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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****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
Eightieth year****Letter dated 28 May 2025 from the Permanent Representative of
Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Upon instructions from the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I have the honour to submit herewith the address by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the participants in the international conference on the theme “Return to Western Azerbaijan as an essential condition for the supremacy of human rights”, held on 21 May 2025 in Ankara, Republic of Türkiye, and the final document adopted at this international conference (see annexes I and II, respectively).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 32, 60, 61, 69, 71, 84 and 132, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Tofiq Musayev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex I to the letter dated 28 May 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Address by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the participants in the international conference on the theme “Return to Western Azerbaijan as an essential condition for the supremacy of human rights”, held on 21 May 2025 in Ankara, Republic of Türkiye

I sincerely welcome you, the participants of the international conference on “Return to Western Azerbaijan as an Essential Condition for the Supremacy of Human Rights,” being held in Ankara, and express my gratitude to the friendly and brotherly Republic of Türkiye for hosting this important event.

The conference, which brings together representatives of Azerbaijan and Türkiye, is a very significant event on the path to establishing peace, justice, and human rights in our region. The alliance and brotherly relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye, as well as the commitment of both countries to the principles of international law, provide a solid foundation for ensuring stability in the region.

Unfortunately, due to armed conflicts and racial discrimination, millions of people have been displaced from their homelands and live as refugees. In particular, during and after the First World War, Armenian radicalism and extremism subjected the Azerbaijani people to unprecedented hardships; hundreds of thousands of our compatriots were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands and faced mass murder and massacres.

In Western Azerbaijan – the territory of Armenia – systematic and total ethnic cleansing occurred in 1918–1921, 1948–1953, and 1987–1991, resulting in not a single Azerbaijani remaining in Armenia. In addition to being a great humanitarian tragedy, this ethnic cleansing also served the heinous geopolitical goal of cutting off the overland connection between the main part of Azerbaijan and its integral part, Nakhchivan, by severing Western Zangezur from the rest of Azerbaijan and transferring it to Armenia in 1920.

Armenia destroyed the rich cultural heritage, ancient settlements, mosques, shrines, and cemeteries of Azerbaijanis who had lived in Western Azerbaijan for millennia. These destructive steps by Armenia were aimed at erasing the traces of the Azerbaijani people from those territories and rewriting the history of the region.

The glorious Victory gained in the Patriotic War of 2020, the full restoration of our sovereignty in 2023, the current reconstruction of Karabakh and East Zangezur, and the return of former internally displaced persons to their homes have also created great enthusiasm among Western Azerbaijanis, enabling them to work in a more organized manner. The issue of Western Azerbaijan has already been included in the international agenda.

The peaceful initiatives of the Western Azerbaijan Community, in accordance with international law, are commendable and enjoy the support of the world community. Ensuring the safe, dignified, and peaceful return of Western Azerbaijanis to their ancestral lands in Armenia is an essential condition for the establishment of peace, human rights, and reconciliation in the region.

Unfortunately, the deep-rooted hatred for Turkic peoples in Armenian society, the fantasy of a “great Armenia,” the inclusion of territorial claims against Azerbaijan and Türkiye in the constitution of this country, and the denial of the opportunity for the return of Western Azerbaijanis represent obstacles to peace. Armenia should give

up its territorial claims against neighboring states, take steps to restore and protect the cultural heritage of Azerbaijanis, allow access to the UNESCO monitoring mission, and start a dialogue with the Community on the issue of return. Armenia should express an unequivocal position on when and under what conditions Western Azerbaijanis can return to their ancestral lands. We expect the Armenian leadership to receive representatives of the Community on this issue.

I would like to emphasize in particular that the desire of Western Azerbaijanis to return does not imply a territorial claim against Armenia, and Armenia should abandon attempts to portray this desire as such. This issue will not leave Azerbaijan's agenda until the return is realized. Of course, Western Azerbaijanis who will return to their homeland should also be provided with security guarantees.

We believe that this international conference, which serves the goal of increasing the awareness of the world community about Western Azerbaijan, will make a significant contribution to the return of our compatriots to their native lands.

We believe that Western Azerbaijanis will return to their native lands safely and with dignity, and that lasting peace will be established in the region.

I convey my best wishes to you and wish the conference every success.

Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Annex II to the letter dated 28 May 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Final document of the international conference on the theme “Return to Western Azerbaijan as an essential condition for the supremacy of human rights”, held on 21 May 2025 in Ankara, Republic of Türkiye

We, the participants comprising parliamentarians, scholars, civil society representatives, and public figures from Azerbaijan, Türkiye and other countries, gathered on 21 May 2025 in Ankara, the capital of Türkiye, for the international conference titled “Return to Western Azerbaijan as an Essential Condition for the Supremacy of Human Rights” and engaged in-depth exchange of views on the right of return of Western Azerbaijanis to their ancestral lands and the significance of this issue in the context of human rights and regional peace.

The conference listened with high esteem to the address by His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The address provided guidance to the discussions on issues of justice and peace at the conference and added significant value to its proceedings.

Based on the discussions held, we, the participants of the conference, express our solidarity on the following points:

The right to return, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other key international conventions, is one of the fundamental norms of international law and represents an important principle that serves peace and coexistence.

During various periods of the 20th century – 1918–1921, 1948–1953, and 1987–1991, Azerbaijanis living in Western Azerbaijan, i.e. in the territory of the present-day Armenia, were subjected to systematic ethnic cleansing and were forcibly expelled from their ancestral lands. As a result of this process, hundreds of thousands of Western Azerbaijanis became refugees and their cultural heritage, including mosques, cemeteries and historical monuments was destroyed. These tragic events have severely impacted the region’s cultural diversity and historical memory and remain an unresolved injustice to this day.

We declare that ensuring the right of return for Western Azerbaijanis is not only a matter of protecting human rights, but also a prerequisite for establishing justice, stability and coexistence in the region. The safe and dignified return of Western Azerbaijanis to their ancestral lands is a step toward rectifying historical injustice and a crucial move for ensuring stability and reconciliation in the South Caucasus.

The restoration of destroyed mosques and other cultural monuments in Western Azerbaijan, and their protection are essential for strengthening regional reconciliation and coexistence. The active participation of international organizations, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) is essential in this effort to promote cultural diversity and reconciliation.

We call on the Government of Armenia to unconditionally ensure the safe and dignified return of Western Azerbaijanis to their ancestral lands and to take concrete steps in accordance with international law. Armenia must initiate a constructive dialogue with the Western Azerbaijan Community, allow monitoring missions by

UNESCO and other relevant institutions to protect and restore the cultural heritage of Azerbaijanis and ensure the property rights of Western Azerbaijanis.

Coordinated international efforts are essential for the reintegration of returning Western Azerbaijanis, the restoration of infrastructure, the provision of humanitarian assistance and the implementation of long-term development programs.

We appeal to the international community to intensify diplomatic efforts to ensure the realization of the right of return for Western Azerbaijanis and to support the comprehensive planning and implementation of this process.

We call on the United Nations and other international organizations to establish monitoring and support mechanisms to ensure the right of return in accordance with international law and to create dialogue platforms for strengthening peace and reconciliation in the region.

We express our support to the Western Azerbaijan Community as the legitimate representative of the Azerbaijanis forcibly displaced from the territory of the present-day Armenia, and commend its determination to achieve the goal of peaceful return within the framework of international law, respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states and call on the international community to support the Western Azerbaijan Community in this endeavor.

We highly appreciate the leadership of His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in promoting the issue of peaceful return to Western Azerbaijan, his commitment to the rule of international law and his efforts aimed at restoring justice. Similarly, we commend His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, for his steadfast support for justice, peace and reconciliation.

This final document serves as a call to ensure the right of return for Western Azerbaijanis, the protection of human rights and promotion of lasting peace in the South Caucasus. The outcomes of the conference shall be communicated to international organizations, governments and the public and promote this issue as a priority on the global agenda.

Ankara, 21 May 2025
