

## **Address By H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President Of The Republic Of Azerbaijan At The General Debate Of The 59th Session Of The United Nations General Assembly, September 24, 2004**

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to join the previous speakers and congratulate Mr. Jean Ping on his election to the post of the President of the Fifty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I also wish to congratulate his predecessor Mr. Julian Robert Hunte for his exemplary stewardship of the Assembly during his Presidency of the Fifty-eighth session.

At the Millennium Summit Member States have committed themselves to a shared vision of global solidarity and common security. We reaffirmed our faith in the United Nations and its Charter as indispensable for a more peaceful, secured and just world. As we entered the new century, we have done our best to maintain the vital importance of international law, so that all countries may have count on this Organization in their hour of need and the United Nations in its turn could fulfill what the world expects from it.

Some of our actions sought to protect millions of innocent people, especially women and children that still fall victims of brutal armed conflicts. Others endeavored to establish a more equitable world economy, where all countries must have equal chances for fair competition.

Azerbaijan makes its own contribution to the strengthening of global and regional security. Being one of the active members of the global coalition against international terrorism, Azerbaijan faithfully cooperates bilaterally and within multilateral frameworks to suppress this evil that continue to bring death and sufferings to innocent peoples.

Azerbaijan is amongst those countries who suffered directly from the consequences of armed conflicts existing on its territory. In reality, these conflicts are interlinked and we have no other choices than to face them in cooperation and in complex. There should be no room for any double standards.

Mr. President,

Since the very day of its membership in the UN Azerbaijan constantly draws attention of the international community to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh and the occupation by Armenia of the Azerbaijani territories. Azerbaijan expected UN to compel the aggressor to move out from its lands and to let expelled Azerbaijani population to return to their homes.

Should I remind that the Security Council in 1993 unanimously adopted four resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 in response to the occupation by Armenia of the territories of sovereign Azerbaijan? These resolutions confirmed the Nagorno-Karabakh region as the part of Azerbaijan, resolutely called for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and its internationally recognized borders, and underlined inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory.

The UN resolutions demanded an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from all occupied areas of Azerbaijan and establishment of conditions for safe return of displaced people to the places of their permanent residence.

None of these resolutions which were called to restore justice, peace and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has been implemented by Armenia which never respected and recognized the fundamental principles of international law contained in the resolutions that laid down the basis for the settlement of this conflict.

Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 other regions of Azerbaijan, which makes 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan, are for more than ten years occupied by Armenia. As a result of the policy of ethnic cleansing conducted by Armenia more than 1 million of the Azerbaijani people became refugees and internally displaced people.

The silent stance of the Security Council had a devastating impact on the settlement process. Ignoring the resolutions, trying to consolidate the results of its military aggression and not being punished for that, Armenia has consequently launched an outrageous policy of the massive illegal settlement of Armenian population in the occupied Azerbaijani territories, which is another blatant violation of the international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 on the Protection of Civilians in the Times of War.

Moreover the situation deteriorates with the use of these territories for drug trafficking, arms transfers, harboring terrorists, illegal economic activities, smuggling. The occupied Azerbaijani territories become kind of grey zone, out of control of the Azerbaijan's Government, areas free from any international monitoring. Self-proclaimed, non-recognized so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh republic"

is a constant threat to peace and security in the whole region. Armenian aggressors and Nagorno-Karabakh separatists are also exploiting natural resources in the occupied Azerbaijani territories, trying to engage overseas companies in the illegal business.

I call upon the Member States to take all necessary measures to make their nationals and companies to respect international law and prevent them from illegal activities on the territory of our country. Azerbaijan on its own part will undertake all necessary legal and practical measures to hold these companies accountable for participation in stealing the natural wealth belonging to a sovereign nation.

Furthermore, Armenia also falsifies the history and misappropriates the cultural and architectural heritage of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Religious and historical monuments, ancient manuscripts and other cultural properties have been destroyed, re-fashioned, plundered and removed.

The process of political settlement of the conflict conducted within the OSCE Minsk Group for the last 12 years, thus far has yielded no results. No serious consideration has been given by OSCE Minsk Group to implementation of the Security Council resolutions, assessment of the situation on the ground, and illegal activities carried out by Armenia on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

It is obvious that under current passive and silent attitude of the UN, its Security Council, OSCE and its Minsk Group and without strong pressure from the international community, Armenia will not move from its aggressive and destructive stance. The illegal actions of Armenia in the occupied Azerbaijani territories and its position within the negotiation process prove that Armenia is aimed not at finding a solution to the problem but rather at prolongation further the negotiations and consolidating the results of the aggression, trying to impose in the end a fait accompli-based settlement.

From this high podium I wish to stress that the settlement may be based only on international law and democracy, not on ethnic cleansing and de-facto annexation of territory of a sovereign state.

Azerbaijan will never reconcile with the occupation of its territories, violation of its territorial integrity and results of ethnic cleansing. The return of Azerbaijani displaced population to their homes remains one of our key priorities in the process of settlement of the conflict. But before our expelled people, refugees and internally displaced people are back home, there is still an urgent need for all the relevant UN agencies, donor countries and international humanitarian organizations to be actively involved in addressing the suffering of this most affected part of population.

The Government of Azerbaijan spares no time and effort and financial resources to do its part, but given the scale of displacement this is not sufficient. Burden sharing between the Government and relevant international organizations is crucial. Requested assistance, besides purely material support, is seen in renewing international attention to the problem as well as in providing for better coordination on the part of the UN and its specialized agencies of efforts by all international organizations. We expect more responsive strategy by the UN in relation to the situation of a "forgotten humanitarian crisis" in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is fully committed to the objectives of poverty eradication and promotion of good governance. Based on this approach and measures undertaken, we currently observe increasing economic performance and growth. Azerbaijan is making its contribution to the development of transregional cooperation and is promoting transportation and communication networks such as TRACECA, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum oil and gas pipelines. These projects will ensure predictable access for exports of land-locked countries to world and regional markets. Benefits of that should reach the poorest in each participating country.

To successfully tackle all the challenges the United Nations has to adapt itself. The long-standing issue of the UN reform needs to be resolved finally. Inability of the UN Security Council to cope with problems, particularly related to armed conflicts is obvious.

The new Security Council should be more representative, responsible and democratic, its working methods more transparent, more rapidly responsive to new challenges, risks and threats of the twenty-first century. The pressing issue is to elaborate viable mechanisms for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions.

It is an obligation of all of us to collectively apply effective approaches towards current problems, enabling stable environment for sustainable growth and democratic development of nations. This can only be achieved through reinforcement of norms and principles of international law, friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation among states.

Thank you.