



Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

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31 MARCH – DAY OF GENOCIDE OF AZERBAIJANIS

In 1998 the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued the Decree on Declaring March 31 as the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis.

The day commemorates a series of violent killings that started in Azerbaijan on March 30, 1918 and continued until April 1. During the three day massacre, thousands of Azerbaijanis, including women, children and the elderly, fell victim of mass murders committed by Armenian nationalists under the Bolshevik cover. In Baku alone, between 8,000 and 12,000 people were killed and about 30,000 perished in Azerbaijan as a whole.

The establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918 was accompanied by occupation and violence caused by Armenia's territorial claims and clashes of interests of great powers following the collapse of Russian Tsar.

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 overwhelms vocabulary of local policy makers in Armenia. In his address to the Nation on the occasion of 31 March President Ilham Aliyev pointed out that the goal of Azerbaijan is not to exploit the topic of genocide for political and financial benefits but to reveal the truth about the policy of Armenian aggression and occupation.

Commemoration of 31 March is the demonstration of the national memory about the tragic events in the history of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani people. The outrageous facts of mass killings, repression, expatriation of the Azerbaijanis from their native lands during the XX century are not known to many. During Soviet domination, Azerbaijan was unable to commemorate this tragedy but after the restoration of independence, the people of Azerbaijan take serious steps on the path of researching and preventing genocide as well as education about its history.