



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 4

### Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

#### **Note verbale dated 1 April 2020 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honour to submit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 31 March, the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis (see annex).

The Permanent Mission kindly requests the Office of the High Commissioner to circulate the present note verbale and the annex thereto\* as a document of the forty-third session of the Human Rights Council, under agenda item 4

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\* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

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## **Annex to the note verbale dated 1 April 2020 from the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

### **Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

March 31 is the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis, commemorating the victims of the bloody massacre perpetrated by Armenians against Azerbaijanis in March 1918.

In March-April 1918, massacres were committed in the city of Baku and other towns and districts of the Baku Province by the Armenian dashnak - bolshevik armed groups operating under the mandate of the Baku Council (Baku Soviet), and tens of thousands of civilians were killed only for their ethnic and religious affiliation. Stepan Shaumian, an ethnic Armenian appointed as the Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus by the head of the Russian Bolsheviks - Vladimir Lenin, admitted that 6,000 armed soldiers of the Baku Soviet and 4,000 from the Dashnaksutyun party participated in the massacres against the Azerbaijani people<sup>1</sup>.

The genocide carried out against the Azerbaijanis along with Baku covered also Shamakhi, Guba, Iravan, Zangezur, Garabagh, Nakhchivan and Kars regions. During the first five months of 1918, more than 16,000 people were murdered with utmost cruelty in Guba province alone; a total of 167 villages were destroyed, 35 of which do not exist to this day. The Armenians also slaughtered local Jews and Lezghis living in Guba. Mass graves discovered in Guba region in 2007 constitute a clear evidence of the inhumane acts committed by Armenians.

March massacres of 1918 were well-prepared and ruthlessly implemented act by radical nationalist Armenians against Azerbaijanis on the grounds of racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing.

The Government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic established the Extraordinary Investigation Commission in 1918 in order to investigate the serious crimes perpetrated by Armenians and has taken a number of measures to preserve the true facts revealed by the Commission in the memory of the people and to inform the world community about these atrocities. The Extraordinary Investigation Commission which was comprised of the best lawyers of that time representing different nationalities – Russians, Jewish, Polish, Georgians and even Armenians, based on the evidences launched criminal cases against 194 individuals accused of different crimes against the peaceful population; 24 individuals in Baku and about 100 individuals in Shamakhy had been arrested for perpetrated crimes.

However, this process had been suspended after the demise of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, full investigation of the tragic events and its political-legal assessment had been prevented. Only after 80 years – on March 26, 1998, the adequate political assessment was given to these horrific events by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the Genocide of Azerbaijanis", signed by National Leader Heydar Aliyev and 31 March was declared the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis.

The commemoration of the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis raises the awareness of the world community to the facts of the massacre and ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanis in the past and present.

Since late 1980s, unleashing the war against Azerbaijan and occupying its territories, Armenia continued the policy reminiscent of March Massacre by carrying out ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis in Armenia and in the seized lands of Azerbaijan and committing numerous war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide, including Khojaly Genocide of February 1992.

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<sup>1</sup> «Шаумян С.Г Избранные произведения», том 2, Москва 1978, стр. 259-260.

While remembering the innocent victims of March tragedy, we strongly condemn the deliberate and continued policy of genocide, crimes against humanity, racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing by Armenia against the people of Azerbaijan and reiterate the importance of ceasing impunity of Armenia to prevent occurrence of such inhumane crimes.

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