Glorious Victory

The triumph of the unity of the president, the people and the army

The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict had gone down in the history of the 20th century as one of the most tragic conflicts, as its implications seriously affected the fates of millions of Azerbaijanis.

The conflict, which began with Armenia's overt territorial claims to Azerbaijan's historical lands, provocations on ethnic grounds and acts of terror in the late 1980s, resulted in military aggression against Azerbaijan.

On September 2, 1991 the Armenian separatists declared the creation of the so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" by uniting the territories settled by Armenians of the Shaumyan (village) district to the existing the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) of the Azerbaijan SSR. In response, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan repealed the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh on November 23, 1991.

During the military campaign, the Armenian armed forces brutally killed Azerbaijanis in the occupied districts and cities without making any distinction between servicemen and the civilian population. A ceasefire agreement was reached on May 12, 1994. Up to that moment, as a result of Armenia's military aggression, 20 percent of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including Khankendi city, Khojaly, Shusha, Lachin, Khojavand, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Gubadli, Zangilan districts, as well as 13 villages of Tartar district, 7 villages of Gazakh district and 1 village of Sadarak district of Nakhchivan were occupied by the Armenian army.

For almost 30 years, Azerbaijan tried to resolve the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict through negotiations with Armenia, which had occupied 20 percent of its territory. The talks yielded no results. On the contrary, it was clear that the Armenian side was simply trying to gain time, to consolidate the status quo, to perpetuate it. Azerbaijan could not and did not come to terms with the occupation.

Over the said period, due to his foresight and wisdom, national leader Heydar Aliyev did tremendous work for the comprehensive development of Azerbaijan and for the solidifying its political and economic independence.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, who successfully continues this path, stated the importance of economic strength, first of all, for the restoration of the country's

territorial integrity. As a result of the accurate and thought-out policies, Azerbaijan began to gain strength, secured its economic independence and became a modern state economically independent of anyone, any country or international financial institution. He created a unique model of development in the world. The country's economic growth led to a turnaround in army building. The Azerbaijani Army's arsenal was replenished with advanced weapons and military equipment. The knowledge and skills of Azerbaijani servicemen were enhanced and significant steps were taken to improve their social protection and professional environment. Azerbaijan's defense industry was developed and most of the army's domestic needs were met through domestic production. Azerbaijan began to produce more than 1,000 types of military products and became an exporter of the most modern weapons.

Most importantly, over the past 30 years the people of Azerbaijan never put up with the occupation and showed unwavering determination in the restoration of their territorial integrity. Over the said period, Azerbaijan has significantly strengthened its standing as a reliable partner, enhanced the country's reputation and turned its determination into the crucial factor in the region through the implementation of multifaceted, principled and authentic foreign policy, active engagement with international organizations and foreign countries and forging close relations, as well as implementation of regional energy and communication projects. All these factors fully conditioned the absolute victory of Azerbaijan and made it only a matter of time.

By torpedoing the format and subject matter of the negotiations, by creating a semblance of negotiations, by not implementing the UN Security Council resolutions and decisions, Armenia explicitly showed that it was not in favor of peace.

Ineffective negotiations and unproductive mediation by the OSCE Minsk Group and non-implementation of sanctions against the aggressor tempted Armenia, even the Armenian minister of defense threatened Azerbaijan with the words "a new war for new lands". The statement of the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Khankendi on August 5, 2019 that "Karabakh is a part of Armenia and full stop" became one of the most obvious admissions of Armenia's policy of aggression.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev reacted harshly to Pashinyan's statement during his speech at the 16th annual meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club on October 3, 2019 saying that "Karabakh is Azerbaijan and an exclamation mark."

President Ilham Aliyev clearly describes this period: “Indeed, they refer to Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state. They then published new maps and began to attribute all the adjacent districts to Nagorno-Karabakh. Our towns and villages were renamed, and finally we were threatened with a new war for new territories.”

In July, 2020 Armenia committed another military provocation in the direction of Tovuz on the state border with Azerbaijan. The purpose of the provocation was to create a new source of tension in the region, to put the issue of occupation of Azerbaijani territories on the backburner, to involve third countries in the conflict and to cause damage to Azerbaijan’s strategic infrastructure. The Azerbaijani Army responded with a crushing blow to the enemy.

In August, 2020 Armenia resorted to yet another military provocation by sending a sabotage group to Azerbaijan to commit acts of terror. However, the Azerbaijani Army foiled this subversive plan, too.

Speaking at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly on September 24, 2020 President Ilham Aliyev warned the international community that Armenia was preparing for a new war against Azerbaijan and stated that the responsibility for the provocations and the escalation of tensions lies squarely with the military-political leadership of Armenia.

On September 27, 2020 a counter-offensive was launched in response to Armenia’s yet another large-scale military attack on Azerbaijani Army positions and civilian settlements. The counter-offensive later became known as Operation Iron Fist that led to the Patriotic War. In his first address to the people during the Patriotic War on September 27, 2020 the President of Azerbaijan called on the nation to achieve the resolute victory. “We are on the right path. Ours is the cause of justice. We will win! Karabakh is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!”

During the 44-day Patriotic War, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev regularly addressed the people. Those addresses brought the people of Azerbaijan even closer together, united them like a fist and had a tremendous impact on the course and outcomes of the war.

The Azerbaijani army began to realize counter-offensive operations from three directions of the line of contact in the occupied territories - Aghdam-Terter, Murovdagh and Fuzuli-Jabrayil. In the first half of the first day of the war, the defense lines of the Armenian armed forces were broken from some directions. As a result, Garakhanbeyli, Garvand, village Horadiz, Yukhari

Abdurrahmanli villages of Fuzuli region, Boyuk Marjanli and Nuzgar villages of Jabrayil district and Murov peak were liberated from Armenian occupation. With the liberation of the Murov peak, the Aghdara-Basarkecher highway was taken under the Azerbaijani Army's control.

On October 2, combat operations continued in different directions of the front. In the direction of Aghdara, Azerbaijani troops liberated the important heights around Sugovushan (Madagiz) settlement and took control of it. In the Jabrayil-Fuzuli direction, Azerbaijani troops managed to move forward and broke the resistance of the Armenian troops, forcing them to retreat.

As the Armenian military forces were not capable of resisting the forces of the Azerbaijani Army in an open battle, they resorted to bombing civilian objects and residential areas. Even the territory of Fuzuli district and the occupied villages of Aghdam and Tartar districts were subjected to artillery fire from the territory of Armenia. On October 4, the city of Ganja, which is very far from the front line, was also hit by heavy rocket-artillery fire by the Armenian military forces. On October 4, 2020 the Azerbaijani Army liberated Jabrayil city and 9 settlements around it from occupation. Jabrayil was the first district to be freed from occupation during the Patriotic War.

In his second address to the nation on October 4, 2020 President Ilham Aliyev showed the enemy its place: "Now we have shown who is who… We are carrying out our salvation mission and we will do it!"

In his third address to the nation on October 9, 2020 the President of Azerbaijan declared that the status quo no longer existed and the line of contact had been smashed. "I have changed the status quo. I have changed it! Right there, on the battlefield. There is no status quo any more. There is no line of contact, it doesn't exist. We have broken through it. They had been building this line of contact for 30 years. No-one can withstand the Azerbaijani soldiers."

On October 10, 2020 Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a ceasefire for humanitarian purposes. The breakthrough came after talks between the Russian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in Moscow and the ceasefire starts at 12:00 pm on October 10. The main purpose of the armistice is to exchange of hostages and bodies of those killed in the clashes through the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Despite the humanitarian ceasefire, armed forces of Armenia continued to target civilian property and other civilian infrastructure in densely populated residential areas.

October 11, 2020 at about 2:00 am Armenian Armed Forces fired missiles at multi-apartment residential buildings in the central part of Ganja, the second largest city of Azerbaijan, located outside the frontline zone. According to preliminary conclusion, 10 civilians, including 3 women died. 42 civilians, including 13 women, 15 children were seriously wounded. More than 10 apartments and more than 100 different types of private property were either destroyed or seriously damaged.

On October 14, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev made Twitter post that the Azerbaijani Army liberated 8 villages of Fuzuli and Khojavand regions from occupation. In his next post on October 15, he reported that 6 villages of Jabrayil, Fuzuli and Khojavand districts were cleared of Armenian military forces by the successful attacks of the Azerbaijani Army.

On October 17, Azerbaijani Army liberated the city of Fuzuli and seven surrounding villages from Armenian occupation.

However, 13 people were killed and 48 injured as a result of the Armenian armed forces firing rockets at the central part of Ganja city on October 17 at about 01:00 am, damage caused to residential buildings and civil infrastructure facilities. Generally, during the missile and artillery attacks carried out by Armenian Armed Forces on Ganja city situated at least 100 km away from war zone, 25 people were killed including 10 women, and 6 children and 142 people were wounded including 57 women and 32 children.

The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia agreed on a temporary humanitarian ceasefire on October 18. However, the ceasefire was still violated by Armenia.

On October 18, the Azerbaijani flag was raised in the center of liberated from the occupation Fuzuli city.

During the day of October 19 and on the night of October 20, crushing blows were inflicted on the enemy who tried to resist in the Fuzuli-Hadrut-Jabrayil and Gubadli-Zangilan directions of the front.

On October 20, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev conveyed the results of the successful battles of the Azerbaijani Army. According to him, the Azerbaijani Army liberated 6 villages of Fuzuli, 7 villages of Jabrayil, 5 villages of Khojavand, 6 villages of Zangilan districts and Zangilan city.

On October 22, 3 cities, 3 settlements and 133 villages, as well as a number of strategic heights in the direction of Aghdara and Murov were liberated from Armenian occupation.

On October 23, Zilanli, Kurd Mahrizli, Mughanli and Alagurshag villages of Gubadli district were liberated from enemy occupation. Dolanlar and Bunyadli villages of Khojavend district, Dagh Tumas, Nusus, Khalafli, Minbashili, Veysalli villages of Jabrayil district, Vanadli and Mirzahasanli villages of Zangilan district were liberated from occupation at the same day. The glorious victories of the Azerbaijani army were first made on the Twitter account of Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev.

Starting from the night of October 25, Azerbaijani army continued the successful battles in the directions of Aghdara, Khojavand, Fuzuli, Hadrut, Gubadli and Lachin and expanded the territories taken under control. As a result of a heavy blow to the units of the Armenian armed forces in the directions of Aghdara and Khojavend, the enemy retreated with a large number of losses.

On October 26, with the mediation of the United States of America, an agreement was reached on a humanitarian ceasefire on the front line from 08:00 in the morning. According to the instructions of Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, the ceasefire regime was observed in all areas along the front. However, units of the Armenian armed forces a few minutes after the new humanitarian ceasefire regime came into force, the positions of the Azerbaijani units and also settlements located in the direction of Tartar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Lachin and Gubadli and Tovuz, Gadabey and Dashkasan districts from the territory of Armenia were subjected to fire from various types of small arms, mortars and cannons by the Armenian armed forces.

Gubadli city and 17 settlements of Gubadli district were liberated from occupation. On October 26, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev addressed the nation in this regard.

On October 27-28, Goranboy, Tartar and Barda regions were subjected to rocket attacks again. Armenia’s missile attack has killed 4 civilians and wounded 10 ones in Azerbaijan’s district of Barda.

On October 28-30, 22 more villages of Azerbaijan were liberated from Armenian occupation.

From October 29, the first units of the Azerbaijani Army began to gather around Shusha. On November 5-6 heroic Azerbaijani fighters entered Shusha, crossing mountains, valleys, and steep rocks, and engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy in and around the city.

On November 7, Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev announced on his Twitter account that 16 more villages belonging to Zangilan, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Khojaly, Gubadli and Khojavend regions were cleared of Armenian forces.

November 8, 2020 - the liberation day of Shusha city from Armenian bandits is inscribed in the history of Azerbaijan as Victory Day in golden letters.

President Ilham Aliyev on that day made address to the nation from the Alley of Martyrs and announced the liberation of Shusha to the people of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis all over the world. “I have also visited the grave of Great Leader Heydar Aliyev today and paid a tribute of respect to him. I said in my heart that I was a fortunate person to have fulfilled a father’s will. We have liberated Shusha! This is a great victory! The souls of our martyrs and the Great Leader are rejoicing today! May you rejoice Azerbaijan! May you rejoice Azerbaijanis of the world! Dear Shusha, you are free! Dear Shusha, we have returned! Dear Shusha, we will revive you!”

One day after the liberation of Shusha 71 villages, 1 settlement, 8 strategic heights were liberated in a day.

On November 10, 2020, the act of Armenia’s capitulation, the **“Statement of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation”**, was signed. On the same day Ilham Aliyev announced: “I am delighted to have signed this historic document. I am happy that we are returning to our homeland, to our native Karabakh, Shusha - Karabakh’s crown jewel, and we will always live in these lands!”

As a result of a continuation of the military victory in the political arena, within 20 days after the 44-day war, three districts were returned to Azerbaijan – Aghdam on November 20, Kalbajar on November 25 and Lachin on December 1, 2020. On August 26, 2022 the city of Lachin, the villages of Zabukh and Sus, which were under the control of the Russian peacekeeping contingent and were illegally settled by Armenians, were handed over to Azerbaijan.

In the Second Karabakh - Patriotic War, Azerbaijan won a brilliant victory and defeated fascist Armenia, implemented the unimplemented resolutions of the UN itself and put an end to

the occupation. Thus, Azerbaijan's lands that were gradually occupied by Armenian military units over the course of four years and remained under occupation for about 30 years were liberated in a matter of 44 days regardless of strong military fortifications, obstacles and lines of defense. The territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been restored and the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict has been consigned to history.

The Armenian myth portrayed to the world as "victorious Armenian nation" and "invincible Armenian army" for more than 30 years was destroyed like a soap bubble in 44 days. On December 23, 2020 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said in his visit to Gubadli region: "When I visit these liberated territories and see the atrocities committed by the Armenians, I get further convinced what a great service we have done to ourselves and our entire region. We have caved in the head of Armenian fascism. It is the Armenian fascism that has brought our lands to this plight. We have broken the back of the fascist Armenian state, the terrorist state. We brought it to its knees, so they must draw the right conclusions."

Unable to withstand the strong counterattack of the Azerbaijani Army, the enemy targeted innocent civilians and committed war crimes in order to create a climate of fear among civilians and undermine the will of Azerbaijani people. During the 44-day war, about 100 civilians were killed and more than 400 civilians were injured as a result of the Armenian army's heavy artillery and rocket fire on settlements of Azerbaijan. Since the end of the war in 2020, 361 of our citizens, mostly civilians, have fallen victim to mine explosion, resulting in 68 deaths and 293 severe injuries. Overall, since the beginning of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan, over 3400 of our citizens have suffered from mines, including 358 children and 38 women.

The cost of Armenia's military equipment, destroyed or taken as trophies by the armed forces of Azerbaijan during the Second Karabakh War amounts to 3.8 billion US dollars.

A part of the equipment taken as booty from the Armenian army was displayed at the military parade held in Baku on December 10, 2020 with the participation of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey. Part of the equipment of the "Victorious Armenian Army" is being showcased in the Military Trophy Park opened in April, 2021 in Baku.

The Patriotic War has also earned the title of a "War of the 21st Century" in the world's military science. In the face of the complex fortifications built by the enemy in difficult terrain for decades, the victorious Azerbaijani Army demonstrated true professionalism, skill, invincibility

and, most importantly, proved to the world that the army is ready for any sacrifice for the sake of eternal love for the Motherland.

The people and the state of Azerbaijan cherish the bright memory of their heroic sons and daughters who died for the Motherland, always remember them with special respect, appreciate the work of veterans and are proud of them. Thousands of Azerbaijani soldiers and officers have been awarded the country's highest orders and medals for their bravery in liberating Azerbaijani land from occupation. Families of martyrs, veterans and participants of the Patriotic War are provided with apartments and cars by the state.

The Patriotic War put an end to the longing of the Azerbaijani people for Karabakh and paved the way for the restoration and reconstruction work in the liberated territories in accordance with the latest standards.

The Shusha Declaration on Allied Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey signed in Shusha on June 15, 2021 also states that the opening of the Zangazur corridor will signal the start of a new phase in the life of the region.

A historic document signed on July 7, 2021 the **"Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on a new division of economic regions in the Republic of Azerbaijan"**, became one of the primary outcomes of the Patriotic War. Located in the eastern part of the Zangazur plateau, surrounded by the Zangazur mountain range and covering a vast area from Lachin and Kalbadjar to Nakhchivan, situated on the border with Armenia, a region that was long part of the Zangazur district established in the same geographical area in 1861, has become a part of a single economic zone – the East Zangazur Economic Region, together with Zangilan, Gubadli, Jabrayil, Lachin and Kalbadjar districts, with which it has historically had economic, historical and cultural ties. The ancient Karabakh region with its unique historical and cultural heritage and inimitable nature has become – the Karabakh Economic Region that includes Aghdam, Shusha, Fuzuli, Tartar, Khojavand, Khojaly districts and Khankendi city, as well as Aghjabadi and Barda districts.

Major construction and restoration works are being carried out in all territories that have already been liberated from occupation. Roads and international airports are built, areas are cleared of mines, infrastructure projects are implemented. On July 19, 2022 the government of Azerbaijan started resettlement of its citizens to liberated Aghali village of the Zangilan region.

The master plans of all liberated Azerbaijani cities have already been prepared according to an order “I State Program on the Great Return to the liberated territories of Azerbaijan” approved by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated November 16, 2022.

On May 28, 2023, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva have visited the Lachin district, where they met with families who returned to the city of Lachin.

The return of former IDPs to their home Fuzuli city started on August 18, 2023.

On July 31, 2023, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev signed an order “On Establishment of City Days in the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan liberated from occupation”. According to the document, every year October 4 will be celebrated as Jabrayil City Day, October 17 as Fuzuli City Day, October 20 as Zangilan City Day, October 25 as Gubadli City Day, November 8 as Shusha City Day, November 20 as Aghdam City Day, November 25 as Kalbajar City Day.

On September 19, 2023, the counter-terror measures were carried out on the territories under the temporary control of the Russian peacekeeping contingent located in the Karabakh region as a result of terrorist acts carried out by reconnaissance and sabotage groups of the Armenian armed forces and in response to the deaths of 4 policemen and civilians on the Azerbaijani side on September 18. The counter-terror measures were limited and proportionate to threat posed to sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, as well as safety and well-being of our citizens. The counter-terror measures exclusively aimed at neutralizing legitimate military targets within sovereign territory of Azerbaijan. As a result of the successful completion of the counter-terrorist measures in approximately 24 hours, Azerbaijan restored its sovereignty. The process of reintegration of the Armenian population permanently residing in the Karabakh region and having assumed Azerbaijani citizenship has begun.

In April 2024, the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia made a joint decision on the early withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from the Karabakh region.

On April 19, 2024, at the 8th meeting of the State Commission on the Delimitation of the State Border between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia and the Commission on the Matters of Delimitation of the State Border and Border Security between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan, an agreement was reached on the return of

4 villages of the Gazakh district to Azerbaijan. At the initial stage of the delimitation process, the sides previously agreed on individual sections of the border line stretching directly between the settlements of Baghanis (Armenia) - Baghanis Ayrim (Azerbaijan), Voskepar (Armenia) - Ashaghi Askipara (Azerbaijan), Kirants (Armenia) - Kheyrimli (Azerbaijan) and Berkaber (Armenia) - Gizilhajili (Azerbaijan) to bring them into line with the legally valid inter-republican border that existed within the Soviet Union at the moment of its collapse. It has been decided that the description of these sections of the borderline will be drawn up taking into account the clarification of coordinates based on geodetic measurements on the ground, which will be documented in the appropriate protocol description, which must be agreed upon and signed by the sides till May 15, 2024.

As a result of the successful completion of the military operations launched by the victorious Azerbaijani army for the integrity of our territory in September 2020, our glorious flag flies in all corners of Azerbaijan.