

APPEAL
of the leaders of religious communities in Azerbaijan
In the Name of the One Creator!

Expressing the will of the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan and millions of Azerbaijanis around the world, and the people who are not indifferent to the tragedies of the History, we bring our appeal on the eve of March 31 - the Day of the Genocide of Azerbaijanis, to the attention of the World Community, Religious Leaders, Parliaments and International Organizations.

One of the supreme verities reflected in the Sacred Books revealed to Humankind is that killing of even a single person created by the Almighty is as grave crime as killing all Humankind. Genocides committed on the basis of national, ethnic and religious identity, imprinted in the bloodstained memory of Humankind, and considered as the greatest and most unforgivable sins against Humanity. The people of Azerbaijan is one of the peoples subjected to such crime, and the World Community must know this horrible reality and definitely give it a fair assessment.

Starting from the beginning of the 19th century, Armenians, massively and deliberately settling in the Caucasus, and dreaming of a "Great Armenia", committed massacres and genocide against Azerbaijanis and other peoples living in these territories. These bloody events were repeated over and over again at short intervals throughout the 20th century. Due to consecutive aggression, ethnic cleansing, terrorism and vandalism by Armenian nationalists against our people, going on for more than two centuries, Azerbaijanis were exiled from their home lands throughout the territory of present-day Armenia, and later, Karabakh. The revanchist rhetoric of Armenian extremists against our country continues even after Azerbaijan has restored the historical justice and its territorial integrity, recognized by the world community during the 44-day Patriotic War.

The History testifies that in 1905 and 1918, Armenian extremists committed massacres of Azerbaijanis in Baku and other regions, killed tens of thousands of civilians, destroyed settlements, historical and cultural monuments, mosques, churches and synagogues. Only during the March Genocide - from March 30 to April 3, 1918 tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis were killed or went missing as a result of the Genocide committed by armed groups of Armenian Dashnaks and Bolsheviks of Armenian origin against the Azerbaijanis in Baku and various regions of Azerbaijan - Shamakhi, Guba, Khachmaz, Lankaran, Hajigabul, Salyan, Zangezur, Karabakh, Nakhchivan, Derbent and other regions.

The facts of genocide against the Azerbaijani population in Northern Azerbaijan (Baku, Shamakhi-city and Shamakhi province, Guba-city and Guba province, Lankaran province), Western Azerbaijan (Zangezur province, Irevan province), South Azerbaijan (the cities of Urmia, Tabriz, Khoy, Salmas) as well as against the Jewish population in Guba and Derbent, committed in 1918-1920, have been reflected in the historical documents. In March, 1918, just in 3 days, more than 12 thousand Azerbaijanis were massacred in Baku; the historical mosques and temples of the city were seized; 8,027 people were killed in 53 villages of Shamakhi province, 8,000 Azerbaijanis were killed in Shamakhi city, while the Juma (Cathedral) Mosque in Shamakhi, the very oldest one in the Caucasus, was set on fire. In Guba-city and Guba province, as well as Derbent, more than 16 thousand Azerbaijanis were killed, 162 villages destroyed, about 3 thousand Jews were brutally killed as well; 2,000 people were killed in Lankaran

province. In 1918-1920, 10,068 Azerbaijanis were killed and maimed in Zangezur province; 211 Azerbaijani villages destroyed in the Irevan province, and their population was exposed to genocide. As a result of the policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide pursued by the Armenians, the number of Azerbaijanis living in those territories decreased from 375,000 in 1916 to 70,000 in 1922. During 1918-1920, about 5,000 Azerbaijanis were killed in the Azerbaijani-populated Borchali region of Georgia and the Azerbaijani-populated historical quarters of Tbilisi. At the same period of 1918-1920, more than 120 thousand Azerbaijanis were killed in Urmia, Maku, Tabriz, Khoy and Salmas.

For historical reference, we inform that there are evidences of the Armenian policy of massacre at the beginning of the 20th century in Central Asia and Turkestan as well. The historical sources show that in 1918-1922, Armenians killed more than 35 thousand Muslim Uzbeks in Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan, they also burned the city of Kokand, where Armenian Dashnaks killed in one single day more than 10 thousand people, and more than 4.5 thousand were killed in Andijan; all the residents of Suzak and Bazar-Korgon villages of Kyrgyzstan were shot dead, so that the massacre reached the borders of Jalalabad.

The policy of genocide and deportation of Azerbaijanis was continued during the Soviet period as well. In 1948-1953, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis were deported from their homes in Zangezur, thus, the Republic of Armenia, which was actually established on the ancestral Azerbaijani territories, turned into a mono-ethnic state.

In the second half of the 80s of the past Century, under the pressure of the Armenian lobby and the instigation of the ruling circles of the USSR, a new wave of aggression and ethnic cleansing by Armenian nationalists began against our people. Taking advantage of the removal of prominent Azerbaijani statesman Heydar Aliyev from the leadership of the USSR, Armenian chauvinists ruthlessly exiled about 300,000 Azerbaijanis from Armenia. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as a result of large-scale military operations, 20 percent of our territory - the upper part of Karabakh and seven other surrounding regions were occupied, more than a million Azerbaijanis were exiled from their native lands. The Armenian atrocities culminated in the acts of genocide committed in Khojaly, Agdaban and Dashalti in 1992. On the night of February 25-26, 1992, Armenian armed bandits suddenly burst into the city of Khojaly and committed a brutal massacre on unarmed civilian population, killing 613 people, including elderly, pregnant women and children; 1275 people went missing, captured and subjected to cruel torture; the unimaginable desecration was done on the bodies of brutally murdered civilians. These facts put the Khojaly tragedy on a par with such crimes against humanity as the as Holocaust, Guernica, Katyn, Srebrenica and Rwanda genocides. A total of 2 million Azerbaijanis endured suffering from all the calamities and horrors of the Armenian policy of genocide, ethnic cleansing and deportation.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that for many years, as a result of the military aggression of Armenia, terror has been carried out against the diverse cultural and spiritual heritage of Azerbaijan. Armenians committed acts of vandalism in the occupied territories of Karabakh and destroyed our historical, religious, cultural monuments, shrines and cemeteries, including Christian and Jewish churches. Intentionally working on the demolition of the historically existed ancient Albanian, Muslim, Orthodox religious and cultural heritage in Karabakh, Armenians either demolished and disabled

our cultural and spiritual heritage, or falsified and appropriated its history and origin by Armenizing and Gregorianizing it.

Today, Azerbaijani official and public circles bring to the attention of international community and organizations the irrefutable facts of ethnic cleansing, genocide and acts of vandalism committed by Armenia in Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, UNESCO is delaying with sending an investigative mission to the liberated territories of Karabakh, while the European Parliament, adhering to a double-standard approach, adopts a tendentious resolution on the so-called “destroy of the Armenian heritage in Karabakh”. Meanwhile, new facts of Armenian crime - mass graves revealed in our liberated territories. Innocent people still die and become disabled because of the countless mines laid by the Armenians, who used a war crime on the territory of Azerbaijan - the scorched land tactics.

We, the leaders of the religious communities living in Azerbaijan in peace and tranquility for centuries, stand for the comprehensive understanding between all the peoples of the South Caucasus, regardless of religion or language. Tendencies such as war, territorial claims, hatred, religious and ethnic discrimination, revanchism must end, stability between states must prevail, efforts must be done for sustainable economic development. All religious communities in our region, and especially the Armenian Apostolic Church, should actively work in this direction, promote peace and dialogue, advocate peaceful and humanistic ideas. Unfortunately, the Armenian clergy support aggression against neighboring nations, mobilize the Armenian diaspora and lobby, to justify the revanchist, radical, xenophobic and fascist actions of Armenian terrorists and extremists.

We, the clergy of different faiths living in Azerbaijan, once again appeal to the World Community and International Organizations calling to give a political and legal assessment to the Genocide crimes committed by Armenia against the Azerbaijani people. Sooner or later, with Almighty's help, the truth and justice will prevail! May the Almighty Creator help us all to discern the truth from lies and to be just! AMEN!

Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur PASHAZADEH
Chairman of Caucasus Muslims' Board

Archmandrit Aleksiy,
Secretary of Baku and Azerbaijan Diocese of
the Russian Orthodox Church

Milikh YEVDAYEV,
Head of the Community of Mountain Jews in Azerbaijan

Robert Mobili
Head of the Albanian-Udi Christian Community

Aleksandr Sharovsky
Head of the Community of European Jews in Baku

Baku, March 28, 2022