

STATEMENT
Of the leaders of the religious confessions of Azerbaijan

In the name of the Supreme Creator!

We celebrate the first anniversary of September 27, 2020, forever inscribed in the history of the Azerbaijani people. Not only for us, but for all mankind, it will forever remain in memory as the triumph day of Truth and Justice, as a starting point on the path of the Great Victory. Our people will always commemorate this Day as a chronicle of martyrdom and heroism in the name of the Motherland!

It is a state of our pride that the author and commander of this Victory is the great son of the Azerbaijani people, His Excellency the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, whose name will remain in our history as the Liberator of Karabakh. His resoluteness of Leader, ultimate policy, bravery and courage shown during the Patriotic War touched the very bottoms of the hearts of soldiers, people, all citizens regardless of their religious or ethnic identity. The world community has witnessed the power of the political leadership of Azerbaijan, the unshakable unity of the people and the government of the country. The ancient Azerbaijani city of Shusha was heroically liberated from the occupation and returned to its true owners. The Shusha Declaration, a document of historical importance, signed by the President of Azerbaijan, His Excellency Ilham Aliyev and the President of the fraternal Turkish Republic, His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan, created a new geopolitical situation in our region.

Today we look forward into the future of the Azerbaijani state with great confidence and hope. The main source of this enthusiasm is the principled and decisive position of President Ilham Aliyev, as well as the worthy role of the President's ally, prominent public and political figure, First Vice President Mehriban Aliyeva in carrying out large-scale construction works in the country and implementing socio-economic programs aimed at increasing welfare of the people. The noble concern of Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva for the families of martyrs and veterans, for the wounded soldiers, the material and moral support provided to them, as well as personal supervision over the implementation of social aid programs are highly valued by citizens, and are perceived by our believers with all blessings.

The world community is well aware that the reasons that led to the events of September 27 are extremely serious and undeniable. For about 30 years, Armenia kept under occupation 20 percent of the territory of our country. The occupation was accompanied by war crimes and crimes against humanity. As a result of the ethnic cleansing carried out by Armenia, more than a million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons. Armenia, which did not comply with the UN Security Council resolutions and was inspired by its impunity, chose the path of continuing the occupation and deliberately thwarted the negotiation

process. In July 2020, Armenia committed a military provocation on the state border with Azerbaijan.

As a result of artillery shelling of the Tovuz region of Azerbaijan, 13 people, among them military personnel and civilians were killed, then in August, the Armenian sabotage group crossed the contact line and tried to commit terrorist acts against Azerbaijani military personnel and civilians, but this attempt was successfully prevented. In response to a large-scale attack by Armenia on Azerbaijani military positions and civilians, on September 27, Azerbaijan, using its right to self-defense enshrined in the UN Charter, launched within its territorial borders a counteroffensive against Armenia.

During 44 days of the war, the armed forces of Armenia subjected to intensive shelling our districts and cities, located in the front-line zone, including Agdam, Agjabadi, Beylagan, Dashkasan, Fizuli, Goranboy and Tartar. The Armenian armed forces, which destroyed Islamic and Christian temples in the occupied territories, in violation of the laws of war, international law and the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention, used the prohibited weapons and bombs and fired cities located at far distance from the front-line zone, as Ganja, Barda, Mingachevir, Gabala, Siyazan, Khizi and others. As a result, hundreds of innocent people were killed, including children, women and the elderly, civilian targets were damaged. Even the capital city of Baku became another target of Armenian missile attacks. Today, civilians and military personnel continue to be killed and injured in minefields established during the period of occupation.

The war, which began on September 27 and lasted 44 days, went down in history as the defeat of Armenia and the glorious victory of the Azerbaijani army. Azerbaijan ensured on its own the implementation of UN resolutions, resolving a 30-year-old conflict and restoring its territorial integrity and historical justice by military-political means.

For the sake of realizing the cherished dream of the liberation of Karabakh, in the name of the Almighty, in the name of freedom of the Motherland and the people, our sons sacrificed their lives and entrusted to the Azerbaijani people the Victory won at the price of their blood. Relying on the tolerance and multicultural values traditionally existing in Azerbaijan, our compatriots rallied during the Patriotic War even more closely around the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and demonstrated their loyalty to the Motherland. Hundreds of heroes such as Polad Hashimov, Mubariz Ibrahimov, Albert Agarunov, Denis Pronin, Yuri Kovalev, Ruslan Polovinko, Sergei Senyushkin and others rose to the top of martyrdom for the sake of their homeland Azerbaijan. The memory of them will forever remain in our hearts. We pray for the fallen for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country that the Almighty will rest their souls in peace, and for the healing of all the wounded.

We express our gratitude to the fraternal and friendly countries, religious centers and international organizations for their support in such a difficult and

crucial period of our history. At the same time, we regretfully note that those forces that tried for many years to hide the crimes committed by the Armenian state against the Azerbaijani people, and vandalism against our cultural and spiritual heritage, are still trying to justify Armenian terrorism and ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis, applying double standards. We call on Armenia again to abandon the policy of aggression, revanchism, nationalism and separatism. We call on the Armenian Church to abandon provocative calls for vengeful war and to strive for peace - the path most corresponding to the sacred values sent down by the Great Creator.

As religious leaders, we consider it our duty to recall the lessons of history in order to prevent wars, killing innocents, terrorist attacks and conflicts in the future. Remembering this, on the Memorial Day - September 27, which entered the calendars as the starting point of the path to the Great Victory, we pray to the Great Creator to rest the souls of our martyrs in peace. May the Almighty protect the State and the People of Azerbaijan and strengthen our Victory!

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