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Agenda items 32, 60, 61, 69, 71, 84 and 132

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 Seventy-ninth year

Letter dated 27 December 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the address by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, to the participants in the Second International Conference on “The Right to Return: Advancing Justice for Azerbaijanis Expelled from Armenia”, held on 5 and 6 December 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan (see annex).

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 32, 60, 61, 69, 71, 84 and 132, and of the Security Council.

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



Annex to the letter dated 27 December 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Address to the participants in the Second International Conference on “The Right to Return: Advancing Justice for Azerbaijanis Expelled from Armenia”, held on 5 and 6 December 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan

More than 120 million people around the world have currently faced the problem of forced displacement, and an effective solution to this problem is impossible without the united efforts of the international community.

The Azerbaijani people, too, have endured the problem of displacement since the beginning of the last century. The Azerbaijanis living in Western Azerbaijan, within the territory of the present-day Armenia, were subjected to ethnic cleansing and forcibly expelled from their historical homeland in stages. In the aftermath of particularly horrific deportations in 1918–1921, 1948–1953 and 1987–1991, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis were driven from their ancestral homeland and sought refuge in Azerbaijan. As a result of those atrocious deportations, not a single Azerbaijani remained in Armenia, which became a mono-ethnic state.

Armenia is doing everything in its power to deny that the Azerbaijani people have lived and created a rich cultural heritage in their ancestral lands for centuries. Armenia has destroyed the cultural heritage created by our people in Western Azerbaijan over thousands of years – historical sites, graveyards, mosques, and settlements, – and has caused immense damage to the Art of Azerbaijani Ashiq, recognized by UNESCO as part of the universal cultural heritage.

Among these historical and cultural sites, only the Blue Mosque, one of the most striking examples of Azerbaijani architecture and Islamic culture, has survived. However, Armenia is trying to deliberately alter the original historical and architectural style of the Blue Mosque and present it under a different name. Such destructive steps aimed at distorting and rewriting the history and cultural landscape of the region are nothing short of intolerance and racism.

Armenia did not stop there and escalated its actions to military aggression against Azerbaijan, occupying its territories, committing ethnic cleansing, destroying and plundering cities and villages, and contaminating our lands with countless mines.

The people of Azerbaijan never came to terms with this injustice and tried to convey their voice of truth to the world. The Patriotic War, which culminated in Azerbaijan’s glorious victory in 2020, created the opportunity for our compatriots expelled from Karabakh and East Zangezur to return to their homeland. Azerbaijan’s war of justice stands as a triumph of the rule of international law and an enormous contribution to the solution of the problem of forced displacement on a global scale. The implementation of the “State Program on the Great Return” is progressing successfully in the liberated territories.

Unfortunately, the deep-rooted hatred towards our people in Armenian society, the myths of a “greater Armenia”, the territorial claims against Azerbaijan still embedded in the Armenian constitution, and the rapid armament of this country hinder the lasting peace between the two countries.

Armenia is trying to deliberately portray the activities of the Western Azerbaijan Community as a threat to its territorial integrity. However, the goal of the Community is to facilitate a peaceful, safe and dignified return of our compatriots displaced from

Western Azerbaijan to their ancestral lands. This is a purely human rights issue. The fact that Armenia labels the Community's activities as a threat represents an attempt to distort the true essence of the issue and deny the right of return enshrined in international law.

The Western Azerbaijan Community has repeatedly called on the Armenian government to engage in dialogue, but the opposing side has always turned down these initiatives. Armenia has to embark on negotiations with the Community and take tangible steps to restore the fundamental rights of Western Azerbaijanis. In addition, Armenia has to allow a UNESCO fact-finding mission to monitor the situation regarding the destruction and distortion of the historical and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people and be open to cooperation in this area.

It is extremely important that the international community should support the peaceful initiatives of members of the Western Azerbaijan Community in accordance with international law to ensure their right of return to their native lands. Initiatives based on the successful implementation of the Concept of Return will make a great contribution to the peaceful, safe and dignified return of Western Azerbaijanis to their native lands.

I wish success to the conference dedicated to safeguarding the rights of thousands of people of Western Azerbaijani origin who were forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands at various times and are currently settled in Azerbaijan and a number of countries around the world. I am convinced that this international conference, which will communicate to the international community the truth about the deportations the Azerbaijani people have been subjected to from time to time, will become an important platform of international dialogue and exchange of views on the right of return and the global problem of displacement in the near future.

H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Baku, 5 December 2024
