



Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

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The Embassy of Azerbaijan to Canada has been informed by the RCMP that on February 24, 2006 the representatives of some Armenian organizations would hold a demonstration in the city of Ottawa in front of the building 275 Slater Street.

In this regard, the Embassy would like to inform the following. Recently the government of Armenia, the Armenian mass media and the Diaspora organizations have launched a propaganda campaign alleging the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage on the territory of Azerbaijan. The ultimate goal of this campaign is to detract attention from the commemoration of the **Azerbaijani Genocide in Khojaly** committed by Armenian military forces on the night of February 25-26, 1992. This brutal action, which resulted in death of 613 Azerbaijanis, including women and children, was called by the Human Rights Watch "*the largest massacre to the date in the conflict*".

In response to the Armenian allegation the government of Azerbaijan has invited **the Council of Europe to dispatch a fact-finding mission in the region** to objectively investigate the situation on the ground. The Azerbaijani authorities undertake necessary measures to preserve the diversity of the national cultural heritage, which includes, along with authentic Azerbaijani components, the elements of Arabic, Russian, Jewish, German and other cultures.

While the Armenian authorities is orchestrating this campaign, the international community must be aware of the actions of the Armenian authorities aimed at erasing the trace of the Azerbaijani population and their culture in Armenia proper and on the occupied Azerbaijani territories, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region. To wipe away from history the fact that Azerbaijanis had lived in the place which is now Armenia, in total the names of some 2000 towns and villages that formerly bore Azerbaijani names have been changed during the Soviet period. A number of historical, cultural, religious monuments and pieces of arts have been removed from the occupied Azerbaijani territories by Armenian armed forces. The Museum of History of Kalbajar region with its unique collection of ancient coins, gold and silver wares, rare and expensive stones, carpets and other handicraft wares, the Museums of History in Shusha region, the unique Bread Museum of Agdam region, the Stone Monuments Museum of Zangelan region, as well as many others were plundered and destroyed. 500 historical, architectural and more than 100 archeological monuments, 22 museums, 9 historical palaces, 44 temples, 10 mosques, 4 art galleries have been left in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and heavily damaged. Hundreds of ancient mausoleums and fortresses have been destroyed. In Shusha region the 18th century Govhar-Aga mosque has been heavily damaged, other mosques in the occupied regions have been destroyed and burnt down.

No amount of falsifications, allegations, and demonstrations can alter the reality on the ground – Armenia, in violation of the UN Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874, 884 of 1993, continues to occupy the Azerbaijani territories. The Armenian authorities must end the morally bankrupt strategy of aggression and falsification. As far as Armenian communities abroad are concerned, their moral obligation is to pave the way for the peaceful co-existence and interaction of Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples which for centuries lived side by side