

**The Statement of the Commissioner for Human Rights
(Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan
concerning the 33rd anniversary
of the tragedy of January 20, 1990**

It has been 33 years since the bloody events of January 20, which are the most tragic days in Azerbaijan's contemporary history, at the same time, one of the brightest and most honorable pages in our people's heroic history.

The Soviet Army committed horrible and mass destruction against peaceful residents of Baku on the night of January 19-20, 1990.

This bloody event was committed to suppress the voice and prevent the realization of the dreams of independence of the peaceful and civilian Azerbaijanis, protesting the support of the USSR for the Armenian policy of aggression against the historical territories of Azerbaijan, and their pro-Armenian, and biased politics against our country. Although the Soviet Empire perpetrated a violent terror act against peaceful human beings, it was impossible to break the will of the people of Azerbaijan.

As a result of this crime against humanity committed by the former Soviet armed forces in several districts along with the cities of Baku and Sumgayit, 150 peaceful civilians, including children, women, and the elderly were brutally killed, 744 persons were injured, 841 persons were arbitrarily deprived of liberty, and 112 persons of them were sent to different prisons across the USSR.

Although our bloody memory –the tragic events of January 20 were one of the most tragic days we have experienced in the recent past, they were engraved in the memory of our people as a glorious history of heroism.

Despite the pressures and challenges that existed on January 21, 1990, Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the people of Azerbaijan, together with his family, came to the Office of the Permanent Representative of

Azerbaijan in Moscow, held a press conference to inform the world community about these crimes against humanity committed on January 20, and made a sharp statement about this crime committed by the USSR leadership.

During the session of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic on November 20, 1990, the Great Leader Heydar Aliyev considered the tragedy of January 20 as an affront to the sovereign rights of the people of Azerbaijan; the bloody events of January 20 were given a political and legal assessment in 1994, following his return to the rule in Azerbaijan, and the names of the perpetrators of this crime were brought to the attention of the general public, and 20 January was declared a national mourning day.

During the bloody events of January 20, the facts of reprisals against innocent people, the deprivation of the right to life and the wounding of hundreds of persons, the presence of women, older persons, and children among the victims, the restriction of the opportunities of people to receive accurate information on the happenings by placing information blockades were serious and mass violations of the principle of respect for human rights and freedoms, which is one of the main principles of international law.

The provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other international legal documents were grossly violated as a result of this tragedy.

The criminal acts committed on January 20 were acts of military aggression that seriously and grossly impaired human rights, disrespected the norms of international law, including international humanitarian law, and were directed against the sovereignty and independence of Azerbaijan, furthermore, they were crimes against humanity.

We do believe the bloody events of January 20 that occurred as a result of military aggression against Azerbaijan, will be evaluated within

international law as a crime against mankind and humanity, and the perpetrators of this crime will be held accountable, and the criminals will not go unpunished.

We urge international organizations and the world community to conduct a legal assessment of the tragic events of January 20 that resulted in grave breaches of human rights in violation of the universally recognized principles and norms as soon as possible.

Sabina Aliyeva

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

19 January 2023

The statement is addressed to the UN Secretary-General, UN Security Council, UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Office of High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Human Rights Council, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, European Union, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, International and European Ombudsman Institutions, Asian Ombudsman Association, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Ombudsman Association of its member states, Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, International Peace Bureau, foreign ombudsmen and national human rights institutions, embassies of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the foreign embassies in Azerbaijan, as well as to the Azerbaijani Diasporas.