



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.: General
11 April 2023

Original: English

**General Assembly
Seventy-seventh session**

Agenda items 14, 30, 57, 58, 66, 68, 73, 84 and 132

Culture of peace**Prevention of armed conflict**

**Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and
displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

**Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia
and related intolerance**

Promotion and protection of human rights

Responsibility of States for internationally wrongful acts

The rule of law at the national and international levels

**The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide,
war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity**

**Security Council
Seventy-eighth year**

Letter dated 7 April 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to my letters dated 17 January 2023, containing or referring to the appeal by the Western Azerbaijan Community ([A/77/706-S/2023/43](#), annex, and [E/2023/50](#)), and my letters dated 22 February 2023, containing or referring to the concept of ensuring the peaceful, safe and dignified return of Azerbaijanis expelled from nowadays Armenia ([A/77/801-S/2023/134](#), annex, and [E/2023/53](#)), I hereby transmit a copy of the letter from the representatives of the Western Azerbaijan Community addressed to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (see annex), expressing deep concern over the destruction, misappropriation and misuse of the Azerbaijani cultural heritage in Armenia and calling for a fact-finding mission to be sent to Armenia to ascertain the state of this heritage and the compliance of Armenia with its international obligations.



I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 14, 30, 57, 58, 66, 68, 73, 84 and 132, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

**Annex to the letter dated 7 April 2023 from the
Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Letter dated 27 March 2023 from the representatives of the Western
Azerbaijan Community addressed to the Director-General of the
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**

Being deeply concerned with the destruction of Azerbaijani cultural heritage in Armenia, and echoing previous appeals from the Azerbaijani society to UNESCO, we are writing this letter to kindly ask you to send a fact-finding mission to Armenia to monitor the state of Azerbaijani cultural heritage there.

Our organization, which was established in 1989, deals with the protection of the rights of Azerbaijanis expelled from the territory of nowadays Armenia.

All Azerbaijanis were expelled from Armenia, where they once constituted the absolute majority. Azerbaijani historical and cultural heritage, including mosques and graveyards in nowadays Armenia, were destroyed on a large scale.

The Government of Armenia destroyed and damaged Azerbaijani tangible and intangible cultural heritage therein by direct actions and conducting propaganda designed to promote or incite ethnic discrimination directed against Azerbaijanis. The destruction took place before, during and in the aftermath of the military aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan. Most of the Azerbaijani cultural heritage in Armenia was destroyed in a pre-planned manner outside military hostilities. In other words, the driving force for the destruction of Azerbaijani cultural heritage has been the systematic policy of racial discrimination by the Government of Armenia aimed at creating a mono-ethnic and mono-cultural space, a notorious objective that has unfortunately become the reality in this country.

Armenia's wrongdoing against Azerbaijani heritage also includes misappropriation and alteration of the pieces of heritage. The only surviving mosque in Armenia, the Blue Mosque in capital Irevan, is misrepresented as "a Persian mosque", in a fallacious and offensive manner. In fact, the mosque was built and for centuries had been attended by Azerbaijanis, who used to constitute the absolute majority in the city.

Armenia continues to obliterate the last remaining traces of Azerbaijani culture. The Tapabashi quarter of Irevan city is the only piece of the historical old town of Irevan that has survived to this day. This quarter keeps in its memory the historical code of Irevan from the 17th century to the present day. The Tapabashi neighborhood, historically inhabited by Azerbaijanis, is now under threat of total annihilation. Armenian authorities are about to completely demolish the quarter.

Armenia's discrimination and ethnic cleansing have made a devastating impact on Azerbaijani intangible heritage as well. For example, the Goycha Ashiq school, the backbone of the Art of Azerbaijani Ashiq, itself inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, took irreplaceable loss due to Armenia's ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis of the Goycha district, in nowadays Armenia. The Government of Armenia even demonstratively destroyed the monument and the grave of Ashiq Alasgar, a prominent representative of the Art of Azerbaijani Ashiq, in his native Goycha.

The destruction of and damage to Azerbaijani cultural heritage by Armenia has made a detrimental impact on the enjoyment of our cultural rights, in particular, the right of everyone to access and enjoy cultural heritage. The violation of this right

threatens stability, social cohesion and cultural identity, and constitutes an aggravating factor in regional security and a major obstacle to dialogue, peace and reconciliation.

We champion the peaceful return of the expelled Azerbaijanis from Armenia in safety and dignity, and after the return ensuring the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law. This requires *inter alia* making Armenia fulfill its obligations under international law to restore, protect and preserve Azerbaijani cultural heritage and property in Armenia.

Protection of cultural heritage is not only a requirement of international humanitarian law but also a fundamental human right as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Enjoying cultural heritage is central to the concept of dignified return of expelled people. Ensuring cultural rights, i.e. human creativity in all its diversity and the conditions for it to be exercised, developed, made accessible, preserved and protected, is part of our fundamental rights, which Armenia has the obligation to ensure prior to, during and after our return to our homes.

Therefore, we seek the support of UNESCO in restoring and preserving our cultural heritage. Sending a fact-finding mission to Armenia to assess the state of Azerbaijani cultural heritage in this country, as well as the level of compliance of Armenia with its international obligations relating to the protection of cultural heritage and cultural rights, would be an invaluable contribution to reversing the damage to the cultural heritage of mankind, ensuring the respect for human rights, and thereby attaining the lasting peace.

Our organization stands ready to collaborate with UNESCO in carrying out activities aimed at assessing, restoring, preserving and protecting Azerbaijani cultural heritage in Armenia, and ensuring the cultural rights of Azerbaijanis expelled from Armenia to access and enjoy their cultural heritage.

We send a copy of this letter to the President of the UN Human Rights Council, and the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights.

(Signed) Dr. Aziz Alakbarov
Chairman of the Board of the Community,
Doctor of Science in Philology

(Signed) Professor Ahliman Amiraslanov
Chairman of the Elderly Council,
Full member of the Azerbaijan National
Academy of Sciences

(Signed) Professor Kamran Imanov,
Deputy Chairman of the Supervisory Board

(Signed) Professor Nizami Jafarov
Deputy Chairman of the Council of
Intellectuals,
Full member of the Azerbaijan National
Academy of Sciences

(Signed) Professor Misir Mardanov
Chairman of the Supervisory Board
Corresponding member of the Azerbaijan
National Academy of Sciences

(Signed) Professor Vahid Novruzov
Chairman of the Control-Audit Council

(Signed) Professor Gulchohra Mammadova
Member of the Supervisory Board,
Rector of the Azerbaijan University of
Architecture and Construction

(Signed) Malahat Ibrahimgizi
Chairwoman of the Women's Council

(Signed) Vahid Aziz
Member of the Supervisory Board,
People's Poet of Azerbaijan

(Signed) Mubariz Taghiyev
Member of the Supervisory Board,
People's Artist of Azerbaijan

(Signed) Movlud Suleymanli,
Member of the Supervisory Board,
People's Writer of Azerbaijan

(Signed) Rza Avshar
Member of the Community,
Honored painter of Azerbaijan
