

BRIEF HISTORY OF ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN CONFLICT

The contemporary Azerbaijani statehood takes its roots back from the Kingdom of Caucasian Albania. The area presently known as Nagorny Karabakh (Mountainous Karabakh) was a part of that Kingdom. According to the Antic sources there were 26 tribal unions in Albania, ethnic composition of which was autochthonous Caucasian and Turkic. In a year 313 A.D. Christianity was confirmed as a state religion in Albania. In a year 705 A.D. Albania was totally subordinated to the Arab Khalifat resulted in adoption of Islam by the most of the Albanian population, while some living in the mountainous areas continued to adhere Cristianity.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Karabakh always was a part of the state formations existed in the territory of present Azerbaijan led by Turkic Muslim dynasties and inhabited by Turkic speaking people.

The collapse of the Azerbaijani Safavid state in the first half of the 18th century was accompanied by the emergence of independent and semi-independent entities, the khanates and sultanates. Established in the 18th century the Karabakh Khanate was ruled by the hereditary Azerbaijani (Turkic) dynasty of Djavanshirs and predominantly populated by ethnic Azerbaijanis.

After the occupation of these entitles by Russia under the treaties of Gyulistan (1813) and Turkmanchai (1828) the ethnic composition of the region was deliberately changed. Only during the period of 1828-1830 more than 40,000 Armenians from Persia and 84,600 from Ottoman Empire were settled in the territories of Azerbaijani khanates ((Irean, Nakhichevan and Karabakh).

In 1828, by the order of the Russian Emperor Nicholas I, an Armenian Oblast was created in the territories of occupied Azerbaijani Khanates (Irean and Nakhchivan). This was aimed to create a buffer zone in the backyard of the Ottoman Empire and separate the Turkic speaking people. Abolition of the Albanian Church by the Russian Czar in 1836 resulted in ultimate Grigorianization (Armenization) of the Albanian population.

Between 1905 and 1918, the Armenians, inspired by dreams of creating «the great Armenia», carried out a series of large-scale offensive actions against the Azerbaijanis. The attacks began in Baky and then extended over the whole Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani villages in the territory of present-day Armenia. Hundreds of settlements were destroyed, and thousands of civilians were killed.

On May 28, 1918, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) was declared. On the same day, the independence of the Republic of Armenia was declared as well.

On May 29, 1918, the government of ADR yielded the town of Irevan (presently Yerevan, the 30% of population were people of different ethnicities, including Armenians, whereas the 70% majority were Azerbaijanis) to the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

According to the The Batum Peace Treaty signed on 4 June, 1918, between the Ottoman Empire and the three South-Caucasian republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), the borders of Armenia have been defined with the total area as 10,000 sq. km. composed of Erivan and Echmiadzin districts with 400,000 residents. Karabakh was recognized as an integral part of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic.

In June-July 1918, despite the agreed terms of peaceful and good neighborly relations, Armenia began the large-scale aggression against Azerbaijan. Occupation of the town of Nakhchivan, massive attacks on Azerbaijani villages of Zangezur and Karabakh resulted in devastation of 115 villages and killing of 7,729 Azerbaijani civilians. Around 50,000 people were displaced from their homelands.

On April 27, 1920, Azerbaijan was occupied by the 11th Red Army of Soviet Russia and the Soviet rule was established in Azerbaijan.

On July 5, 1921, the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia adopted the decision by which, Azerbaijan SSR was recommended to confer upon Mountainous Karabakh a broader autonomy. On July 7, 1923, Decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan SSR on "Formation of the Autonomous Region in the Mountainous Karabakh with an administrative center in Khankendi" was issued. In September 1923, Khankendi was renamed to Stepanakert after Stepan Shaumian, famous bolshevik leader.

Moreover, predominantly Azerbaijani populated regions of Zangezur and part of Kazakh district (in total 9,000 sq.km) was given to Armenia. As a result, the

Nakhchivan region was cut off from the main body of Azerbaijan. In 1922, the Bolsheviks disposed of the Azerbaijani lands of Dilijan and Goycha in the same manner. In 1929, several villages were severed from Nakhchivan and given to the Armenian SSR. In 1969, the Armenian SSR again extended its territory at the expense of the Azerbaijani land.

At the same time, while granting the right of self-rule to the Armenians of the Mountainous Karabakh, 575,000 Azerbaijanis living in compact settlements in Armenia were refused the same status by the governments of both the USSR and the Armenian SSR. Azerbaijani population of Armenia always lived under pressure and this resulted in massive organized deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia. Under the decisions of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (December 23, 1947; March 10, 1948), during the period of 1948-1953, more than 150,000 of Azerbaijanis were forcibly resettled from their historical homelands in Armenia to Azerbaijan.

In total, during the 70 years of the Soviet rule 20,000 sq.km. of Azerbaijani territories had been given to Armenia.

ARMENIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST AZERBAIJAN

The present-day stage of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict began at the end of 1987 with the attacks on Azerbaijanis in Nagorny Karabakh and Armenia resulting in a flood of Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons.

On February 20, 1988, the representatives of the Armenian community at the session of the Soviet of People's Deputies of the NKAO (Nagorny Kharabakh Autonomous Oblast) adopted a decision to petition the Supreme Soviets of the Azerbaijan SSR and the Armenian SSR for the transfer of the NKAO from the Azerbaijan SSR to the Armenian SSR.

On February 22, 1988, near the settlement of Askeran in Karabakh, the Armenians opened fire on a peaceful demonstration by the Azerbaijanis protesting against above-mentioned decision. Two Azerbaijani youths were killed, becoming the first victims of of the conflict.

On February 26-28, 1988, 26 Armenians and Azerbaijanis were killed as a result of disturbances in Sumgait. One of the leading figures in these events was Edward Grigorian, an Armenian and native of Sumgait, who was one of the organizers of the killings and violence against Armenians and the pogroms in Armenian neighborhoods. In fact, events in Sumgait, being necessary to the Armenian leadership as a means of launching an extensive anti-Azerbaijani campaign and justifying the ensuing aggressive actions against Azerbaijan, had been planned and prepared in advance.

Since beginning 1988, all Azerbaijanis living in Armenia were forced to leave their homeland. During 1988-1989, 216 Azerbaijanis were killed and 1,154 people were wounded. The refugees from Armenia- eventually numbering 243,682 people - began to arrive in Azerbaijan.

On June 15, 1988, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR adopted a resolution agreeing to the incorporation of the NKAO in the Armenian SSR and requesting the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to consider and approve the transfer of the oblast from the Azerbaijan SSR to the Armenian SSR.

In response to it, on June 13 and 17, 1988, the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR adopted resolutions where it was declared that the transfer of the NKAO from the Azerbaijan SSR to the Armenian SSR to be unacceptable and impossible, based on Article 78 of the Constitution of the USSR and Article 70 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR.

During 1988-1989, Armenia adopted many other anti-constitutional decisions in attempts to legalize the seizure of NKAO. Among them a decree on the unification of the Armenian SSR and Nagorny Karabakh adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR on 1st December, 1989.

This decision was resented by most Azerbaijanis and led to massive demonstrations against both the Soviet and Armenian authorities. On January 20, 1990, in order to suppress the growing national movement the Soviet troops were dispatched to Baky. As a result, thousands of Azerbaijani citizens were killed, wounded, and subjected to other physical pressures. This bloody tragedy reflected in the history of Azerbaijan as a "Black January".

At the end of 1991 and the beginning of 1992, the conflict entered a military phase. Taking advantage of the political instability, as a result of dissolution of the

Soviet Union and a weak leadership in Azerbaijan, Armenian militants with the military assistance of the USSR troops stationed in Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh began the occupation of Azerbaijani settlements in Nagorny Karabakh. The united Armenian and Soviet troops occupied Kerkidjahan, Malybeyli, Gushchular villages, where thousands of defenseless inhabitants were killed, injured, taken hostage, and forcibly moved from their homes. The most tragic event in the whole modern history occurred on the 26th February night, 1992, when the Armenians massacred the whole population of the small town Khojali in Nagorny Karabakh. News of the ferocity of Khojali massacre spread rapidly, instigating a wave of Azerbaijani refugees from the entire area.

In May 1992, Shusha, the Azerbaijani-populated administrative center of the region within Nagorny Karabakh, and Lachin, the region situated between Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh, were occupied. In 1993, the armed forces of Armenia captured another 6 surrounding Nagorny Karabakh districts of Azerbaijan: Kelbajar, Aghdam, Fizuli, Jabrayil, Gubadly, Zangilan.

Only after return of the national leader Heydar Aliyev to power, (15 June 1993), serious measures were undertaken in Azerbaijan for mobilizing military-economic and human power in the war against Armenian occupants. The attacks of Armenian troops in direction to Beylagan were rebuffed in mid November 1993. As a result of successful operations of Azerbaijan army, the strategically important Horadiz district and 22 villages of Fuzuli were released from enemy on January 5, 1994. After that Azeri troops released part of Djebrayil district, Bozlu, Tekeqaya, Babashlar, Qanlykend, Chepli, Qasymbinesi, Yanshaqbine, Yanshaq, Baghirsaq, Qamyshly settlements. Chichekli Mountain and other strategic peaks were returned, Kelbadjar-Lachyn road's section up to the tunnel was taken under control.

On May 12, 1994, due to Azerbaijan's progress in fighting the ceasefire was established.

KHOJALI GENOCIDE

The Khojali genocide is one of the most horrible tragedies of the XXth century along with Hatin, Ludice, Songmi...

Over the night of February 25-26, 1992, the Armenian Armed Forces, with the direct participation of the 366th Infantry Guards Regiment of the former USSR, seized Khojaly, a small town in Nagorny Karabakh and committed an act of genocide.

Surrounded by Armenian armed forces Khojali was burnt and razed to the ground by mass firing with heavy artillery. Weaponless population of occupied town was executed with particular brutality: by being burned alive, scalped, beheaded, crushed by driving over military vehicles, and the like. Moreover, there were cases of putting out eyeballs, cutting women's breasts, nostrils, ears. Those who tried to escape by running to forests were shot from submachine guns and helicopters.

As a result, 613 persons were killed, including 106 women, 63 children and 70 elderly people; 1,275 inhabitants were taken hostage, while the fate of 150 persons remains unknown; 487 inhabitants of Khojaly were severely maimed, including 76 children; 6 families were completely wiped out; 26 children lost both parents, and 130 children lost one of their parents.

MARCH 31 - DAY OF GENOCIDE OF AZERBAIJANIS

Every year on March 31, the people of Azerbaijan commemorate the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis. Events of March 1918 are one of the bloodiest pages of the ethnic cleansing and genocide policy that have been progressively carried out by the Armenians against the Azerbaijanis for almost two hundred years.

The national tragedy of the Azerbaijani people began with the division of their historical lands under the peace treaties of Gyulistan and Turkmanchay, signed in 1813 and 1828 by Russia and Iran. The tragedy of the divided Azerbaijani nation continued with the occupation of its lands by Russia. The policy of the ethnic

cleansing and genocide became an integral part of the occupation of Azerbaijani lands. As a result of this policy, a very rapid mass resettlement of the Armenians in Azerbaijani lands took place and the ethnic composition of the region was substantially changed. Only during the period of 1828-1830, more than 40,000 Armenians from Persia and 84,600 from Ottoman Empire were settled in the territory of the Azerbaijani Khanates (Irevan, Nakhichevan and Karabakh).

Despite the fact that Armenians settled in Azerbaijan were a minority in comparison with Azerbaijanis living there, in 1828, by the order of the Russian Emperor Nicholas I, Armenian Oblast was created in the territories of Irevan and Nakhchivan Khanates with the aim of creating a buffer zone in the backyard of the Ottoman Empire and separating the Turkic speaking people. The establishment of artificially created territorial unit laid the basis of the policy of ousting Azerbaijani population from their own land.

Between 1905 and 1907, the Armenians inspired by dreams of creating «the great Armenia, from sea to sea», carried out a series of large-scale bloody actions against Azerbaijanis. The pogroms committed by Armenians covered nearly the whole Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani villages in the territory of present-day Armenia. Hundreds of settlements were destroyed and wiped from the face of the earth, and thousands of Azerbaijanis were barbarically killed.

Next stage of genocide of Azerbaijanis began in 1917, when taking advantage of the situation following the end of the First World War and the February and October 1917 revolutions in Russia, the Armenians started implementation of their plans aimed at eliminating Azerbaijanis from their own lands under the Bolshevik watchword of combating counter-revolutionary elements. March 31, 1918, became a «Saint Bartholomew night» in Baku. Solely because of their ethnic belonging, over 30,000 Azerbaijanis were killed during one night in Baky. Armenians set the houses on fire and burned people alive. They destroyed national architectural treasures, schools, hospitals, mosques and left the large part of Baky in ruins.

Extermination of Azerbaijanis, which began in Baky, then extended over the whole of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani villages in Armenia. In the period from 30 March to 1 April 1918, over 50,000 Azerbaijanis were killed and hundreds of thousands were forcibly driven away from their homes.

After the proclamation of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic in 1918, March 31 was announced as a national day of mourning. It was the first attempt to make a political assessment of the policy of genocide against Azerbaijanis and of the occupation of our lands for over a century. After the occupation of Azerbaijan by the Red Army of Bolsheviks, all was done to erase this date from the history, while continuing the policy of resettlement and chipping away Azerbaijani lands.

Thus, the next stage of ethnic cleansing began with the establishment of the Soviet regime. In 1920, by Stalin's directives, the region of Zangazur and a part of Kazakh district were transferred to Armenia. In 1922, Dilijan and Goycha were passed to Armenia in the same manner. In 1929, several villages were severed from Nakhchivan.

Moreover, on the pretext of migration to Armenia of the Armenians living abroad, the Council of Ministers of the USSR issued the resolutions (December 23, 1947; March 10, 1948) on resettlement of Azerbaijanis from Armenian SSR to Azerbaijan SSR. Under these decisions, during the period 1948-1953, 150,000 Azerbaijanis living in Armenian were forcibly deported from their historical homelands to the Kura-Araks lowlands in the Azerbaijani SSR.

Since 1987 Azerbaijan have been facing next outburst of aggressive policy of Armenia. Ongoing aggression by Armenia resulted in occupation of 1/5 of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan with more than 1 million of refugees and displaced persons. In 1987-1988, for the first time in the modern history Armenia carried out complete ethnic cleansing of 250,000 Azerbaijanis from Armenia and later continued pursuing such policy in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. In February 1992, the Armenians perpetrated the worst massacre of the Karabakh war when Azerbaijani town of Khojaly in Nagorny Karabakh was razed to the ground and hundreds of its population among them children, elderly and women in one single night was slaughtered.

All the tragedies in the history of Azerbaijan, which took place in the XIX and XX centuries, were accompanied by the seizure of its land, and represented various stages of the Armenians' deliberate and systematic policy of genocide against Azerbaijanis. It is rather ironic and hypocritical, that over years the Armenians have been trying to depict themselves as a "genocide victim" and get the international recognition of the crimes that they, themselves, had committed repeatedly.

ARMENIAN TERRORISM

Terrorism is a means for the achievement by the Armenian nationalists of their political goals. The Armenian terrorism has a long history and its network of terrorist organizations widespread all over the world. The activities of “Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia”(ASALA, established in 1975 in Beirut), “Avengers for Armenian Genocide” (established in 1973), “Group of June 9” (established in 1991 in Switzerland), “Suicide Squadron” (established in 1981 in France), “The Commandos of Justice of the Armenian Genocide”, “The Armenian Revolutionary Army” and many other terrorist organizations are directed at the implementation of goals and demands of the Armenian political parties "Dashnaktsutyun", "Hnchak", "Ramkavar", the most important of which is the recognition by Turkey of the "genocide" of Armenians.

In order to draw the attention of the international public to the so-called "Armenian genocide", the Armenian terrorist organizations tried to justify their terrorist activities by the struggle for the revenge and liberation of the “motherland”. The Turks as well as the Americans, the Portuguese, the Swedish, the Canadians, the French, the Australians, and hundreds of other nationalities became their victims. In 1973-2001, only in Western Europe, Armenian terrorist organizations committed 235 terrorist acts, among them 70 murders and 41 assassination attempts.

After the open assertion by Armenia in the late 1980s of its claims on Azerbaijan and the launching of armed operations in the Nagorny Karabakh region, Armenian terrorist organizations began a constant and horrible terrorist war against Azerbaijan with the financial support of Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora.

In order to spread horror among the Azerbaijani population and achieve great casualties during the occupation of Nagorny Karabakh and the adjoining 7 districts, Armenian special service bodies organized and committed 33 terrorist acts in locations populated by Azerbaijanis, far from the conflict zone. As a result of this, more than 2,000 of innocent people were killed and wounded.

The list below shows some of the terrorist-subversive actions committed by Armenian terrorist organizations in the territory of Azerbaijan:

September 16, 1989. The "Tbilisi-Baku" passenger bus was exploded, 5 people died, 25 were injured.

July 11, 1990. The "Tartar-Kalbadjar" passenger bus was exploded, 14 people were killed, 35 injured.

August 10, 1990. The "Tbilisi-Agdam" passenger bus was exploded, 20 people died, 30 were injured. The Supreme Court of Azerbaijan found A.Avanesian and M.Tatevosian guilty of committing this crime.

The bus "LAZ" was exploded on the road "Shamkir-Gandja", 17 people died, 26 were injured.

January 9, 1991. A reporter of the newspaper "Molodyoj Azerbaydjana" ("Azerbaijani Youth") S.Askerova and 4 militaries were killed in terrorist attack. The Supreme Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan found the perpetrators of this attack - A.Mkrtchian, G.Petrosian, A.Mangasarian, G.G.Arutyunian and G.M.Arutyunian guilty of committing this crime, as well as other terrorist acts.

May 30, 1991. The "Moscow-Baku" passenger train was exploded, 11 people died, 22 were injured. Armenian citizen S.Aznarian was arrested.

July 31, 1991. The "Moskow-Baku" passenger train was exploded, 16 people died, 20 were injured. The Supreme Court of Azerbaijan found members of terrorist organization Urarty - A.Tatevosian and V.Petrosian guilty of committing this crime.

November 20, 1991. 19 passengers (Azerbaijan state and government representatives, observers from Russia and Kazakhstan) and members of crew of the helicopter "MI-8" died in result of firing in Khodjavand region.

January 8, 1992. 25 people were killed, 88 injured in result of explosion on the ferryboat, sailing by the route "Krasnovodsk-Baku".

January 28, 1992. The civil helicopter MI-8, was shaken down by Armenian terrorists near Shusha. 44 people, including women and children, died.

February 28, 1993. Passenger train "Kislovodsk-Baku" was exploded, 11 people died, 18 were injured.

February 1, 1994. The explosion in the passenger train "Kislovodsk-Baku", 3 people died, 20 were injured.

March 18, 1994. The "Hercules" type airplane, belonging to the Iranian Military Air Forces, was shaken down near Khankandi town, 32 people died.

March 19, 1994. The explosion in the underground subway station "20 January" in Baky, 14 people died, 49 were injured.

April 13, 1994. The passenger train "Moscow-Baku" was exploded, 6 people died, 3 were injured.

July 3, 1994. The explosion of train between subway stations "May 28" and "Genjlik" in Baku, 13 persons died, 42 were injured.

During the investigation, led by the Supreme Court of the Azerbaijan Republic, it was completely proved that all above-mentioned and many other terrorist actions were organized, carried out and sponsored by special service and other state bodies of the Armenian Republic.

Armenian terrorism is supported by the Republic of Armenia and became a part of its state policy. Armenian terrorism is closely connected to international terrorism and organized crime. All this creates serious threat to regional security. One thing is undoubted: the present-day Armenia, being the aggressor-state and the state, supporting and sponsoring terrorism and separatism, will act until the international community condemns and ceases to support its unlawful claims.

INTERNATIONAL REACTION

The legal and political constituent for the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is based on the norms and principles of international law, laid down in the UN Security Council resolutions 882, 853, 874 and 884 as well as the appropriate documents and decisions of the OSCE.

The above-mentioned UN Security Council resolutions adopted in 1993 reaffirming respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the international borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan demanded immediate cessation of all hostile acts, immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from all occupied regions of Azerbaijan, and called for the restoration of economic, transport and energy communications in the region, ensuring the return of refugees and displaced persons to the places of their permanent residence.

Since February 1992, the process of mediation efforts on the settlement of Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict within the frame of the CSCE (Conference for Security of Cooperation in Europe, now Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe - OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs has been ongoing. In 1997, the institute of the triple Co-Chairmanship, including Russia, France and the US was established.

A number of the statements, decisions and documents on the settlement of the conflict based on the norms and principles of the international law have been taken on the Meeting of the CSCE Council of March 1992, CSCE Summit of December 1994, OSCE Summits of December 1996 and November 1999 and OSCE Council of Ministers Meetings of December 1997, 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Negotiations between the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as their special representatives and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of both countries have been held within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) on Tehran Summit 1997, Doha Summit 2000, Putrajaya (Malaysia) Summit 2003, and Mecca Summit 2006 adopted 3 resolutions on the conflict, where it strongly condemns the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and demands the strict implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions, the immediate unconditional withdrawal of Armenian forces from all occupied Azerbaijani territories and strongly urges Armenia to respect

the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. OIC also strongly condemns the barbaric acts committed by the Armenian aggressor in Azerbaijani occupied territories aiming at the total annihilation of Islamic historical and cultural relicts and shrines.

Council of the Europe Parliamentary assembly, on December 25, 2005, adopted Resolution 1416. The Parliamentary assembly reaffirmed the occupation of a considerable part of the territory of Azerbaijan and expressed its concern that the military action, and the ethnic hostilities which preceded it, led to large-scale ethnic expulsion and the creation of mono-ethnic areas, which resembled ethnic cleansing. The Assembly stressed that the occupation of foreign territory by a member state constituted a grave violation of that state's obligations as a member of the Council of Europe and reaffirmed the right of displaced persons from the area of conflict to return to their homes safely and with dignity. The Assembly also recalled the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and urged parties concerned to comply with them, in particular by withdrawing military forces from any occupied territories.

None of above-mentioned resolutions was implemented by Armenia.

CONSEQUENCES OF ARMENIAN AGGRESSION

As a result of Armenian aggression, 20 % (17 000 sq. km) of Azerbaijani territories are occupied: the Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Region and 7 surrounding districts (Lachin, Kelbajar, Aghdam, Fizuli, Jabrayil, Gubadly, Zangilan). More than 1 million people became refugees and internally displaced persons, 20,000 killed, 50,000 disabled, 5,100 were taken hostage and missing.

Destructions caused by the Armenian aggression: 890 settlements, 150,000 houses, 7,000 public buildings, 6,000 industrial and agricultural enterprises, 693

schools, 855 kinder gardens, 695 health care facilities, 927 libraries, 737 historical monuments of national and world importance, 28 museums with more than 83,500 exhibits, 4 picture galleries, 44 temples and 18 mosques (among them 17th century mosque complex in Jabrail, 18-19th century Govharagha and Saatly mosques, 19th century mosque in Agdam) etc.

The total damage is estimated as exceeding 60 billions US \$.