

**AN ADDRESS**  
*to the world's religious leaders and parliaments,  
the UN, the OSCE, the CoE, the OIC, the European Court of Human Rights*

**In the name of the One Creator! □**

As we approach the 28th anniversary of the genocide in Khojaly, in Azerbaijan's Karabakh region, we speak on behalf of millions of Azerbaijanis and address once again the entire international community, regardless of religion, language or nationality.

A historical fact deeply engraved in the memory of the Azerbaijani people is that on the night of February 25-26, 1992, Armenian invaders, aided by their patrons, carried out a sudden armed attack on the town of Khojaly to commit a merciless mass killing of the peaceful and unarmed local population. The Armenian armed bandits murdered, in an especially barbaric manner, 613 civilians, including elderly people, children and pregnant women, in the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly that night. The town of Khojaly was razed to the ground, 150 local residents went missing, 1,275 were taken captive and brutally tortured, and unspeakably vile acts were performed on the dead bodies of the peaceful civilians who were savagely murdered.

Under international law, genocide is one of the most serious crimes against peace and humanity. By its nature, the Khojaly tragedy belongs to the same kind of crimes against humanity as the Holocaust, and the acts of genocide which were perpetrated at Guernica and Khatyn. As a result of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani people suffered ethnic cleansing, physical and moral terror on their own lands, Armenian extremists occupied 20 per cent of our territory, drove more than a million Azerbaijanis from their homes, and carried out acts of vandalism on the Karabakh land that they invaded, including the destruction of our religious and cultural monuments. The deliberate act of genocide in Khojaly was the culmination of Armenian atrocities.

Although 28 years have passed, the Armenian terrorists have not yet been punished for their crimes and the requirements of four well-known UN Security Council resolutions have not been honoured to date. Although several countries and international organizations demonstrate an objective approach to Azerbaijan's regular appeals to the international community to recognize the Khojaly genocide, there are those, unfortunately, who are indifferent to this terrible crime.

Crimes taking place in today's world, such as violence, terrorism and extremism, are the result of the dangerous trends such as double standards, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and Islamophobia that some states, organizations and religious leaders demonstrate with regard to problems. Since massacres committed as a result of this kind of an approach, such as the Khojaly tragedy, are not given the recognition they deserve, this paves the way for fresh crimes and prepares the ground for a repetition of acts of genocide, terror, extremism and separatism in different parts of the world. It is very regrettable that some states work to promote the recognition not of real historical acts of genocide but of false allegations of genocide. We are concerned about trends in the international arena to open the way for unfair allegations through a biased politicization of events that are not based on historical facts. This kind of fanaticism can never be acceptable!

Because an indifferent attitude has been demonstrated toward the aggression against Azerbaijan and the consequent problem of one million refugees and displaced persons and because nobody has been held accountable for the banishment of our fellow countrymen from their homes by Armenian extremists, Armenia has not given up on its provocations and, furthermore, takes captive and hostage our citizens who visit the graves of their relatives buried on the land of their fathers and grandfathers, and tortures them and fails to honour international conventions, even those covering the return of dead bodies. Everybody knows that those involved in the Khojaly massacre will not be able to avoid the judgment of history. The day that the Khojaly criminals will be brought before an international tribunal for the crime of genocide is not far off, God willing!

We, religious figures of different faiths, who live in Azerbaijan, believe in - and pray for - a successful outcome of the efforts of the state leader of Azerbaijan to restore the territorial integrity of our country. We will always cherish the dear memory of all slain people - including the slain people of Khojaly - who died in Karabakh, which is an integral part of our Motherland, for the liberation of our lands, and we ask God that their souls may rest in peace. We, religious figures, wish peace, happiness, calm and prosperity to all the peoples of the world, and we pray and are doing our best for the establishment of justice in Nagorno-Karabakh in a peaceful manner within the framework of international law and to enable our refugees and IDP fellow countrymen to return to their homes. To this end, we once again ask religious leaders of the world, parliaments, international organizations and the European Court of Human Rights to adopt a principled political and legal stance on the aggression and atrocities committed by the Armenian extremists against the people of Azerbaijan and to recognize the crime committed in Khojaly as an act of genocide.

May the Supreme Creator help us all in good deeds and in justice! AMEN!

*Sheikhulislam Allahshukur PASHAZADE,  
Chairman of the Board of Muslims of the Caucasus*

*ALEKSANDR,  
Archbishop of Baku and Azerbaijan*

*Melih YEVDAYEV,  
Leader of the community of Mountain Jews in Azerbaijan*

*Baku, February 24, 2020*