



# NEWSLETTER

Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

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## **The First Azerbaijani-Canadian Grassroots and Advocacy Conference Held at the University of Toronto**

On November 28, 2010, the Azerbaijani Student Association at the University of Toronto (AzSA), the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Canada and the Azerbaijani-American Council (AAC) co-organized the First Azerbaijani-Canadian Grassroots and Advocacy Conference at the University of Toronto (UofT). The keynote speaker at the event was Dr. Reza Moridi, the member of Ontario Provincial Parliament. Among other speakers at the conference were Mr. Farid Shafiyev, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Iskandar Gadirzade, chairman of UofT AzSA, Mr. Michael Mostyn, former Director of Public Relations of B'nai Brith Canada, Dr. Javid Huseynov, General Director of AAC, Mr. Yashar Mugan, the Board Member of the Assembly of Azerbaijani-Canadian Organizations (AACO) and the others. At the event's opening, Mr. Shafiyev talked about the role of Azerbaijani grassroots in Canada as an important mechanism for advancing the interests of Azerbaijani-Canadian community and strengthening ties between Azerbaijan and Canada. Dr. Huseynov talked about the impact of internet on Azerbaijani grassroots, and successes and challenges of Azerbaijani diaspora in the United States. Speaking further, Mr. Gadirzade informed about the activities of AzSA at UofT, future plans to broaden Azerbaijani youth networking to other Canadian universities, and to build a first Azerbaijani-Canadian online grassroots portal. Finally, Mr. Mugan talked about the work of AACO and appealed to the audience to more actively participate in grassroots and advocacy.

## **Performance About Azerbaijani Refugees Showed in Montreal**

On November 30, 2010 a French language theatre performance about the Azerbaijani refugees titled "Gulnara's dress" (La robe de Gulnara), written by a Canadian Isabelle Hubert, was shown in Montreal. Before the show Farid Shafiyev addressed the audience. Mr. Shafiyev thanked the creators and organizers of the performance and underlined the importance of the play for drawing attention to the problem of refugees in the world, including Azerbaijan. He

noted that the Embassy was ready to contribute to the development of cultural relations between Azerbaijan and Canada. At the end of the play the audience went for the standing ovation. Following the show the Embassy hosted an official reception. "La robe de Gulnara" will be shown in Montreal until December 11, 2010. In September-December, 2011 the performance is scheduled to be staged in Quebec and other provinces of Canada.

## **Azerbaijani Ambassador to Canada Addressed Event at Ontario Legislature**

On November 26, 2010 Ambassador Shafiyev took part as a keynote speaker at a banquet held by the Association of Progressive Muslims of Ontario (APMO) at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in Toronto. During his speech Mr. Shafiyev touched on relationship between Islamic and Western worlds, and noted with regret the rise of Islamophobia in some Western countries. He said that in Azerbaijan, which was a secular state with more than 90% of its population comprised of Muslims, there were several synagogues and churches. The Ambassador noted that despite Azerbaijan had been subjected to an aggression, and the destruction of mosques in its occupied territories, the attitude to Christianity and other religions in the country remained tolerant. At the event Mr. Shafiyev has received an APMO's award.

## **Azerbaijani Ambassador to Canada Met with the Mayor of Montreal**

On November 30, 2010 Farid Shafiyev, Azerbaijani ambassador to Canada held a meeting with Mr. Gerald Tremblay, the Mayor of Montreal. They discussed the prospects of cooperation in economy, culture and education. Mr. Shafiyev stressed the existence of wide potential for the development of cooperation and importance of the implementation of a number of projects for further enhancing the relations. Mr. Tremblay said he was interested in expanding ties with Azerbaijan.

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*Embassy's Newsletter is compiled from various sources*