



*Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

**PRESS-RELEASE**

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**31 MARCH – DAY OF GENOCIDE OF AZERBAIJANIS**

Since 1998 the Azerbaijani people commemorates March 31 as the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis. In that particular day in 1918, the forces of the Bolshevik party in Baku together with Armenian militia massacred close to 12,000 Azerbaijanis. The British consul in Baku, Mac Dowell wrote: “There weren’t any Moslems in the town except corpses”.

During the past 200 years the massacre and deportation policy was pursued by Armenian nationalists and their supporters against Azerbaijani civilians. The aim of this repulsive policy was to withdraw Azerbaijanis from their native lands by force, and to establish “Great Armenia” state that was made up by Armenian nationalist historians and ideologists.

Following the resettlement policy of Armenians led by Tsarist and then Soviet Russia in the historical Azerbaijani provinces - Karabakh, Nakhchivan, Zangazur and others, the Azerbaijani inhabitants of those lands were deported gradually, in different periods of the XIX century and in 1905-1907, 1918-1920, 1948-1953, 1988-1993. Particularly, on March 1918 the Bolsheviks and Armenian nationalist groups under a banner of fight against counter-revolution slaughtered thousands of Azerbaijanis in Baku and other cities and regions of Azerbaijan. The policy of creating mono-ethnic state reached a high peak in 1988-1989, when 230,000 Azerbaijanis were expelled from Armenia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union Armenia launched a full scale war against Azerbaijan and occupied about twenty percent of the territories of Azerbaijan. About one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons.

It is worth noting that the facts proving mass human annihilations committed with special brutality by the Armenians during March events in 1918 in Quba region have been revealed in the recent years. Countless human bones found in the massive grave in the region are visual evidence of the Armenian vandalism. It has already been identified that these bones belong to the local civilians brutally murdered by the Armenian armed groups during their assault on Quba city in 1918.

After gaining independence, the political assessment of these events was finally given by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Genocide against Azerbaijanis” in 1998 and the fact of the genocide against Azerbaijanis by Armenia was officially declared for the first time. The committed crimes, ethnic-cleansing and deportation acts against Azerbaijanis throughout the history, and invasion of Azerbaijani territories by Armenians makes it necessary to properly assess the history of Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus as a whole, since territorial claims and historical falsifications are still going on.