the Azerbaijani Presidential Administration has issued an Order on approval of the plan of events on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of January 20 tragedy.

The Order envisages holding events, conferences, meetings, delivering lectures, covering these events in media, spreading materials about the bloody 20 January in the leading mass media of the world, TV channels and internet.

According to the plan of events, to draw the attention of the world community to the bloody January tragedy, events will be held by Azerbaijan's embassies, diplomatic missions and Azerbaijani communities abroad to bring the truth about the 20 January to the world nations.

Humanitarian aid will be rendered to the families of the 20 January victims, redevelopment works will be carried out around the Alley of Martyrs, a special lesson will be given at all educational institutions, and the country's major religious confessions will hold special religious ceremonies dedicated to the victims.

The victims will be commemorated by a minute of silence, the ships, cars and trains will sound horns at 12.00 on January 20.

Appropriate plan of events has been adopted in the cities and regions of the Republic.

State flags of Azerbaijan will be lowered in the country that day as a sign of mourning.

<http://azertag.az/en/xeber/87180>

Head of Azerbaijani Presidential Administration approves plan of events on 25th anniversary of January 20 tragedy (2 January 2015)

Head of the Azerbaijani Presidential Administration has issued an Order on approval of the plan of events on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of January 20 tragedy.

The Order envisages holding meetings, conferences, delivering lectures, covering these events in media, spreading materials about the bloody 20 January in the leading mass media of the world, TV channels and internet.

According to the plan of events, to draw the attention of the world community to the bloody January tragedy, events will be held by Azerbaijan's embassies, diplomatic missions and Azerbaijani communities abroad to bring the truth about the 20 January to the world nations.

Humanitarian aid will be rendered to the families of the 20 January victims, redevelopment works will be carried out around the Alley of Martyrs, and the country's major religious confessions will hold special religious ceremonies dedicated to the victims.

The victims will be commemorated by a minute of silence, the ships, cars and trains will sound horns at 12:00 on January 20. Appropriate plan of events has been adopted in the cities and regions of the Republic.

State flags of Azerbaijan will be lowered in the country that day as a sign of mourning.

<http://azertag.az/en/xeber/822355>

Plan of events on 26th anniversary of January 20 tragedy approved (2 January 2016)

Head of the Azerbaijani Presidential Administration has issued an Order on approval of the plan of events on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of January 20 tragedy.

The Order envisages holding meetings, conferences, delivering lectures, covering these events in media, spreading materials about the bloody 20 January in the leading mass media of the world, TV channels and internet.

According to the plan of events, to draw the attention of the world community to the bloody January tragedy, events will be held by Azerbaijan's embassies, diplomatic missions and Azerbaijani communities abroad to bring the truth about the 20 January to the world nations.

Humanitarian aid will be rendered to the families of the 20 January victims, redevelopment works will be carried out around the Alley of Martyrs, and the country's major religious confessions will hold special religious ceremonies dedicated to the victims.

The victims will be commemorated by a minute of silence, the ships, cars and trains will sound horns at 12:00 on January 20.

Appropriate plan of events has been adopted in the cities and regions of the Republic.

State flags of Azerbaijan will be lowered in the country that day as a sign of mourning.

**http://azertag.az/en/xeber/Plan_of_events_on_26th_anniversary_of_January_20_tragedy_approved
-915857**

Plan of events on 27th anniversary of January 20 tragedy (6 January 2017)

Head of the Azerbaijani Presidential Administration has issued an Order, approving the plan of events on the occasion of the 27th anniversary of January 20 tragedy.

Under the plan, meetings, conferences, lectures will be organized, plays will be staged, films and documentaries will be screened to commemorate the bloody events of Black January when in 1990 the Soviet army entered capital Baku, killing and wounding hundreds of innocent and defenseless people. Azerbaijan's embassies, missions and diaspora organizations in foreign countries will organize commemorative events and increase the international community's awareness of January 20 tragedy through the mass media, including television, radio and the Internet.

According to the plan, commemorative events will also be held by religious confessions and organizations, higher educational institutions and secondary schools across the country.

The plan will also see the provision of humanitarian aid to families of those who were martyred in the bloody events.

A nationwide minute of silence for victims of the Bloody January will be observed at 12.00 on January 20 and the national flag will be lowered across the country, according to the plan of events.

http://azertag.az/en/xeber/Head_of_Azerbaijani_Presidential_Administration_approves_plan_of_events_on_27th_anniversary_of_January_20_tragedy-1024728

OFFICIAL CEREMONIES

Nationwide commemoration of 14rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs (20 January, 2004)

Though it has been 14 years since the bloody tragedy caused by the Soviet troops' action in Azerbaijan, our people remember that terrible night and express their deep hatred towards those who committed the savagery.

Those day went down to the history of Azerbaijan's struggle for freedom and territorial integrity as heroic page; the brave sons of their Motherland who valued freedom and dignity of their country and people above all other things gave their lives and reached the peak of shahids.

The carnage against peaceful citizens demanding their constitutional rights, cruel killing of hundreds of innocent people will remain in the history of humankind as ruthless terrorist act committed by the military machine of the soviet empire, and one of the gravest crimes against humanity.

Soviet Army troops invasion of Baku to suppress the broad masses of people who went into the streets to express their indignation over the imperial leadership's treacherous anti-Azerbaijan policy of support of the aggressive actions by Armenia putting territorial claims to our Republic, resulted in unprecedented tragic events and death of hundreds of innocent people. This bloody terror, however, failed to crush our people's will and striving for freedom. The January 20 tragedy also demonstrated the competitive spirit, resoluteness and pride of our people owing to which we have gain the long-awaited independence and sovereignty.

The Presidential Executive Order "On Marking the 14th Anniversary of January 20 Tragedy" says our Republic yearly marks the January 20 tragedy as the nation-wide mourning day, which will be kept in our people's bloody memory forever.

In the morning on 20th of January, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev arrived at the Lane of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody January 1990 events.

Prayers were said for the repose of souls of shahids and nation-wide leader Heydar Aliyev.

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev laid a wreath at the memorial "Eternal Fire."

State Military Orchestra of the Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan performed State Anthem of Azerbaijan.

Afterwards, Head of our State Ilham Aliyev met with Ambassadors of foreign countries in Baku and representatives of the international organizations who came to revere the memory of shahids. They expressed to the President of Azerbaijan their deep condolences and sympathy.

President Ilham Aliyev thanked the heads of diplomatic corps and other foreign guests.

Among those who came to commemorate the January 20 shahids were leading employees of state organizations, and heads of religious communities functioning in Azerbaijan, as well.

Then, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev gave interview to journalists.

At the Martyrs' Lane visiting ceremony, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev was accompanied by Chairman of the Milli Majlis Murtuz Alasgarov, Prime Minister Artur Rasizadeh, Chief of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev, deputies of the Parliament's Chairman and Prime-Minister and other officials.

The nationwide visiting the Lane of Martyrs in commemoration of the January 20 shahids continued all day long.

**Nationwide commemoration of 16rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy
President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs
(20 January, 2006)**

Despite it has been 16 years since the soviet army's bloody envision of Baku on 20 January, 1990, people in Azerbaijan continue to live with pain of that tragic night in their hearts, and express their hatred for those committed that inhuman deed.

It was the day that entered into the history of Azerbaijan's struggle for freedom and territorial integrity as a heroic page, and elevated the country's brave sons and daughters, who died while defending their freedom, honor and dignity to martyrdom.

The terror act committed by the soviet empire, which had been declaring its commitment to the principles of humanism over the whole period of its existence, against hundreds of innocent people who took to the streets to demand their constitutional rights, will remain forever in the history of humankind as one of the worst crimes against humanity.

Red army units' invasion of Baku resulted in death and injuring of hundreds of peaceful residents, who rebelled against the biased policy of the empire's criminal leadership overtly supporting Armenia's territorial claims against Azerbaijan, and treacherous stance of local authorities of that time. That bloody action, however, failed to crush the people's will and aspiration to freedom.

During some period after the soviet regime collapsed, and Azerbaijan regained its state independence, the country's leaders had been involved in struggle for power, taking no steps to have the crime investigated and given a legal and political assessment. It was not in their interest because they themselves were to some extent accountable for what had happened.

Legal and political assessment to the January 20 tragedy was given, and the offenders were identified only in 1994, a year after national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev returned to power in the Republic.

Ever since, Azerbaijan marks January 20 as the date symbolizing heroic struggle of its people for freedom, independence and territorial integrity.

In the morning on 20 January, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev arrived at the Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody tragedy. He laid a wreath with the words "President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to 20 January Shehids (martyrs)" written on the ribbon around it.

Attending the commemoration ceremony ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations functioning in Baku expressed their sympathies to President Ilham Aliyev.

Among those visiting the Alley of Martyrs were Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov, Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, Chief of the President's Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev, as well as deputies of the Speaker and the Prime Minister, and other officials.

**Nationwide commemoration of 17rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy
President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs
(20 January, 2007)**

On January 20, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev visited the Alley of Martyrs to honor the sacred memory of those who fell victims of the bloody massacre committed by the Soviet army on this day 17 years ago.

Located at one of the highest points of Baku, the Alley of Martyrs is the place where those who gave their lives for territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in combat against Armenian aggressors were buried, as well.

President Aliyev laid a wreath at the Memorial Eternal Fire.

Foreign ambassadors and representatives of international organizations, who were also present at the commemoration ceremony, extended their sympathies and condolences to the Azerbaijanian leader.

Also in attendance along with President Ilham Aliyev at the Alley of Martyrs were Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, Speaker Ogtay Asadov, Chief of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev as well as other governmental officials, and religious figures.

Thousands of residents of the Azerbaijan capital, representatives from other cities and regions of the country, as well as numerous foreign guests have visited the Alley of Martyrs today to pay tribute to the heroes, and lay wreaths and flowers at their graves.

**Nationwide commemoration of 18rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy
President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs
(20 January, 2008)**

The 20th of January, 1990 entered into the modern history of Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic days, and at the same time as a heroic page.

That terrible day elevated the country's brave sons and daughters, who died while defending their freedom, honor and dignity, to martyrdom.

Despite it has been 18 years since the soviet army's bloody invasion of Baku on 20 January, 1990, people in Azerbaijan continue to live with pain of that tragic night in their hearts, and express their hatred for those who committed that inhuman deed and for their servants in Azerbaijan.

The terror act committed by the soviet empire, led by disgraced Gorbachev, which had been declaring its commitment to the principles of humanism over the whole period of its existence, against hundreds of innocent people who took to the streets to demand their constitutional rights, will remain forever in the history of humankind as one of the worst crimes against humanity.

Red army units' invasion of Baku resulted in death and injuring of hundreds of peaceful residents, who rebelled against the biased policy of the empire's criminal leadership overtly supporting Armenia's territorial claims against Azerbaijan, and treacherous stance of Azerbaijan's local authorities of that time.

Unlike them, the Azerbaijani people's great son Heydar Aliyev, who then lived in Moscow, despite his illness, came to Azerbaijan's permanent representative office - a day after the tragedy – and strongly condemned those who committed the January massacre, thereby once again demonstrating his courage and bravery, and his being the devoted son of his people.

That bloody action, incited by Armenians, however, failed to crush the people's will and aspiration to freedom.

The Azerbaijani people gained their independence and freedom for the price of their blood, and they will never give them away.

During some period after the soviet regime collapsed, and Azerbaijan regained its state independence, the country's leaders had been involved in a struggle for power, taking no steps to have the crime investigated and given a legal and political assessment.

Legal and political assessment to the January 20 tragedy was given, and the offenders were identified only in 1994, a year after national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev returned to power in the Republic.

The modern Azerbaijani state and its leadership are very sensitive about marking such tragic dates like March of 1918, January 20 of 1990 and Khojaly tragedy of 1992; and reconstruction and repair at the Alley of Martyrs ordered by Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev is yet another evidence of this.

Azerbaijan has been remembering the victims of the January 20 tragedy ever since.

The Administration of the President has prepared a plan of action to commemorate the 18th anniversary of the January tragedy.

In the morning on 20 January, President Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva arrived at the Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody tragedy.

Prayers were said for the shahids.

The President laid a wreath at the Eternal Fire monument.

A military orchestra played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

Attending the commemoration ceremony ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations functioning in Baku expressed their sympathies to President Ilham Aliyev.

Among those visiting the Alley of Martyrs were Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov, and Chief of the President's Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev, as well as deputies of the Speaker and the Prime Minister, and other officials.

**Nationwide commemoration of 19rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy
President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs
(20 January, 2009)**

The 20th of January, 1990 entered into the modern history of Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic days, and at the same time as a heroic page.

That terrible day elevated the country's brave sons and daughters, who died while defending their freedom, honor and dignity, to martyrdom.

Despite it has been 19 years since the soviet army's bloody invasion of Baku on 20 January, 1990, people in Azerbaijan continue to live with pain of that tragic night in their hearts, and express their hatred for those who committed that inhuman deed and for their servants in Azerbaijan.

The terror act committed by the soviet empire - led by disgraced Gorbachev, which had been declaring its commitment to the principles of humanism over the whole period of its existence - against hundreds of innocent people who took to the streets to demand their constitutional rights, will remain forever in the history of mankind as one of the worst crimes against humanity.

This resulted in death and injuring of hundreds of peaceful residents in the country, especially in Baku, who rebelled against the biased policy of the empire's criminal leadership overtly supporting Armenia's territorial claims against Azerbaijan, and treacherous stance of Azerbaijan's local authorities of that time.

Unlike them, the Azerbaijani people's great son Heydar Aliyev, who then lived in Moscow, despite his illness, came to Azerbaijan's permanent representative office - a day after the tragedy - and strongly condemned those who committed the January massacre, thereby once again demonstrating his courage and bravery, and his being the devoted son of his people.

That bloody action, incited by Armenians, however, failed to crush the Azerbaijani people's will and aspiration to freedom.

The Azerbaijani people gained their independence and freedom for the price of their blood, and they will never give them away.

During some period after the soviet regime collapsed and Azerbaijan regained its state independence, the country's leaders had been involved in a struggle for power, taking no steps to have the crime investigated and given a legal and political assessment.

It is national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev's returning to power in the Republic, that made it possible in 1994 to give legal and political assessment to the January 20 tragedy and identify the offenders.

The modern Azerbaijani state and its leadership are very sensitive about marking such tragic dates like March of 1918, January 20 of 1990 and Khojaly tragedy of 1992; and reconstruction and repair at the Alley of Martyrs ordered by Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev is yet another evidence of this.

Azerbaijan has been remembering the victims of the January 20 tragedy ever since.

The Administration of the President has prepared a plan of action to commemorate the 19th anniversary of the January tragedy.

In the morning of 20 January, President Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva arrived at the Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody tragedy.

The President laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame monument.

A military orchestra of the defense ministry played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

Attending the commemoration ceremony were state and government officials, religious leaders, ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations functioning in Baku.

Among those visiting the Alley of Martyrs were Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov, and deputies of the Premier and Speaker.

**Nationwide commemoration of 20rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy
President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs
(20 January, 2010)**

Today marks 20 years since the Black January events when the Soviet army invaded Azerbaijan`s capital, Baku, killing and injuring hundreds of innocent and defenseless people.

The 20th of January, 1990 entered into the modern history of Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic days, and at the same time as a heroic page.

The terror act committed by the Soviet empire against hundreds of innocent people who took to streets in protest against the biased policy of the empire`s criminal leadership, overtly supporting Armenia`s territorial claims against Azerbaijan, will remain forever in the history of mankind as one of the worst crimes against humanity.

That terrible day elevated the country`s brave sons and daughters, who died while defending their freedom, honor and dignity, to martyrdom.

Despite it has been 20 years since the Soviet Army`s bloody invasion of Baku, people in Azerbaijan continue to live with pain of that tragic night in their hearts, and express their hatred for those who committed that inhuman deed.

Every year on this day hundreds of thousands of people visit the Alley of Martyrs in Baku to pay tribute to Azerbaijan`s valiant sons and daughters.

The Black January was nothing but a state`s massacre of its people. It was a vast violation of the constitutions of the former USSR and the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic. By sending troops against peaceful people the Soviet Union roughly violated international legal norms, including the United Nations` Charter and the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

However, the then authorities of Azerbaijan failed to find courage for themselves to stand by their people even at such a difficult moment.

Unlike them, Azerbaijan`s great son Heydar Aliyev, who then lived in Moscow, came to Azerbaijan`s permanent representative office - a day after the tragedy - and strongly condemned those who committed the January massacre, thereby once again demonstrating his courage and bravery and his devotion to his people.

However, that bloody action, incited by Armenians, failed to crush the Azerbaijani people`s will and aspiration to freedom.

The Azerbaijani people gained their independence and freedom for the price of their blood, and they will never give them away.

It is national leader Heydar Aliyev`s returning to power in Azerbaijan, that made it possible in 1994 to give a legal and political assessment to the January 20 tragedy and identify the offenders.

* * *

The Administration of the President has prepared a plan of action to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the January tragedy.

On Wednesday morning, President Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva arrived at the Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody tragedy.

The President laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame monument as a military orchestra of the defense ministry played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

Attending the commemoration ceremony were state and government officials, religious leaders, ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations functioning in Baku.

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Prime Minister Artur Rasizadeh, Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov and head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev were also at the Alley of Martyrs.

**Azerbaijan`s President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs of January 20
(20 January, 2011)**

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva on Thursday morning arrived at the Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody January tragedy.

The President laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame monument as a military orchestra of the defense ministry played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

Attending the commemoration ceremony were state and government officials, religious leaders, ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations functioning in Baku.

Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov and head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev were also at the Alley of Martyrs.

**Nationwide commemoration of 22rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy
Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to fond memories of martyrs of January 20
(20 January, 2012)**

22 years elapse since the bloody 20 January events. On this day of the national mourning – the 20th January, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev paid tribute to the memory of martyrs.

The 20th of January 1990 left in the contemporary history of Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic days, but remembered also as the glorious day of our people. Twenty two years ago, during the night from January 19 to January 20, Soviet Army troupes launched wide scale military operations against large masses indignant over actions of the aggressive Armenia and favor of the former Soviet leadership for Armenians by pouring to the streets and squares of Baku in sign of a strong protest. Holding the freedom of their Motherland and people above all, patriot sons and daughters of Azerbaijan have sacrificed their lives on that awful night by becoming the martyrs of their own land.

In spite of 22 years that pass since bloodbath perpetrated by former Soviet military machine in Azerbaijan, our people remember constantly that appalling night, live with pain of that tragedy and deplores strongly all those that stood behind barbaric actions. Each year, on January 20, thousands of people visit the Alley of Martyrs and pay their tribute to fond memories of Azerbaijan's sons and daughters that sacrificed themselves for the sake of Motherland's freedom and sovereignty.

The tragedy of 20 January is seen as unprecedented aggression and massacre committed by the State against its own people. It was a rude violation of the former USSR and Azerbaijani Soviet Republic's Constitutions and its full disregarding. Having sent the troupes against civilians, USSR government has ignored UN Charter and international law norms and violated several dispositions of the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights of 1966. In the aftermath of the tragedy, the then slave minded authorities which lacked courage to join their own people at that time and still followed their Soviet patrons. Differently from them, living in Moscow at that time, our national leader Heydar Aliyev came to the permanent representation of Azerbaijan on the next day since tragedy by putting his life in danger and made statement by deploring strongly those who perpetrated the bloody January massacre and brought the message to the international community about this awful event faced by our people. Thus, our great leader demonstrated once again his courage, bravery and commitment to own people.

However, this bloodshed could not crush will of the Azerbaijani people and subdue its aspirations for freedom. Though it costed the lives, our people have rejoiced its dreams of freedom and independence.

Following the political comeback of national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev, the political-legal assessment was given to the event of 20 January and the names of perpetrators of this crime were announced to the public.

Each year, the Azerbaijani people pay deep respect to the memories of victims of the 20 January tragedy.

X X X

In the morning of January 20, President Ilham Aliyev came to the Alley of Martyrs to pay tribute to fond memories of the dead in the tragedy of January 20.

President Ilham Aliyev laid the wreath to the Monument of Eternal Flame.

Azerbaijani anthem was performed by the Special Exemplary Military Orchestra of the Ministry of Defense.

X X X

State and government officials, heads of religious communities, ambassadors of foreign countries as well as representatives of international organizations joined the ceremony of paying tribute to our martyrs.

X X X

Prime Minister Artur Rasi-zade, Chairman of Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov and Head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev have participated at this event.

<http://en.president.az/articles/4109>

**Nationwide commemoration of 23rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy
President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs
(20 January, 2013)**

Baku, January 20 (AzerTAc). Today marks 23 years since the Black January events when the Soviet army invaded Azerbaijan`s capital, Baku, killing and injuring hundreds of innocent and defenseless people.

The 20th of January, 1990 entered into the modern history of Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic days, and at the same time as a heroic page.

The terror act committed by the Soviet empire against of innocent people who took to streets in protest against the biased policy of the empire`s criminal leadership, overtly supporting Armenia`s territorial claims against Azerbaijan, will remain forever in the history of mankind as one of the worst crimes against humanity.

That terrible day elevated the country`s brave sons and daughters, who died while defending their freedom, honor and dignity, to martyrdom.

Despite it has been 23 years since the Soviet Army`s bloody invasion of Baku, people in Azerbaijan continue to live with pain of that tragic night in their hearts, and express their hatred for those who committed that inhuman deed.

Every year on this day hundreds of thousands of people visit the Alley of Martyrs in Baku to pay tribute to Azerbaijan`s valiant sons and daughters.

The Black January was nothing but a state`s massacre of its people. It was a vast violation of the constitutions of the former USSR and the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic. By sending troops against peaceful people the Soviet Union – led by Mikhail Gorbachev – roughly violated international legal norms, including the United Nations` Charter and the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

However, the then authorities of Azerbaijan failed to find courage for themselves to stand by their people even at such a difficult moment.

Unlike them, Azerbaijan`s great son Heydar Aliyev, who then lived in Moscow, came to Azerbaijan`s permanent representative office - a day after the tragedy – and strongly condemned those who committed the January massacre, thereby once again demonstrating his courage and bravery and his devotion to his people.

However, that bloody action, incited by Armenians, failed to crush the Azerbaijani people`s will and aspiration to freedom.

The Azerbaijani people gained their independence and freedom for the price of their blood, and they will never give them away.

It is national leader Heydar Aliyev`s returning to power in Azerbaijan, that made it possible in 1994 to give a legal and political assessment to the January 20 tragedy and identify the offenders.

* * *

The Administration of the President has prepared a plan of action to commemorate the 23th anniversary of the January tragedy.

On Sunday morning President Ilham Aliyev visited the Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody tragedy.

The President laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame monument as a military orchestra of the defense ministry played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

Attending the commemoration ceremony were state and government officials, religious leaders, ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations functioning in Baku.

* * *

Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov and head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev were among the participants of the commemorative ceremony.

**Nationwide commemoration of 24th anniversary of Bloody January tragedy
President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs (20 January, 2014)**

Today marks 24 years since the Black January events when the Soviet army invaded Azerbaijan`s capital, Baku, killing and injuring hundreds of innocent and defenseless people.

The 20th of January, 1990 entered into the modern history of Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic days, and at the same time as a heroic page.

The terror act committed by the Soviet empire against innocent people who took to streets in protest against the biased policy of the empire`s criminal leadership, overtly supporting Armenia`s territorial claims against Azerbaijan, will forever remain in the history of mankind as one of the worst crimes against humanity.

That terrible day elevated the country`s brave sons and daughters, who died while defending their freedom, honor and dignity, to martyrdom.

Despite it has been 24 years since the Soviet Army`s bloody invasion of Baku, people in Azerbaijan continue to live with pain of that tragic night in their hearts, and express their hatred for those who committed that inhuman deed.

Every year on this day hundreds of thousands of people visit the Alley of Martyrs in Baku to pay tribute to Azerbaijan`s valiant sons and daughters.

The Black January was nothing but a state`s massacre of its people. It was a vast violation of the constitutions of the former USSR and the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic. By sending troops against peaceful people the Soviet Union roughly violated international legal norms, including the United Nations` Charter and the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

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However, that bloody action, incited by Armenians, failed to crush the Azerbaijani people`s will and aspiration to freedom.

The Azerbaijani people gained their independence and freedom for the price of their blood, and they will never give them away.

It is national leader Heydar Aliyev`s returning to power in Azerbaijan, that made it possible in 1994 to give a legal and political assessment to the January 20 tragedy and identify the offenders.

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On Monday morning President Ilham Aliyev visited the Alley of Martyrs to commemorate the victims of the bloody tragedy.

The President laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame monument as a military orchestra of the Defense Ministry played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

X X X

Attending the commemoration ceremony were state and government officials, religious leaders, ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations functioning in Baku.

X X X

Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov and head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev were among the participants of the commemorative ceremony.

President Ilham Aliyev paid tribute to 20 January martyrs (20 January, 2015)

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev paid tribute to the victims of the bloody January tragedy on the National Mourning Day.

Twenty-five years have passed since bloody January. 20 January 1990 went down in the history of modern Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic and, at the same time, heroic dates for our people. This date has become a symbol of the struggle for national independence, freedom and unshakeable will. The people of Azerbaijan, subjected to punitive measures of the armed-to-the-teeth Soviet army, did not lose their aspiration to freedom. On the contrary, their voice grew even stronger.

Twenty-five years ago, on that horrific night, the courageous sons and daughters of Azerbaijan for whom the freedom, honor and dignity of their native country and people were above anything else, sacrificed their lives and became martyrs. Although many years have passed since Soviet troops perpetrated this bloody massacre in Azerbaijan, our people have not forgotten the pain of those horrendous days and are expressing their contempt for the then leaders of the Soviet empire and their servants in Azerbaijan for unleashing suffering on their own citizens.

The deployment of a large military contingent against large masses of people protesting at the biased and pro-Armenian policies of the USSR leadership, its overt support for Armenia's territorial claims for historically Azerbaijani lands and the treacherous stance of the then leaders of the republic led to an unseen tragedy in Azerbaijan, especially in Baku, and to the killing of many innocent people. Despite this, instead of standing by their people, the incompetent and slave-like leaders of Azerbaijan continued to hold on to Soviet leadership.

In contrast to them, the brilliant son of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev, who lived in Moscow at the time, put his own life at risk by going to Azerbaijan's permanent representative office on the day following the tragedy, made a harshly-worded statement condemning the perpetrators of the Bloody January events and informed the world of the atrocities unleashed on our people. By doing so, our great leader demonstrated his courage, bravery and dedication to his people again.

However, this Armenian-instigated crime could not break the will of the Azerbaijani people or put out their love of freedom. Our people managed to fulfill their dream of freedom and independence, albeit at such a high cost, and will never let go of this achievement.

The massacre perpetrated by the Soviet military machine in Azerbaijan was an act of unseen aggression and genocide of citizens by their own state, a flagrant breach of the Constitutions of the former USSR and the Azerbaijan SSR. By sending troops to crush the civilian population on that night, the USSR government flouted the UN Charter, international law and a number of clauses of the International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights of which the USSR had been a member.

After nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev returned to power in Azerbaijan, a political and legal assessment of the 20 January events was given in 1994 and the names of those guilty of the crime were made public. Since then 20 January has been commemorated as National Mourning Day.

Every year on this date, the people of Azerbaijan pay tribute to the 20 January martyrs.

X X X

On the morning of 20 January, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev visited the Alley of Martyrs to honor the cherished memory of the victims of the bloody January tragedy.

President Ilham Aliyev laid a wreath at the "Eternal Flame" memorial.

The Defense Ministry's military orchestra played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

X X X

Participants in the commemorative ceremony included state and government officials, heads of religious communities in the country, ambassadors of foreign countries to Azerbaijan, and representatives of international organizations.

X X X

The ceremony at the Alley of Martyrs was attended by Prime Minister Artur Rasizade and Parliament Speaker Ogtay Asadov.

**President Ilham Aliyev paid tribute to 20 January martyrs
(20 January, 2016)**

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva have visited the Alley of Martyrs to pay tribute to the victims of the Bloody January tragedy on the National Mourning Day.

Twenty-six years have passed since bloody January. 20 January 1990 went down in the history of modern Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic and, at the same time, heroic dates for our people. This date has become a symbol of the struggle for national independence, freedom and unshakeable will. The people of Azerbaijan, subjected to punitive measures of the armed-to-the-teeth Soviet army, did not lose their aspiration to freedom. On the contrary, their voice grew even stronger.

Twenty-six years ago, on that horrific night, the courageous sons and daughters of Azerbaijan for whom the freedom, honor and dignity of their native country and people were above anything else, sacrificed their lives and became martyrs. Although many years have passed since Soviet troops perpetrated this bloody massacre in Azerbaijan, our people have not forgotten the pain of those horrendous days and are expressing their contempt for the then leaders of the Soviet empire and their servants in Azerbaijan for unleashing suffering on their own citizens.

The deployment of a large military contingent against large masses of people protesting at the biased and pro-Armenian policies of the USSR leadership, its overt support for Armenia's territorial claims for historically Azerbaijani lands and the treacherous stance of the then leaders of the republic led to an unseen tragedy in Azerbaijan, especially in Baku, and to the killing of many innocent people. Despite this, instead of standing by their people, the incompetent and slave-like leaders of Azerbaijan continued to hold on to Soviet leadership.

In contrast to them, the brilliant son of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev, who lived in Moscow at the time, put his own life at risk by going to Azerbaijan's permanent representative office on the day following the tragedy, and made a harshly-worded statement condemning the perpetrators of the Bloody January events and informed the world of the atrocities unleashed on our people. By doing so, our great leader demonstrated his courage, bravery and dedication to his people again.

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Every year on this date, the people of Azerbaijan pay tribute to the 20 January martyrs.

X X X

The head of state laid a wreath at the "Eternal Flame" memorial.

The Defense Ministry's military orchestra played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

X X X

Participants in the commemorative ceremony included state and government officials, heads of religious communities, ambassadors of foreign countries to Azerbaijan, and representatives of international organizations.

X X X

The ceremony at the Alley of Martyrs was attended by Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, Parliament Speaker Ogtay Asadov and head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev.

**President Ilham Aliyev paid tribute to 20 January martyrs
(20 January, 2017)**

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has paid tribute to the victims of the bloody January tragedy on the National Mourning Day.

Twenty-seven years have passed since bloody January. 20 January 1990 went down in the history of modern Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic and, at the same time, heroic dates for our people. This date has become a symbol of the struggle for national independence, freedom and unshakeable will. The people of Azerbaijan, subjected to punitive measures of the armed-to-the-teeth Soviet army, did not lose their aspiration to freedom. On the contrary, their voice grew even stronger.

Twenty-seven years ago, on that horrific night, the courageous sons and daughters of Azerbaijan for whom the freedom, honor and dignity of their native country and people were above anything else, sacrificed their lives and became martyrs. Although many years have passed since Soviet troops perpetrated this bloody massacre in Azerbaijan, our people have not forgotten the pain of those horrendous days and are expressing their contempt for the then leaders of the Soviet empire and their servants in Azerbaijan for unleashing suffering on their own citizens.

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Every year on this date, the people of Azerbaijan pay tribute to 20 January martyrs.

X X X

On the morning of 20 January, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev visited the Alley of Martyrs to honor the cherished memory of the victims of the bloody January tragedy.

President Ilham Aliyev laid a wreath at the "Eternal Flame" memorial.

The Defense Ministry's military orchestra played the national anthem of Azerbaijan.

X X X

Participants in the commemorative ceremony included state and government officials, heads of religious communities, ambassadors of foreign countries to Azerbaijan, and representatives of international organizations.

X X X

The ceremony at the Alley of Martyrs was attended by Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, Parliament Speaker Ogtay Asadov and head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev.