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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.

Throughout the XX century the Armenian nationalists conducted the policy of aggression and ethnic cleansing against the Azerbaijani nation. In 1905-1906 they carried out a series of large-scale bloody actions against Azerbaijanis living in then part of the Russian Empire. On March 1918 Armenian Bolshevik and nationalist groups under a banner of fight against counter-revolution slaughtered thousands of Azerbaijanis in Baku and other cities and regions of Azerbaijan. After the Sovietization of the South Caucasus the Azerbaijani population were gradually deported from Armenia. This policy of creating mono-ethnic state reached a high peak in 1988-1989 as 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 territories of Azerbaijan. About one million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced persons.

Unfortunately, the sufferings of Azerbaijanis do not only belong to the history. This is today's tragic reality as twenty percent of Azerbaijan's territory is occupied by Armenia and about one million refugees and internally displaced persons are scattered across the country.

The act of genocide in Khojaly in 1992 and other murders in the course of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan 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.

The commemoration of 31 March is the demonstration of the national memory about the tragic events in the history of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani people.