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Press release
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27th anniversary of the Khojaly Genocide

Twenty-seven years ago, the largest massacre during the conflict was committed against the civilians and defenders of the town of Khojaly, in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Before the war, 7,000 people lived in that town. From October 1991, the town was entirely surrounded by the Armenian forces. In the night of 25 to 26 February 1992, following massive artillery bombardments, the assault on the town began from various directions. As a result of the attack and capture of the town, hundreds of Azerbaijanis, including women, children and the elderly, were killed, wounded or taken hostage, while the town was razed to the ground.

The overall assessment of the causes and consequences of the war and evidence relating to mass killings in Khojaly make it absolutely clear that the crimes committed in that town were not isolated or sporadic acts, but were part of Armenia's widespread and systematic policy and practice of atrocities.

International media, such as The Washington Post, The Washington Times, The New York Times, The Boston Globe, Los Angeles Times, The Times, The Sunday Times, Newsweek, The Irish Times, The Guardian, The Independent, The Age (Australia), Milliyet (Turkey), Komsomolskaya Pravda (Russia), Pravda (Russia), Trud (Russia), and human rights non-governmental organizations, such as the Human Rights Watch and Memorial, reported with horror the killing of residents and defenders of Khojaly by indiscriminate gunfire and other brutal acts.

In their subsequent response to the massacre in Khojaly, the authoritative international organizations strongly condemned the attacks directed against the Azerbaijani civilian population and the unacceptable scorched earth policy practiced by the Armenian forces, qualifying atrocities committed in the town as acts of particular gravity which amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

The official investigation conducted in Azerbaijan has found that the specific elements of the crime of genocide, as defined under international law, are present with regard to mass killings in Khojaly and that the necessary requirements are met for the purpose of sustaining the genocidal charges to that end.

On 8 May 2008, the "Justice for Khojaly" international awareness campaign was launched to increase public knowledge about Khojaly, especially among the youth, express solidarity with the victims and support the survivors, as well as to mobilize the public in rejecting massacres, ethnic cleansing and discrimination on racial, ethnic or religious grounds. To date, hundreds of thousands of people and hundreds organizations from various countries have joined the Campaign. Social networks, exhibitions, rallies, contests, conferences, seminars, publications and other public and academic activities are among the tools used by the Campaign to promote its objectives (for more information about the Campaign, see www.justiceforkhojaly.org).

The Council of Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, at its 39th session held in Djibouti in November 2012, and the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, at their 12th Summit held in Egypt in February 2013, welcomed “the “Justice for Khojaly” international civil awareness campaign initiated in the framework of the “OIC Memorial Day Program” and aimed at disseminating of historical truth on the mass massacre of Azerbaijani civilians perpetrated by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia in the town of Khojaly in February 1992, which constitutes the crime against humanity”. They also called upon “Member States to support and actively participate in the events of the Campaign and exert due efforts for recognition on national and international levels of this genocidal act as a crime against humanity”.

The parliaments of fifteen countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Guatemala, Honduras, Jordan, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Slovenia, The Sudan), twenty two states in the United States of America (State of Arizona, State of Arkansas, State of Connecticut, State of Georgia, State of Hawaii, State of Idaho, State of Indiana, State of Maine, State of Massachusetts, State of Minnesota, State of Mississippi, State of Montana, State of Nebraska, State of New Jersey, State of New Mexico, State of Oklahoma, State of Pennsylvania, State of Tennessee, State of Texas, State of Utah, State of West Virginia, State of Wisconsin) and the Scottish Parliament adopted special resolutions, condemning in the strongest terms the massacre in Khojaly and honouring the victims of the tragedy.

Those who ordered and committed mass killings in Khojaly, as well as in other cities, towns and villages of Azerbaijan during the war, have yet to be punished. Azerbaijan is determined to bring to justice those responsible for the heinous crimes committed against its people, regardless of their official or political status. Measures undertaken at the national level, the existing legal framework, case law of prosecution of, and punishment for, serious crimes of concern to the international community and growing international awareness secure conviction in the prospect of ending impunity still enjoyed by the perpetrators of the Khojaly massacre.

On the occasion of the 27th anniversary of the Khojaly Genocide, the residents of Khojaly, who survived the massacre, issued a statement addressed to the international community, urging the world nations, peoples and international organizations to reject unambiguously Armenia’s aggression and groundless territorial claims and to give a legal and political assessment to the Khojaly genocide.

The following documents were released on the occasion of the 27th anniversary of the Khojaly Genocide:

- Joint Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Azerbaijan (available at www.mfa.gov.az/en/news/909/6027);
- Letter from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (A/73/740-S/2019/133, available in all UN languages at www.un.mfa.gov.az/content/57);
- Appeal of the religious leaders of Azerbaijan to the world’s religious leaders, parliaments and the international community (available at www.report.az/en/religion/religious-leaders-of-azerbaijan-appeal-to-international-organizations);
