Ilham Aliyev:

"Dear Shusha, we are back!"



The Association for Civil Society Development in Azerbaijan

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BAKU - 2021

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There is no Karabakh without Shusha,
and no Azerbaijan without Karabakh at all!
Heydar Aliyev

Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on declaring Shusha the cultural capital of Azerbaijan

Shusha has historically been one of the important centers of Azerbaijan's historical-cultural and socio-political life. In 1977, at the initiative of the national leader Heydar Aliyev, a decision was passed to "declare the historical part of Shusha as a historical-architectural reserve". Consequently, this decision was instrumental for the protection of monuments in Shusha and perpetuation of the memory of prominent figures of culture and art.

Following the armed aggression against Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia occupied Shusha on May 8, 1992, and implemented the policy of destruction of the historical and cultural heritage of our nation in the city.

The historical justice has been restored through the decisive and resolute struggle of our army, and on November 8, 2020, Shusha was liberated from the occupation. The inventory of damage to the city, its historical-cultural heritage and nature was immediately made and the restoration has been started. In addition to this, special attention has been attached to Shusha's governance to ensure flexibility and efficiency in organizing the restoration and building activities. Shusha was the first district among the liberated territories to get the first special presidential representative of the Azerbaijani Republic named.

Shusha's historical-cultural significance and the exceptional moral value for the people of Azerbaijan necessitate the city's special care and treatment. From this standpoint, the further improvement of the governance and legal regulation in Shusha will be both conducive to the restoration and preservation of the historical and cultural heritage and also for its permanent sustainable development.

Guided by paragraph 32 of Article 109 of the Constitution of the Azerbaijani Republic, in order to restore the historical appearance of Shusha, to restore

its former glory and to reunite it with its traditional rich in content cultural life, as well as to internationally promote it as a shining pearl of the centuries-long rich culture, architecture and urban planning, I decide:

1. To declare Shusha the cultural capital of Azerbaijan.
2. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijani Republic shall resolve the issues arising from this order.

Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Baku, May 7, 2021

Shusha Declaration on Allied Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey

The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey,

Emphasizing the historic significance of the meeting between President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the city of Shusha, the ancient cradle of culture of Azerbaijan and the entire Turkic world,

Once again reaffirming their adherence to all international documents signed between the two friendly and fraternal countries, and to the Treaty of Kars of October 13, 1921,

Guided by the "Agreement on the Development of Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey" and the "Protocol on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey" signed on February 9, 1994, as well as the "Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance" signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey on August 16, 2010",

Emphasizing that raising the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey to a qualitatively new and allied level on the basis of friendship and brotherhood between the two countries and peoples serves the interests of the two countries and peoples,

Realizing the importance of combining the capabilities and potentials of both countries in the political, economic, defense, cultural, humanitarian, healthcare, educational, social spheres, in the field of youth and sports in common interests,

Stressing the importance of continuing joint efforts to ensure global and regional peace, stability and security in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations,

Expressing the need for mutual coordination of activities in regional and international strategic issues of common interest,

Proceeding from the principles of solidarity and mutual assistance in bilateral and multilateral formats in such issues of national interest as independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey, inviolability of their internationally recognized borders,

Combining efforts in promoting joint activities on the regional and international plane aimed at the stable development of the Turkic world,

Emphasizing that the wise sayings of the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, and the national leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, "The joy of Azerbaijan is our joy and its sorrow is ours too" and "One nation, two states", are regarded as the national and spiritual heritage of our peoples,

Comprehensively considering the prospects for further expansion and deepening of bilateral relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey,

Hereby declare as follows:

The sides, expressing their satisfaction with the level of strategically developing relations between the two friendly and fraternal countries, note the importance of continuing the political dialogue at all levels and mutual visits at the highest level.

The sides proudly declare that Azerbaijan, having won a victory during the 44-day Patriotic war, put an end to the aggressive policy of Armenia that lasted for 30 years, liberated its lands from occupation, secured the victory of justice and the restoration of international law.

Azerbaijan highly appreciates the moral and political support of the Republic of Turkey in ending the 30-year Armenian aggression, liberating the occupied lands and restoring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The parties will

continue their efforts aimed at strengthening stability and security in the Caucasus region, restoring all economic and transport links, normalizing the relations between countries of the region and ensuring long-term peace. In this context, the special geographical location of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be taken into account. The sides emphasize that the contribution made by Turkey to the operation of the Turkish-Russian Joint Center in the territories of Azerbaijan liberated from occupation plays an important role in ensuring peace, stability and prosperity of the region.

The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey, guided by the principles of independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders, noninterference in the internal affairs of states, determine the political and legal mechanisms of their allied relations.

The parties note the importance of coordinating their foreign policies and holding regular bilateral political consultations and emphasize in this context the importance of activities between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey within the framework of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council.

The parties pursue an independent foreign policy aimed at protecting and ensuring national interests.

The parties make joint efforts aimed at the development of international relations based on peace, friendship and good-neighborliness through stability and prosperity on a regional and international scale, as well as the settlement of conflicts and the solution of issues of global security and stability.

Demonstrating solidarity and mutual support on international issues of a topical nature and of mutual interest, the parties, speaking from a consolidated position, will deepen bilateral cooperation and support each other within the framework of international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

If, in the opinion of one of the parties, there is a threat or an act of aggression from a third state or states against their independence, sovereignty, territorial

integrity, the inviolability or security of their internationally recognized borders, the parties will hold joint consultations and, in order to eliminate this threat or acts of aggression, carry out initiatives in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and provide each other with the necessary assistance in accordance with the UN Charter. After determining through urgent discussions the volume and form of such possible assistance, a decision will be made to secure defense needs for the adoption of joint measures and coordinated activities will be organized of power-wielding and administrative agencies of the Armed Forces.

Joint meetings of the security councils on national security issues of the parties will be held on a regular basis, discussing issues of national defense, regional and international security that may affect the interests of the parties.

The parties will continue to make joint efforts aimed at reorganizing and modernizing the armed forces of the two fraternal countries in accordance with modern requirements.

Guided by the clearance of mined areas, the parties will support activities aimed at normalizing life in the regions liberated from Armenian occupation.

The parties will encourage the exchange of personnel aimed at strengthening the defense capability and military security, conducting joint exercises and trainings, increasing the interaction capabilities of the armed forces of the two countries, cooperating closely in the management of weapons and ammunition on the basis of modern technologies, and ensuring coordinated activities of authorized agencies and institutions for this purpose. Azerbaijan and Turkey will support the implementation of military exercises together with the armies of other friendly states.

The parties, carrying out mutual technological exchange in the maritime, air and space spheres, and taking into account their national and international obligations, will encourage the implementation of common projects in order to develop joint capabilities and make a positive contribution to the development of mutual technologies in the defense industry, provide their weapons and ammunition, and mutually encourage production technologies and support the cre-

ation of production industries that do not currently exist in their countries, the implementation of joint research and production activities, cooperation between defense industry bodies of the two countries in the field of technology, military products and services in the domestic and international markets.

The parties note that the military-political cooperation developed between the two states and meeting their national interests is not directed against third states.

The parties emphasize the importance of further developing cooperation in the field of cyber-security, and will conduct joint scientific research, train specialists in this area and encourage mutual technical cooperation.

The parties will step up efforts aimed at diversifying national economies and exports in trade and economic relations, as well as creating joint production in promising industries and developing more favorable conditions for the mutually beneficial development of investment cooperation. In this context, Azerbaijan and Turkey will take measures aimed at creating mechanisms for organizing the free movement of goods.

The parties emphasize the advanced role of Turkey and Azerbaijan in the implementation of the strategic Southern Gas Corridor, which contributes to the energy security of the region and Europe and ensures the diversification of sources and routes of natural gas. The parties will continue their efforts in a coordinated manner aimed at rational use and further development of the Southern Gas Corridor. The parties, taking into account the processes in the global energy sector, also express their intention to continue their efforts in the field of electricity and to intensify efforts towards regional cooperation in order to enhance the security of energy supply of the region.

The parties will strengthen their cooperation in order to increase the competitiveness of the East-West Transport Corridor passing through the territory of the two countries. Azerbaijan and Turkey, using the technologies of intelligent transport systems, will further develop the transit and transport potential on the Azerbaijani-Turkish sections of international transport corridors.

The parties note that the opening of the corridor connecting Azerbaijan and Turkey between western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Azerbaijan (the Zangazur corridor) and, as a continuation of this corridor, the construction of the Nakhchivan-Kars railway will make an important contribution to the development of transport and communication links between the two countries.

The parties emphasize that the current level of relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan contributes to the overall regional and international peace and prosperity and that by bringing peace and prosperity not only to the two countries but also to the region as a whole, these relations serve stability, peace and the interests of the international community headed by countries of the region.

The parties will expand and deepen their joint efforts and cooperation in the field of combating various threats and challenges that have a negative impact on regional and international stability and security, in particular terrorism, all its forms and manifestations, financing, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, money laundering, drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal migration.

The Republic of Azerbaijan condemns any activity directed against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, stability and security of the Republic of Turkey, including all forms and manifestations of terrorism, and resolutely supports the fight the Republic of Turkey is waging against terrorism.

The parties will consolidate their efforts to further develop cooperation between Azerbaijani and Turkish diasporas living in different countries, take joint action against common problems they face and show consistent solidarity.

The parties will encourage coordination and mutual support of diaspora activities in representing their countries and communicating the historical truth related to the protection of national interests to the world.

The parties, stressing that Armenia's unfounded claims against Turkey, attempts to distort history and politicize historical facts through their distortion, harm peace and stability in the region, strongly support the efforts of Turkey in

this context, which has opened its archives in connection with the events of 1915 in order to encourage the opening of archives in Armenia and other countries and enable a research to be conducted on this topic by historians.

In accordance with the "Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey in the Field of Media" signed on December 10, 2020, the parties, taking into account the capabilities of the Azerbaijan-Turkish media platform, will further strengthen cooperation between relevant agencies of the two countries in the field of information, communication and public diplomacy. Within this framework, active consultations and exchanges of information will be regularly held between the ministers of foreign affairs.

The parties encourage further strengthening of inter-parliamentary cooperation and increased interaction in this direction.

The parties will ensure the provision of the necessary public support for important manifestations of the common values of the two peoples and carry out joint activities to protect the historical and cultural heritage.

The parties note the intensification of national and international efforts that will serve the unity and well-being of the Turkic world.

The parties will strengthen cooperation in the field of promoting and advancing Turkic cultural heritage at the international level.

In order to further strengthen Turkic cooperation, the parties will give an impetus to the activities carried out within the framework of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, the Turkic Academy, the Foundation of Turkic Culture and Heritage, TURKSOY and the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries.

The parties express their satisfaction with the agreement reached on the entry of citizens of one party into the territory of the other party with domestic passports only and, noting the exceptional importance of this agreement in terms of proximity between our peoples and ties between them, approve the adoption of appropriate measures to enable citizens of one party to obtain the right to re-

side in the territory of the other party in accordance with the principle of reciprocity.

The parties, providing the necessary state support, will continue to develop and deepen close ties on the basis of common values in the humanitarian sphere, in the field of social protection, science, education, healthcare, culture, youth and sports. To this end, relevant agencies of the two countries will carry out joint activities on a permanent basis.

This Declaration is signed in the city of Shusha on June 15, 2021 in the Azerbaijani and Turkish languages in two original copies, and all texts are equally authentic.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Ilham Aliyev

President of the Republic of Turkey
Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Dear readers!

Here comes a new book by the Azerbaijani Association for Civil Society Development.

I am delighted that we live in Azerbaijan that has regained Karabakh, Shusha... As well, I am thrilled that copies of this book will also occupy their rightful place on the bookshelves of Shusha libraries...

In November 2020, Azerbaijani President and Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev declared the liberation of Shusha, a charming corner of our country, from the Armenian occupation and its reunion with the HOMELAND!

On that day, the people of Azerbaijani have again become joyous. The people of Azerbaijan have restored own pride and have regained their might.

Today we are even stronger!

The book "Ilham Aliyev: Dear Shusha, we are back!" is being prepared for the publication after the signing of a very important and historic document, "the Shusha Declaration on the Allied Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey".

The official visit of the president of the fraternal Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to Azerbaijan has just ended. And we will analyze the statements of the presidents of the two brotherly countries, Azerbaijan and Turkey, for a very long time. The text of the Declaration signed in front of the house of Khurshidbanu Natavan, the daughter of the last khan of Shusha, Mehdigulu khan, savagely destroyed by the Armenian occupiers, will be studied and learnt by the whole world.

The signing of this document in Shusha is extremely important.

Shusha has a special place in the historical and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people. Founded in 1752, in the second half of XVIII century, Shusha was already one of the famous Azerbaijani cities and the musical centre of the Caucasus at the end of the XIX and early XX centuries. In different periods, Shusha was called Little Paris, an art temple of the Caucasus, the cradle of the Azerbaijani music and the conservatory of the Caucasus.

Shusha has gone down in history as the center of our national culture, the cradle of our poetry and music as well as the source of our spiritual pride, which takes a special

place in the development and dissemination of the Azerbaijani musical culture worldwide. Shusha is both the birthplace of Uzeyir bay Hacibayli, Zulfuqar Hacibayli, Soltan Hacibayli, Jabbar Qaryagdioglu, Bulbul, Khan Shushinski, Rashid Behbudov, Suleyman Alasgarov and hundreds of unmentioned celebrities of culture and dramaturgy. The most spectacular and famous representatives of our national art music were born in Shusha.

May 8, 1992 – the day of the occupation of Shusha – inflicted a heavy blow on the morale of the Azerbaijani nation. The invasion of Shusha was a heavy pain for the people of Azerbaijan. With Shusha's occupation, 480 innocent civilians were killed, 600 were wounded and 22,000 were displaced. The fates of our captured 68 compatriots still remain unknown.

Throughout the occupation of Azerbaijani lands, the Armenian armed forces also brutally destroyed national cultural monuments of the Azerbaijani people and inflicted irreparable damage to the cultural heritage of Azerbaijan - an integral part of the world nations. Historical and cultural monuments of the Azerbaijani people were razed to the ground and deliberately wiped off in the captured territories. Accordingly, because of Shusha's occupation, 8 museums, 31 libraries, 17 clubs, 8 culture houses were razed to the ground. About 5,000 exhibits of the Shusha city museum of history, 1,000 exhibits of the Shusha branch of the Azerbaijani State Museum of Carpet and Folk Applied Arts, the State Museum of the History of Karabakh, museum collections of the memorial museums of Uzeyir Hajibayli (over 300 items), founder of the Azerbaijani professional music; of great singer Bulbul (about 400 items), founder of the Azerbaijani vocal art; of Mir Movsum Navvab (over 100 items), prominent musician and painter, were plundered.

The Armenian aggressors took statues of Uzeyir bay Hacibayli and Bulbul, great figures of the Azerbaijani music, as well as poetess Khurshidbanu Natavan from Shusha to Armenia. Contrary to the moral norms, these monuments were riddled with bullets and damaged with heavy machinery. Thanks to the resolute steps of the Azerbaijani government, the busts were again obtained with great difficulty and brought back to Baku. Shusha's liberation also healed "the wounds" of the statues of Uzeyir bay Hacibayli, Bulbul, Khurshidbanu Natavan that had been riddled with bullets of Armenians.

Shusha, the symbol of might of Karabakh and Azerbaijan as a whole and the pearl

of the historical and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people, has reunited with the FATHERLAND after many years owing to the strong will power of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the courage of the Azerbaijani Army. The yearning for Shusha, of which the gates remained closed for the Azerbaijani people for 28 years, has come to an end. The gates of Shusha were again opened for people of Azerbaijan, who, throughout the history have lived here, created this pearl of culture, and engraved the history of heroism, bravery and courage with their blood on this land.

It is useful to recall that assessing Shusha's exceptional importance for Azerbaijan, national leader Heydar Aliyev said that there could be no "Karabakh without Shusha and no Azerbaijan without Karabakh as a whole".

In his interviews with various international news agencies and TV channels at different times, including after the September 27, 2020 counteroffensive operations, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, constantly underscored the historical, cultural and spiritual significance of Shusha for the Azerbaijani people.

Remarks by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made in his December 10, 2020 speech to the Victory Parade at Baku's Liberty Square are of great importance:

"Undoubtedly, one of the biggest contributors of Azerbaijan's military and diplomatic successes is my dear brother President Ilham Aliyev. By this, my brother Ilham Aliyev has also accomplished the last wish of late Heydar Aliyev. I also take this opportunity and thank the national leader Heydar Aliyev, who laid the foundation of a strong Azerbaijan. I hope that Azerbaijan will further achieve miracles under the resolute leadership of my brother Ilham Aliyev."

Dear readers!

A historic victory was achieved within 44-day patriotic war in 2020. A glorious history has been made and this history must be written, as it is essential.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has declared Shusha the capital of the Azerbaijani

culture. Following this move, Shusha has acquired prominence worldwide. Dr. Salim Mohammed AlMalik, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), said that they wanted to see Shusha as the cultural capital of the Islamic world. The Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States proposed to announce Shusha as the cultural capital in 2022 and to hold numerous cultural events there.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Kharibulbul music festival, the idea of which belonged to President Ilham Aliyev, and organized by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, for the first time after the occupation of Shusha, resounded throughout the world.

Currently, the research of Shusha's glorious history, its rich culture and the life-and-death battle for the liberation of the city are one of the most pressing issues.

Addressing the opening of the Military Trophy Park in Baku on April 12, 2021, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said: "After the Shusha operation, Armenia dropped to its knees. The Shusha operation is a separate epic and it will be spoken about for a long time. However, those, who visit Shusha and see those steep cliffs, cannot imagine how this impregnable fortress was taken. We have regained Shusha only thanks to the professionalism, courage, heroism and national spirit, and the enemy fell to its knees, bowed its head, raised the white flag, admitted defeat, signed an act of surrender on November 10 and we have occupied Kalbacar, Lacin and a part of Agdam districts returned without firing a single shot."

When this book was ready for printing, good news came...

The servicemen of our Armed Forces, who took part in the military operations for the liberation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, showed courage and bravery, performed their duties with dignity and honesty, were awarded various orders and medals as ordered by President Ilham Aliyev - Supreme Commander-in-Chief.

Under the June 24 presidential decrees, 11,365 people were awarded "For the liberation of Fuzuli"; 11,831 people "For the liberation of Khojavand"; 3,435 people "For the liberation of Zangilan"; 10,211 people "For the liberation of Jabrayil"; 5,867 people "For the liberation of Qubadli"; 5,784 people "For the liberation of Shusha"; 3,522 people "For the liberation of Aghdam"; 4,225 people "For the liberation of Kalbacar"; 2,643 people "For the liberation of Lachin"; 10,647 people "For the liberation of Suqovusan"; 731 people "For the Motherland"; 616 people "For Valor"; 2,893 people "Brave Warrior";

786 people "For Distinguished Service" and 1,743 people "For Military Service" medals.

By another presidential decree, 2 people were awarded the "Karabakh"; 28 servicemen for "The Azerbaijani Flag Order"; 13 people the 3rd degree of "Valor"; 7 people the 3rd degree "Order for Service to the Motherland" orders. The total number of the awardees is 76,349.

I am confident that this book by the Azerbaijani Association for Civil Society Development will be a remarkable gift for Azerbaijan with regained Karabakh and Shusha.

Elkhan Suleymanov,
President of the Association for Civil Society Development in Azerbaijan

Photos of official chronicle

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2. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva outside the tomb of the national leader Heydar Aliyev at the Alley of Honor

3. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva paying tribute to the prominent ophthalmologist-scholar, academician Zarifa Aliyeva at the Alley of Honor

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8. Outside Bulbul's bust vandalized by Armenians;

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13. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev outside Vagif's shrine that will be renovated

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41. President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan and First Lady Emine Erdogan pictured with "Kharibulbul" composition, a symbol of Karabakh

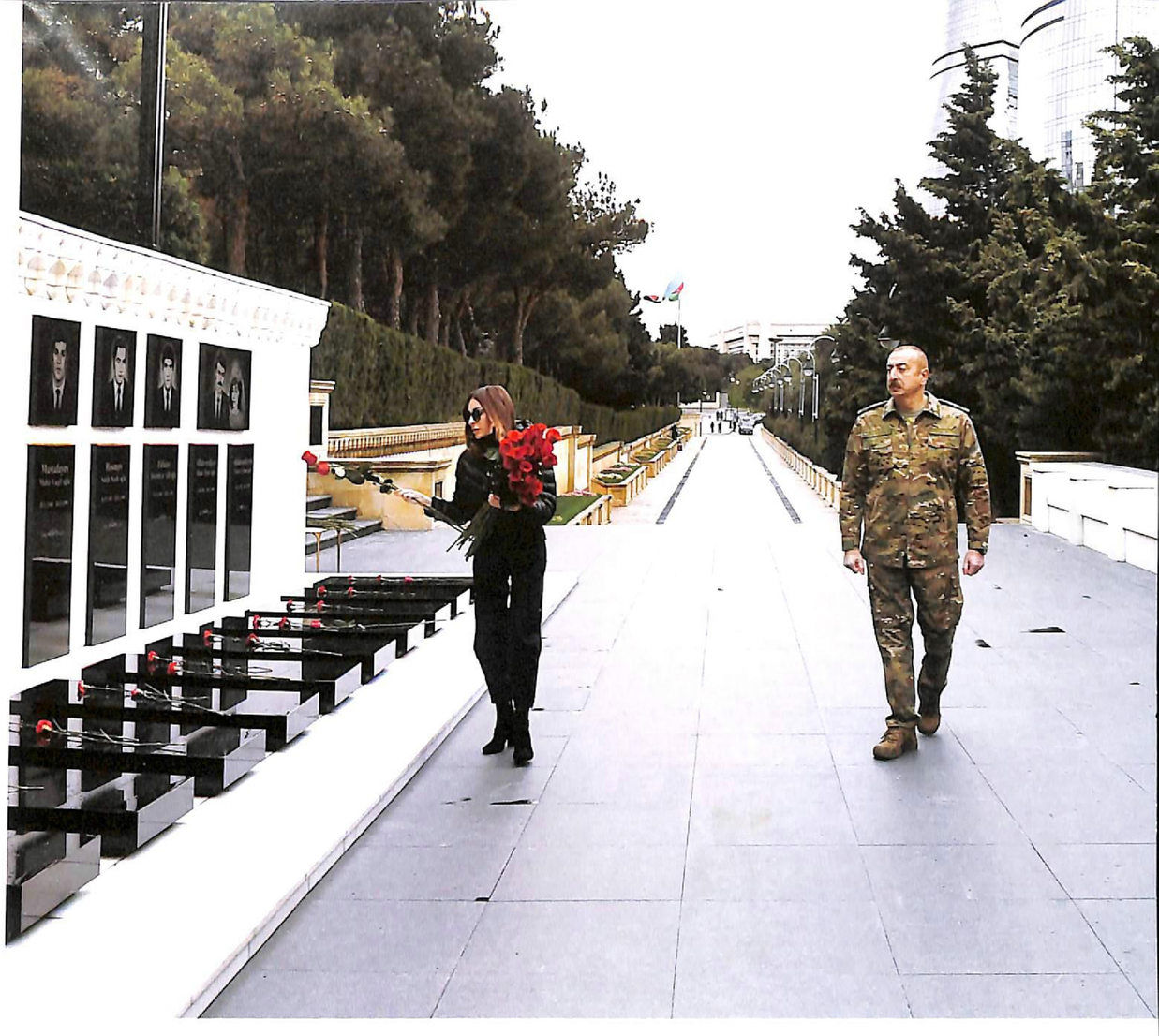
42. President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan addressing the Milli Majlis (Parliament)





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08.11.2020



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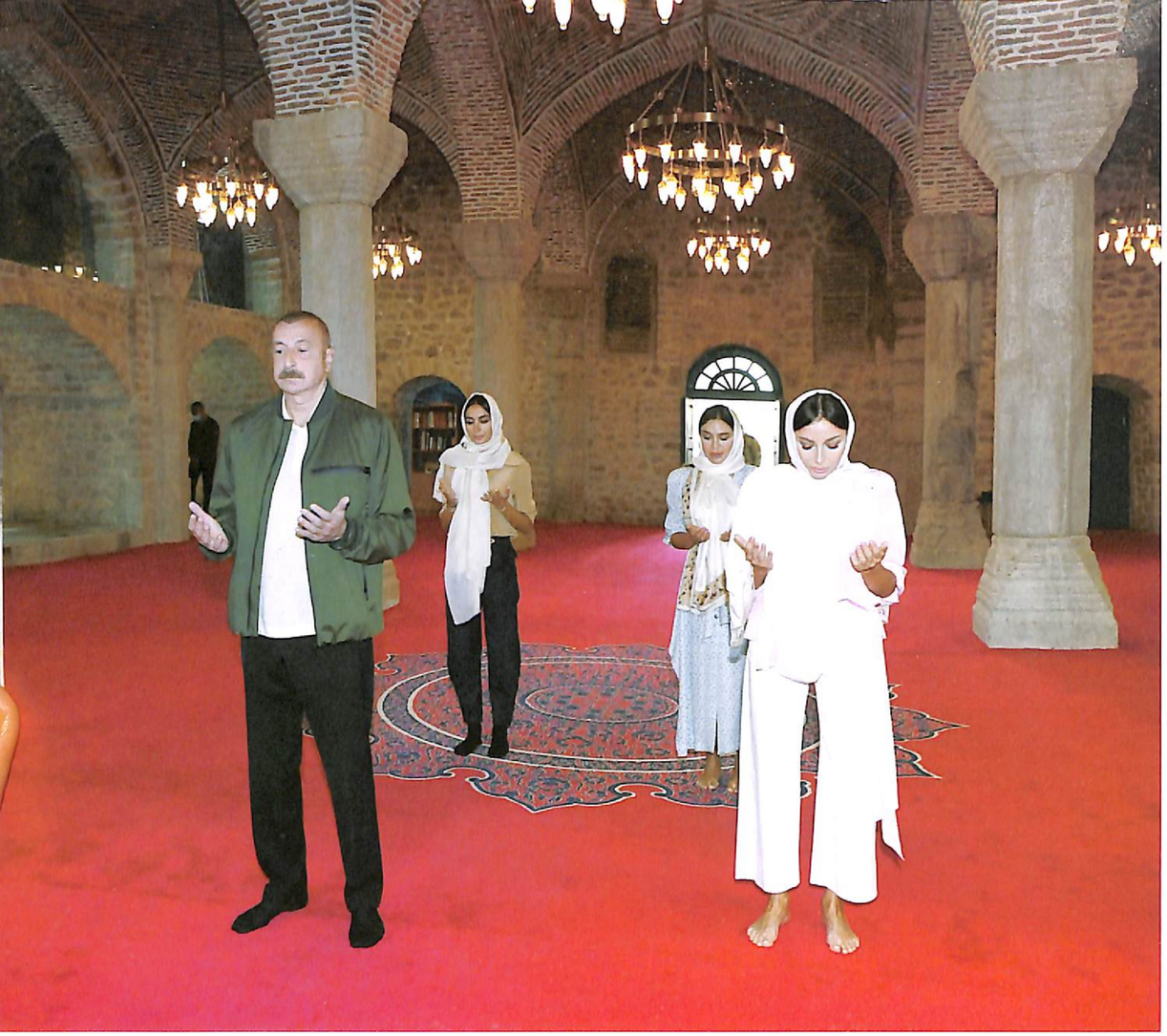

MƏSCİDİN TƏMƏLİ
AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ
PREZİDENTİ CƏNAB İLHAM ƏLİYEV
TƏRƏFİNDƏN 12 MAY 2021-Cİ İL
TARİXİNDƏ QOYULMUŞDUR







12.05.2021








BİR MİLLƏT, İKİ DÖVLƏT
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OFFICIAL CHRONICLE

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva visited Alley of Honors and Alley of Martyrs
The head of state, Victorious Commander-in-Chief addressed the nation at the Alley of Martyrs

08.11.2020

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva have today visited the Alley of Honors and the Alley of Martyrs.

AZERTAC reports that the head of state addressed the nation at the Alley of Martyrs.

President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva first paid respect to national leader Heydar Aliyev at the Alley of Honors.

President Ilham Aliyev laid a wreath at the tomb of national leader Heydar Aliyev.

The state anthem of Azerbaijan was played.

The head of state and his wife also paid tribute to prominent ophthalmologist, academician Zarifa Aliyeva.

They also put flowers at the graves of state figure Aziz Aliyev and physician, scientist Tamerlan Aliyev.

President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva then visited the Alley of Martyrs. The head of state and the first lady commemorated Azerbaijani heroes who gave their lives for the country`s independence and territorial integrity, and put flowers at their graves.

President Ilham Aliyev laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame monument.

The state anthem of Azerbaijan was played.

The head of state addressed the nation at the Alley of Martyrs.

Address of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev to the nation

- Dear fellow countrymen, dear sisters and brothers!

It is with great pride that I declare that the city of Shusha has been liberated from occupation! Shusha is ours! Karabakh is ours! I heartily congratulate all the people of Azerbaijan on this occasion. I heartily congratulate all the people of Shusha.

Shusha, which was under occupation for 28 and a half years, has been liberated! Shusha is free now! We have returned to Shusha! We have won this historic victory on the battlefield. November 8, 2020 will forever remain in the history of Azerbaijan. This history will live forever. This is the day of our glorious victory! We have won this victory on the battlefield, not at the negotiating table. I have said many times that, despite all the statements, there are military solutions to this conflict, the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and we are proving it on the battlefield today. Nearly 30 years of meaningless negotiations did not bring us any closer to the result. Our ancient historical lands had been under occupation for almost 30 years. In the process of negotiations, the Armenian side simply wanted to gain time, strengthen the status quo and perpetuate it. Over the years, signals sent to Azerbaijan from various power centers were repeatedly urging us to put up with the situation. However, showing determination, courage and political will, we did not go for any agreement that did not meet the interests of the Azerbaijani people. I have repeatedly stated from all international forums that the restoration of our lands and territorial integrity is our main task, and we are fulfilling this task. Negotiations did not yield any results. They were just trying to fool us, they were just trying to freeze the issue. We have won this victory on the battlefield, we have won this victory by giving martyrs. May God have mercy on all our martyrs! I ask God's mercy for all our martyrs who died in the first Karabakh war and the second Karabakh war- the Patriotic war as we call it. I wish God's healing to our wounded compatriots. We

are liberating our lands from occupiers at the cost of the lives and blood of our people, soldiers and officers. We are expelling the occupiers from our lands and we will expel them!

Shusha was under occupation for 28 and a half years. Shusha has a special place in the history of Azerbaijan. This is our ancient and historical city. For centuries, Azerbaijanis have lived, built and created in Shusha. Shusha is a pearl not only of Azerbaijan but also of the entire Caucasus. However, by occupying Shusha, the hated enemy dealt a great blow to our cultural heritage, destroyed our historical sites, destroyed our mosques and insulted us. We have now returned to Shusha. We will restore all our historical sites, all our mosques, and a call to prayer will be heard in Shusha again after 28 years. A few years ago, at the opening of a mosque built on my instructions in the Jojuq Marjanly settlement which was liberated from occupation after the April 2016 fighting, I stated that this mosque was similar to the Shusha mosque. It is of the same size and architectural style. I said that one day we would restore our mosques destroyed by Armenian vandals in Shusha, and that day is coming. Today, the Azerbaijani flag is flying in Shusha. Today, all the people of Azerbaijan are proud to welcome this good news.

We are gathering strength in a focused manner, tirelessly, despite all the pressures. We are building up economic power. If we did not have economic power, it would not be possible to achieve this victory. First of all, economic independence had to be secured and was secured. Today, Azerbaijan is not economically dependent on anyone, on any country or international financial institution. This independence has allowed us the opportunity to develop our country and strengthen our army at the same time. We buy all the military equipment and weapons needed for our Army from foreign markets. If we didn't have economic opportunities, how could we get them? I think that by pursuing a successful policy within the country, we have created a unique model of development for the world. Our internal solidarity, national unity and common cause gave us additional strength, did not allow some hated foreign circles to implement their

ugly plans in respect of Azerbaijan. However, there were such plans, there were such attempts. We have repulsed these attempts by showing political resolve and unity, we have defended our pride as a people, as a nation, we have defended our independent choice, and we have proved that no-one can or will interfere in our work. Without this unity and national solidarity, we would never have been able to liberate our lands from occupiers. The main goal of the smear campaign, the campaign of libel and defamation against us over the years was to remove us from our main task, to distance us, to drown us in internal problems and to keep the occupied territories in the hands of the occupiers forever. Strong political will and the unity of the people and government overthrew these plans.

The third key factor in our victory is our success at the international level. We have proved to the whole world that Karabakh has always been the land of Azerbaijan. We have proved that the Azerbaijani people have lived in these lands for centuries. We have proved that the Armenian population was settled to these lands only 200 years ago, how it was resettled and for what purpose. We presented it all to the world community, with evidence and facts. We have proved that Nagorno-Karabakh is historical and ancient land of Azerbaijan, and this issue must be resolved on the basis of the norms and principles of international law. All of the world's leading organizations, all international organizations have adopted fair resolutions and decisions on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Four resolutions of the UN Security Council, resolutions of the UN General Assembly, resolutions of the Non-Aligned Movement, resolutions of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, resolutions of the European Parliament and other international organizations unequivocally recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as an integral part of Azerbaijan. This gave us additional strength. If we had not done that, the processes surrounding the conflict today could cause us great problems. Over the years, we have been able to establish relations with many countries on the basis of sincere, businesslike and mutual respect. Many countries consider Azerbaijan a strategic partner, and this expression is already reflected in international documents. We have been able to establish relations with

all neighboring countries on the basis of sincere friendship, mutual respect and mutual trust. If we had not done that, a completely different process could have taken place around the conflict today.

When Shusha was occupied, our main problems were that we did not have an army and the leadership could not fulfill its duties. At the international level, Azerbaijan had strained relations with almost all countries. We were almost isolated. But today we have isolated Armenia. Our transnational projects have created a completely new landscape in the region. We have redesigned the energy and transport maps of the region. The projects implemented on our initiative meet the interests not only of our people, but also the interests of many countries, including the countries of the region. We have both bilateral and trilateral cooperation formats with neighboring countries. All this has greatly strengthened Azerbaijan's international authority. Without these achievements, the problem could remain frozen.

Finally and, first of all, army building. During these 17 years, the key part of my work has been devoted to army building, to strengthening our army, to equipping our army with the most modern weaponry. It was not an easy task either. Material resources alone are not enough to buy these weapons. At the same time, diplomatic and political efforts must be made, and we have achieved all this. Today, Azerbaijan provides for its military needs from many countries. At the same time, the defense industry has been created in Azerbaijan on my initiative. We meet the needs of our army largely through domestic production. Azerbaijan produces more than 1,000 types of military products, including the most modern ones. This is our activity – building the army, solving the material and housing problems of our servicemen, solving the problems of the retired servicemen, providing them with apartments, improving the working conditions of our servicemen. We have rebuilt almost all our military camps and military bases, and they meet the highest standards. Of course, first of all, there is combat capability. The ability to fight has increased. Repeated military parades on Azadlig Square have shown the world our strength.

Increasing combat capability is a key factor in army building. We use modern weapons, we use technology and we destroy enemy equipment, but it is Azerbaijani soldiers who liberate our lands, it is Azerbaijani officers who liberate them. They are the ones who chase the enemy with a flag and a weapon in their hands, soldiers who destroy the enemy. Long live our soldiers!

We have created such an army! We said to the occupiers, we said to them, put an end to the occupation before it is too late. Therefore, our policy was unequivocal at all times. We have said that if the issue is not resolved peacefully, we will resolve the issue militarily. I have said this many times. Therefore, I have been criticized by some countries. I said to them: weren't our lands occupied by military means? Has Armenia occupied our lands peacefully? Every country has the right to self-defense. This right is given to us by the UN Charter. I said that if I see that the talks are completely ineffective, we will be left with no other option. Let everyone know this – the enemy, its supporters and the mediators involved in this matter. I have always kept my word. I did what I told the Azerbaijani people. I kept my word on this issue and we are already celebrating the Victory.

Since September 27, more than 200 cities, villages and settlements have been liberated, including the city of Fuzuli, which has been completely destroyed. The hated enemy did not leave a single safe building there. Jabrayil is completely destroyed. Gubadli, Zangilan are completely destroyed. Villages, cities. Hadrut settlement, Sugovushan settlement and the city of Shusha today.

Our victory march continues. There are still occupied lands and the fighting still continues. If the Armenian leadership does not respond to my demand, we will go to the end. No-one can stop us. There is no force in the world that can stop us. Armenia has already admitted its bitter defeat, has humiliated itself and insulted its people. The Armenian leadership now seeks help, military assistance, weapons and equipment from other countries. Where is your invincible army now? We have destroyed it. All their words, all their statements were a myth, a lie. The invincible army is the Azerbaijani Army! We showed this on the battlefield, expelled the enemy from the lands on our own. Billions of dollars

have been spent over 30 years, fortifications have been built, engineering facilities have been built. But we have destroyed them all – at the cost of our spirit, strength and unity!

I want to say again that our victory march continues. Enemy forces must be withdrawn from all occupied territories. This is our demand. International norms and principles, decisions and resolutions of international organizations require exactly that.

Dear sisters and brothers, today I give this good news to my native people here in the Alley of Martyrs. This is not accidental. This is natural. Today, I bow once again to the souls of our martyrs. Today I declare that the blood of our martyrs does not remain unavenged. The blood of the victims of Armenian atrocities, the victims of Khojaly, does not remain unavenged. We took our revenge on the battlefield. We have never fought against civilians, we didn't do it this time either. Although the hated enemy has killed 93 and wounded more than 400 civilians with cowardly fire. But I said no, we are Azerbaijanis! We will take our revenge on the battlefield! We have destroyed their army, we have destroyed their equipment, we are destroying and will destroy. We will drive out the enemy!

Today, I also visited the grave of great leader Heydar Aliyev and paid my respects. I said in my heart, I am happy to have fulfilled my father's will. We have liberated Shusha! This is a great victory! The souls of our martyrs and the Great Leader are happy today! Congratulations, Azerbaijan! Congratulations, Azerbaijanis of the world!

These days I receive thousands of letters from Azerbaijanis around the world, from people living in Azerbaijan. I get thousands of letters every day. I just regret that I can't read them all. There is simply not enough time. What wonderful words, what great support! Today we prove to the whole world that we are a great nation, we are a proud nation! We are an invincible people! We show the enemy's place on the battlefield!

These days, I have repeatedly appealed to the people of Azerbaijan and showed my fist to the enemy. I said that this is not such a fist. This is an iron fist.

We will crush the head of the enemy with this iron fist! At the same time, this fist is a symbol of our unity. Today, the people of Azerbaijan are as united as this fist! It will always be the case! This unity will last forever! This unity will allow us to fulfill all our responsibilities in the future. For all these years – for 17 years – I have felt the support of the Azerbaijani people. I have seen your trust, your kind attitude to me. It gives me strength. This is invaluable support for my policy. I have always assured the people of Azerbaijan that I will serve my homeland and my people with dignity and loyalty. I am glad that I have kept my word. As always, I have kept my word.

Giving this good news to the people of Azerbaijan on this historic day is perhaps one of the happiest days of my life.

Dear Shusha, you are free!

Dear Shusha, we are back!

Dear Shusha, we will revive you!

Shusha is ours! Karabakh is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

https://azertag.az

Mehriban Aliyeva: We have returned our Shusha! I congratulate all of you on this significant historic event

08.11.2020

First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva has congratulated the people of Azerbaijan on the liberation of Shusha.

First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva has shared a post on her official Instagram page on the occasion of the historic victory, AZERTAC reports. The post says:

"All our people are indescribably proud and happy at these moments! Shusha has been liberated from occupation! I extend my sincere congratulations to all our compatriots on this occasion!

After years of grief, longing and tragic events, historical justice is being restored! Today's heroism of a generation of heroes defending our homeland and liberating the ancient lands of Azerbaijan from occupation will forever go down in the history of Azerbaijan, will forever remain in the memory of all of us!

The liberation of every inch of Azerbaijani lands is being made possible thanks to the heroism and courage of our brave soldiers, their endurance and determination to win! May God have mercy on our martyrs who died for the motherland!

Dear brothers and sisters!

We have returned our Shusha! I once again congratulate all of you on this significant historic event.

May the unity of the people and the President, the guarantor of all our successes, achievements and victories, be strengthened day by day! Today, this unity allows Azerbaijan the opportunity to demonstrate its strength! Thanks to national solidarity, trust, confidence and support of the people, our President is able to successfully cope with all complex issues! May Almighty God protect our army, our people, our Motherland and our President! Shusha is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!"

https://azertag.az

First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva: I am very happy to be in our liberated ancient city of Shusha

15.01.2021

First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva has made an Instagram post on her visit to the liberated city of Shusha.

AZERTAC presents the post.

"Dear brothers and sisters!

I am very happy to be in our native, ancient city of Shusha, which was liberated from occupation. It is with great pleasure that I share with you the footages of our visit to this beautiful land.

With reverence and love,

Your MEHRIBAN."

https://azertag.az

President Ilham Aliyev laid foundation stones for Fuzuli-Shusha highway and Fuzuli airport in Fuzuli district, visited the city of Shusha

15.01.2021

On January 14, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev laid foundation stones for Fuzuli-Shusha highway on the 27th km of Ahmadbayli-Fuzuli-Shusha highway, as well as airport in Fuzuli district.

President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva then visited the city of Shusha, capital of Azerbaijani culture which was liberated from occupation.

Driving the car to Shusha, **President Ilham Aliyev** said:

- We left early in the morning. The destination is Shusha city.

We are driving into the liberated lands. The glorious Azerbaijani Army attacked from this direction and drove the enemy out of our lands.

The village of Garakhanbayli of Fuzuli district destroyed by the Armenians.

The newly developed project of the Fuzuli-Shusha highway includes the construction of bridges and tunnels. The new road will be connected to Fuzuli airport and a new road will be built to Isa bulaghi.

The head of state and first lady laid the foundation stone for the road.

President Ilham Aliyev: We have laid the foundation of the Fuzuli-Shusha road. Now we will lay the foundation of the Fuzuli airport. At least the airport runway should be put into operation this year.

President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva then laid the foundation stone for international airport in Fuzuli district.

The airport, to have a runway that is 2,800 meters long, will be equipped with infrastructure in compliance with international standards. All conditions will be created here for the arrival and departure of planes and the comfort of passengers.

President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Today, on January 14, the foundation of Fuzuli International Airport was laid. I have informed the Azerbaijani people about the construction of the airport. This is a very important project for the development of our liberated regions. The Fuzuli International Airport is to be commissioned this year. At least the runway should be commissioned this year. The airport building may be commissioned this year or next year. The main purpose of this airport is to facilitate the arrival of foreign visitors to Shusha. The distance from here to Shusha is not very large. Taking into account the fact that the foundation of a new four- and in some places six-lane Fuzuli-Shusha highway was laid earlier today, foreign visitors will be able to arrive at the Fuzuli International Airport and travel to Shusha very comfortably and quickly.

I have declared Shusha the cultural capital of Azerbaijan. Work has begun to restore the city of Shusha, restore its historical appearance. In general, only two months have passed since the war ended, but extensive construction work has already begun. A second international airport will be built in our liberated lands in Kalbajar or Lachin districts. A site is now being selected and the construction of two international airports must be completed in the near future.

The great return begins. All work has begun. I am sure that just as we drove the enemy out of our lands in a short time – in a matter of 44 days – we will restore our ancestral lands of Karabakh in a short time.

Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

xxx

President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva then headed to the city of Shusha.

President Ilham Aliyev: We have laid the foundation of Fuzuli international airport. The Fuzuli international airport is to be commissioned this year. At least the runway should be put into operation so that our citizens, foreigners and Azerbaijanis living abroad could easily come to Shusha by plane starting

this year. At the same time, the instruction has been issued to start work on the organization of international flights from the Fuzuli international airport. At the same time, people will be able to come here from other cities of Azerbaijan – Lankaran, Nakhchivan, Ganja and then go to Shusha easily. Now we are heading for the city of Shusha, and additional information will be provided along the way.

We are going from Fuzuli to Khojavand district. After that, we will go to Shusha. There are some spectacular landscapes in front of us, beautiful, majestic and snow-capped mountains. We are in our beautiful Azerbaijan. This is Shakarjik village. The village of Shakarjik is adjacent to Fuzuli city. When the city of Fuzuli was liberated, fierce battles took place for Shakarjik. Notice that the contemptible enemy destroyed all these territories during the occupation. We have already visited Fuzuli. The Azerbaijani people have seen those horrible scenes. The whole world has seen them, as it should. Therefore, I have ordered to invite foreign visitors to Azerbaijan, bring them to these regions, show them the Armenian savagery and their deeds. The whole world can see now what a savage enemy we fought against and what a savage enemy we have destroyed. These mountains are ours.

This is the territory of Boyuk Taghlar village of Khojavand district. See how beautiful our country is. All this territory was liberated from the occupiers by the heroic Azerbaijani Army.

The head of state, first lady and their daughter Leyla posed for photographs.

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President Ilham Aliyev: Our journey continues. Notice that the sun has come out. The sun also greets us and illuminates our path. We are going to Shusha, to the liberated Shusha. This road is under construction. I am sure that it will be one of the most beautiful roads in our country. Of course, it will be built with the highest quality. At the same time, it is a scenic road, a historical road, a road to victory.

There was no read here before. Our heroic servicemen passed through

these territories. We have built this road in a matter of two months. Then, of course, the road will be widened and asphalted. Azerbaijani citizens will go to Shusha comfortably.

President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva then arrived in Shusha.

Azerbaijani President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev hoisted national tricolor flag in the city of Shusha.

The head of state then met with the servicemen and made a speech.

Speech of President Ilham Aliyev

- Dear servicemen, November 8 will forever go down in the history of our people. On November 8, Azerbaijan won a brilliant victory by liberating our ancient city of Shusha from the enemy. The liberation of Shusha required great heroism, professionalism and national spirit. The Azerbaijani army demonstrated all these sublime features.

I have come to Shusha using the victory road. That road is now open. There was no there before. Passing through mountains, forests, valleys and tens of kilometers, the heroic Azerbaijani army liberated villages and settlements along the way, approached the city of Shusha, liberated the village of Dashalti and then liberated Shusha from the occupiers.

I am confident that the Shusha operation will be included in the textbooks of leading international military schools. I already know that experts from many developed countries analyze every single day of the 44-day war. Because every day of the 44-day war is a day of victory. The liberation of Shusha was the greatest blow to the enemy because the enemy thought that it was impossible to liberate Shusha, and they were probably right to some extent. Because Panahali khan built this city in such a way that steep rocks and natural landscape protect Shusha from all sides. In May 1992, Shusha was occupied as a result of the betrayal of the then leadership of Azerbaijan and the PFPA-Musavat duo fighting for power.

At that time, the Armenians gave their so-called operation a name – wedding in the mountains. But there was no operation. The city of Shusha was vacated. The then minister of defense said that if Shusha was lost, he would shoot himself in the head. He cowardly fled Shusha. After that, the Armenians invented legends about this operation – the alleged wedding in the mountains. We have arranged a wedding for them they will remember forever. The heroic sons of Azerbaijan liberated Shusha from the occupiers by conducting a perfect military operation, demonstrating courage, bravery, heroism, strength and national spirit, and after a long break the Azerbaijani flag was raised in Shusha on November 8.

When the National Flag Square was inaugurated in Baku, I said in my speech that the day would come when the Azerbaijani flag is raised in the occupied territories, including Shusha. And this is the day. I remember some representatives of the Armenian separatist regime saying at the time that the Azerbaijani flag could be raised in Shusha only if Azerbaijan recognized the so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh republic" and then opened an embassy in Nagorno-Karabakh. Notice what disgusting and arrogant expressions they used. They are sitting like mice now, tight-lipped. They can't utter a word. We came here as winners, we raised our flag, the Azerbaijani flag is flying in all the liberated lands. We have come here through fighting. Nobody gave us these lands. No negotiations were of any importance whatsoever. We saw that we had to liberate our lands on our own, and we did that. We have proved our strength to the whole world by crushing the enemy's head. We forced the enemy to kneel before us and sign the act of capitulation. This is what happened, and the humiliating act of capitulation will go down in history forever. The whole world is talking about our victory. Leading media outlets around the world write about Azerbaijan's brilliant victory and publish reports. Analytical articles are now being published, books will be written.

The 44-day war of our glorious army is the war of the XXI century. We had prepared properly for this war, and we made no secret of that. I have said many times, including in my meetings with the military, that if the enemy does not leave our lands of its own free will, we will force them out of our lands. Force will

play a role, and so it happened. Every single day of the 44-day war was a day of victory. Every day we moved forward. We did not drop back a single time. This is a very rare occasion in wars. There are attacks in wars, there are setbacks, there are maneuvers, but we were moving forward every day. Every week we liberated dozens of settlements from the occupiers. As a result, we liberated more than 300 settlements and Shusha by dealing crushing blows to the enemy. We forced them to withdraw their troops from Aghdam, Lachin and Kalbajar districts in just 20 days. They were thrown out of our lands and we returned. From the day the war began, I was telling them to leave our lands and make a commitment. I was saying that the Armenian leadership should take this responsibility, that it should give us a timetable of when they would leave our lands, and I would have stopped the war. Otherwise, we will go to the end. Despite all the pressures, all the phone calls and all the threats, I said that we would go to the end and drive the enemy out of our lands. We did that, we went all the way, we drove the enemy out and forced them to sign an act of capitulation on 10 November, thus ending the war.

This war will live forever in our history. We won this war at the expense of the lives and blood of our martyrs, at the expense of the bravery of our servicemen. May God have mercy on all our martyrs! May God grant patience to their relatives! All martyr families are being taken care of by the state. All martyr families will be provided with apartments and houses by the state. Instructions have already been issued this year. The allowance for the families of martyrs has been increased from 300 to 500 manats, and these families will always be in the spotlight. The state has already provided apartments to the families of 9,000 martyrs killed in the First Karabakh War. Our wounded servicemen are being taken care of by the state. The issue of rehabilitation of disabled servicemen and providing them with modern prosthetic appliances will be resolved. I have awarded high orders and medals to thousands of servicemen who showed heroism in the war. The Order of the Patriotic War is the highest military order of Azerbaijan. The "Victory" Order, the "Karabakh" Order. I suggested the names of all these orders

myself. The servicemen who distinguished themselves in the liberation of our settlements and cities were awarded medals bearing the names of these districts. Our army successfully liberated Jabrayil, Fuzuli and Khojavand districts, Sugovushan and Hadrut settlements, Murovdag range, the southern part of Lachin district, Gubadli, Zangilan districts and the city of Shusha on November 8. On 9 November, the enemy surrendered, threw in the towel, was put on its knees and conceded defeat.

We are a victorious people. I last came to Shusha 39 years ago. I came here twice 39 years ago - first on January 14. Here I am again today, on January 14. This time I came as the Commander-in-Chief of the victorious Azerbaijani Army, the triumphant Azerbaijani Army. I have come as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army that broke the enemy's back, and I say here under the sacred flag and in front of the heroic soldiers that we will live in these lands forever! We will restore Shusha and all other destroyed cities and villages. We will restore all our destroyed historical sites. Armenia spread false speculation about Shusha in the whole world, claiming that Shusha is their ancient city. How can a city built by Panahali Khan be Armenian city?! After all, this is a matter of recent history, recent events. If they considered it their city, why did they bring it to such a deplorable state? Why did they destroy all the buildings? See what the city is like! Over 30 years, they blew everything to smithereens, but only built villas and created conditions for themselves.

We will restore this city. A large group was sent here on my instructions and all the analysis was done. I received the first update yesterday and already issued relevant instructions. In the near future, we will ensure the restoration of Shusha in a planned manner. Of course, from now on we must protect Shusha like the apple of an eye. Our soldiers, our heroic sons will protect Shusha so that the enemy does not venture to look in this direction. I said that if anyone in Armenia even thinks of revenge, they will deal with our iron fist again. This iron fist broke their backs and crushed their heads. If they commit any provocation against us, our response will be very harsh, they will be very sorry and face a bitter defeat

again. No-one can stand in front of us. This will always be the case from now on. The Azerbaijani Army, special forces, our heroic sons, fighters of military units must protect Shusha and all the liberated lands like the apple of an eye, so that the enemy does not try to do anything ever again. If they do, the end will be bitter.

At the end of my speech in the Alley of Martyrs on November 8, announcing the liberation of Shusha to the people of Azerbaijan, I said: dear Shusha, you are free! Dear Shusha, we are back! Dear Shusha, we will revive you! I repeat the same words today. Shusha is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

xxx

Then a photo was taken together with the servicemen.

xxx

President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva visited Saatli Mosque in the city of Shusha.

The head of state presented the Holy Quran to the mosque.

President Ilham Aliyev said:

- We have visited the Saatli Mosque, prayed there and presented the Holy Quran from Mecca to the Saatli Mosque. We will then visit the Ashaghi Govharagha and Yukhari Govharagha mosques. I will present the Quran I brought from the holy Mecca to these mosques. During the occupation, the enemy destroyed our religious sites in the liberated lands, devastated 67 mosques or made them unusable. After the liberation of Shusha, our citizens cleaned up the mosque and carried out some repairs. Of course, the mosque will be overhauled, relevant instructions have been issued and the Heydar Aliyev Foundation has undertaken this mission. Mehriban khanim made a statement on this, so we will restore all our historical and religious sites.

I must say that the overhaul and restoration of the Aghdam Juma Mosque

I visited has already begun. Specialists have already been sent there and proposals for repairs will be made soon. At the same time, mosques in Shusha will be restored. The destruction of the minaret shows the Islamophobic nature of the enemy. Armenia is constantly trying to establish relations with Muslim countries, to develop relations with some countries, introduce itself as a country that has a positive attitude towards Muslim peoples. This is all a lie. If anyone still believes this, let them come to Shusha, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil and other liberated lands of ours and see what Armenian leaders have done to Muslim mosques, what they have done to the temples that are sacred to every Muslim. They have destroyed and desecrated them, kept pigs and cows in them, wrote obscenities on the walls of our mosques. Can such a country be friends with Muslim states? Of course not! I have repeatedly stated this in all international platforms and addressed the leaders of Muslim countries both in a bilateral format and during multilateral meetings and through international events. I have said that Armenia cannot be friends with Muslim countries. A country that has brought mosques to this condition cannot be friends with Muslim states. This is hypocrisy, and viewing Armenia as a friendly country is hypocrisy and ungodliness. How can leaders of Muslim countries be friends with a country that has destroyed mosques? Let them answer. Let them answer to their own people, not to me. Can they be friends with a country that has destroyed mosques and put cows there? Let their people answer this.

We are protecting and will continue to protect the temples of all religions. Let no-one doubt that. The history of our independence and the pre-independence history showed that. The sites of all religions are protected in our country – churches, synagogues, including an Armenian church in the center of Baku, are protected and repaired by the state. What did they do? When I was in Zangilan, I made a speech outside a local mosque, with only walls left of it. I appealed to the people of Azerbaijan and said what they have done. Addressing the international organizations, I said, come and see this, prepare a report here, not in your cabinets. Don't believe the false information of the Armenian leadership and its patrons. Come and see with your own eyes what they have done to our

mosques. They repaired the Yukhari Govharagha Mosque together with a foreign company only to create an image. We do not need this repair. This repair is a symbol of hypocrisy. It is intended to create the impression that the Armenian leadership repairs mosques. Unfortunately, the company of a certain country was involved in these ugly deeds. Of course, the repair of the Yukhari Govharagha Mosque is unacceptable because they came to our lands illegally without our permission, stayed here for months and allegedly repaired this mosque in collaboration with the Armenian criminal junta. We do not need such repairs. Let no-one be deceived, no-one should fall for this. We will repair and rebuild all our mosques, and the whole world must see what the hated enemy has done to our holy temples.

After the liberation of Shusha, the process of restoring the city and all its historic buildings began. Attempts to Armenianize Shusha have been stopped. For 30 years, they tried to Armenianize Shusha, but they failed. This is an alien city to them. If they ever considered it their own, they would not have brought it to this condition. The real owners of Shusha are back, we are back. Shusha is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

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As a result of Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijani lands, including Shusha, historical and cultural monuments were destroyed and house museums were looted.

Busts to Khurshidbanu Natavan, Uzeyir Hajibayli, Bulbul in Shusha are among them. These shot busts are witnesses of Armenian vandalism. In one of his speeches, President Ilham Aliyev said that after the restoration of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, busts to Bulbul, Natavan and Uzeyir Hajibeyli will be returned to Shusha. These words of the head of state have already become a reality. The busts of these geniuses were restored in Shusha.

In an event held on this occasion, **President Ilham Aliyev** said:

- When I came to Shusha today, I brought the busts of our geniuses Khurshidbanu Natavan, Uzeyir Hajibayli and Bulbul, which were kept in the yard of the Art Museum in Baku for almost 30 years. The House of Culture was located here, and the busts of Uzeyir Bey and Bulbul used to stand here. The hated enemy destroyed the Shusha House of Culture and shot at the busts of our geniuses.

The bust of Khurshidbanu Natavan was unveiled personally by Heydar Aliyev in the summer of 1982. I was here with my father at that time. There was a bust of Khurshidbanu Natavan not far from here. After desecrating the busts of our genius personalities, the Armenians took them to Armenia to be melted down and sold. Just imagine how mean a person should be to shoot at and insult the memorial busts of historical personalities, take them away and try to melt them down. At that time, Polad Bulbuloglu found out about that and appealed to great leader Heydar Aliyev. As a result of the measures taken, these busts were taken away from the Armenians. I must say that they were paid for. They sold them – just as they have done throughout their existence. We bought the busts back. We brought them back then and placed them in the yard of the Art Museum.

Then at different times, some people suggested that we put these busts somewhere in Baku. I said no to that. We will take them back only after liberating Shusha from the enemy and put them in their original places.

The busts of our great personalities are a symbol of our Victory. Their spirits will be rejoicing. They have returned to their homeland. We brought them back, chased the enemy away, crushed the enemy, threw them out of our lands, took back Shusha and liberated it. Everyone coming here to Shusha will see the Armenian savagery.

Historical justice is being restored. We are restoring historical justice – at the expense of strength, perseverance, resolve, courage, and national spirit! Natavan, Uzeyir bey, Bulbul are the embodiment of our national spirit. Their cherished memory has lived and will live on forever in our hearts. Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

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President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva visited the building of the former Shusha District Party Committee.

President Ilham Aliyev: The loathsome enemy created an institution for themselves called the mayor's office. This was the meeting room of the head of the junta in Shusha. This was the room of the "head of executive authority" of the city of "Shushi" of the so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh republic", which has now gone to hell. Not "Shushi" but Shusha. They should not forget that the iron fist is still there. And this is where the thugs had rest. These are their books, look at that. Their place is in a landfill. All of this will become museum exhibits. They have dismantled the air conditioner and taken it away. Running away from Shusha, the thieves even found time to take the air conditioner. This building commands a view of the square. Broken glass and busts are visible from here.

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While leaving Shusha, the Armenians committed theft and looting of office buildings. For example, all air conditioners and heating system equipment in this building have been dismantled. It is beyond doubt that this is a manifestation of greed, but also of theft. It is also a sign of the vile fate of those who vandalized the culture of the Azerbaijani people during the 30 years of occupation.

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The head of state, first lady and their daughter Leyla then familiarized themselves with the Natavan bulaghi.

President Ilham Aliyev: My father and I visited the Natavan bulaghi in 1982. After 39 years, I am back as Commander-in-Chief of the Victorious Army. Shusha is ours again! Shusha is Azerbaijan again!

The head of state enquired about the water and electricity supply of Shusha.

It was noted that the city now has a regular supply of water and electricity.

President Ilham Aliyev said that the Natavan Palace, which functioned as a children's sanatorium during the Soviet era but was destroyed by Armenians after the occupation, would be restored as the house of the khan's daughter.

The head of state and his family members posed for photos in front of the Natavan Palace.

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President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva also viewed Bulbul's destroyed house-museum.

Pointing to Bulbul's destroyed bust, **President Ilham Aliyev** said:

- Another act of vandalism, another sign of hostility on the part of the Armenians. See what they have done to the bust and house of great Bulbul. We have answered them with a vengeance. We answered them on the battlefield, we avenged all our martyrs, their blood did not remain unavenged. The contemptible enemy that committed the Khojaly genocide and the cultural genocide was defeated and destroyed on the battlefield. I am sure Polad will come and restore his father's house.

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The head of state, first lady and their daughter Leyla also visited the Ashaghi Govharagha and Yukhari Govharagha mosques.

President Ilham Aliyev also donated the Holy Quran to these mosques.

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President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter

Leyla Aliyeva then visited the Gazanchi church in Shusha.

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One of the monuments destroyed in Shusha by the Armenian vandalism is the museum-mausoleum complex of Molla Panah Vaqif, Azerbaijani poet, public and political figure, who lived in the XVIII century and was a vizier of the Karabakh khan. The Molla Panah Vaqif museum-mausoleum complex was commissioned in 1982 with the participation of the national leader Heydar Aliyev.

The mausoleum, built on the tomb of the great poet in a spectacular venue of Shusha city - near the Jidir plain, has a four-cornered shape and was decorated with marble. Nearly 80 exhibits reflecting Vaqif's life in Shusha were also on display there. As a result of the occupation of Shusha by the Armenian armed forces in May 1992, the building of the complex and the exhibits on display were destroyed.

President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva arrived at the place where the bust of Molla Panah Vagif was once located.

President Ilham Aliyev: This is also a historical picture – Heydar Aliyev in front of the bust of Vagif. The minaret of the mosque is visible on this picture. Vagif's bust has been destroyed by the Armenians. They build an ugly shop in its place. This is another manifestation of Armenian vandalism, another crime.

The head of state and his family members viewed the destroyed mausoleum of Vagif.

Making a speech in front of the mausoleum, **President Ilham Aliyev** said:

- The mausoleum of Molla Panah Vagif, built on the initiative of great leader Heydar Aliyev, was inaugurated exactly 39 years ago – on January 14, 1982. I remember that historic day. Because at that time, along with my father, I was standing right here. There is video footage of that historic event. It was very cold and snowy. It was snowing heavily. However, the people gathered at this event,

Azerbaijani intellectuals did not feel that cold at all because the magnificent mausoleum of Molla Panah Vagif, the vizier of the Karabakh khan, was being inaugurated. This initiative was put forward by great leader Heydar Aliyev. The construction work was carried out under his leadership and a beautiful, majestic mausoleum was built.

It was quite unusual to erect a mausoleum in honor of the khan's vizier at that time, during the Soviet era. Everyone can see it as a natural phenomenon now, but at that time, in the era of socialism, the construction of a mausoleum in honor of the khan's vizier was a truly extraordinary event. It was as a result of Heydar Aliyev's persistence and courage that Azerbaijan was able to achieve this at that time, and this place was not chosen by chance. The grave of Molla Panah Vagif is here. The establishment and opening of this mausoleum was, on the one hand, a sign of respect for the history of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the genius of the Azerbaijani people. On the other hand, the opening of this mausoleum in Shusha once again confirmed that Shusha is an Azerbaijani city.

When the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region was established, the goal of including Shusha in it was quite clear – to steadily and gradually erase the traces of Azerbaijan here, to Armenianize this territory and to make Azerbaijanis a minority in this territory of their own republic. That was the goal. During the time of national leader Heydar Aliyev, in 1969-1982, as a result of his efforts and policy, including the construction of the railway from Yevlakh and Aghdam to Khankandi, the establishment of enterprises in Nagorno-Karabakh and the arrival of specialists from different parts of Azerbaijan, the ethnic composition changed significantly in favor of the Azerbaijani people. In 1982, Azerbaijanis already made up 25 percent of the population of the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region. If Heydar Aliyev had stayed in power in Azerbaijan at that time, Azerbaijanis would have constituted a majority in the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region in the next 10 years and no conflict or separatism would have ever occurred here.

The great leader's foresight, devotion to his native people, love of our liter-

ature and culture were manifested in the construction of this mausoleum. I want to say again that khanates were described as anti-national entities in the official Soviet ideology, while khans were presented to the public as enemies. The official ideology of the Soviet Union was that khanates existing in the territory of Azerbaijan allegedly only exploited people. The people of Azerbaijan allegedly waited for these khanates to be abolished and Soviet power to be established instead. Of course, this was nonsense. The Azerbaijani people have lived with the love of freedom and independence for centuries. Unfortunately, the vast majority of our history passed in the colonial format, as we were part of other states. We were forced to do that, it was not our choice.

The great leader did a great deal to keep the national spirit at a high level in Soviet times. The opening of this mausoleum was a historic event. I remember that day very well. I was standing there, slightly apart, while my father and prominent cultural figures were standing here. I remember Azerbaijani and Armenian poets reciting poems. Even Armenian poets recited poems in Azerbaijani. It was a celebration of friendship, a friendly event, and no-one could ever imagine that separatism would break out here in a few years, that Armenia would invade Azerbaijan, that our historical city would be taken away from us, that our historical sites, mosques and this mausoleum would be destroyed, and that they would try to erase the centuries-old heritage of the Azerbaijani people from the Karabakh land. This could not have occurred to anyone. I have said this many times and I want to repeat – if Heydar Aliyev had not left Baku for Moscow in 1982, if he had not been appointed to Moscow, he would never have allowed any separatism to take place here. But when Heydar Aliyev came to power, Shusha was already under occupation, Kalbajar was under occupation, Lachin was under occupation, Dashalti was under occupation, all surrounding areas were under occupation, and a geographical link was established between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.

The government of the Popular Front and Musavat is to blame for this. They committed this betrayal and then cowardly went into hiding, fled and sold Shu-

sha. They handed over the impregnable fortress of Shusha to the enemy in order to overthrow the then government of Azerbaijan and come to power. And this is what happened. The loss of Shusha led to the collapse of the then government. The Popular Front took advantage of this and came to power after the loss of Shusha and the surrender of Lachin to the enemy. Everyone remembers this history. It is recent history. The Popular Front-Musavat duo committed treason, betrayal and crime only to come to power. What did they do next? They turned looting into a state policy in Azerbaijan, declared bribery their ideological principle, and left the mark of betrayal and desertion on the history of the Azerbaijani people. The Popular Front-Musavat traitors humiliated and put our people to disgrace in the eyes of the whole world. After all, who was Armenia to defeat us? Who were they? The anti-national Popular Front-Musavat elements gave Shusha to the enemy, then fled and went into hiding.

After that, Armenian vandals razed all our cities to the ground. While visiting the liberated lands, I see this with my own eyes, and the whole world should see it too. They have destroyed our mosques, graves, historical sites and all our buildings. This mausoleum was also destroyed by the contemptible enemy. In this part of the mausoleum, there were patterns. Pictures of that are available. All of that has been demolished and looted, and the mausoleum is destroyed.

How hostile they must have been to commit these atrocities. The perpetrators are the Sargsyan-Kocharyan duo. It is the Sargsyan-Kocharyan duo that has brought our cities to this plight. We have crushed the thugs, the Khojaly executioners, those who made themselves false heroes. We have destroyed their army. We took Shusha back from their army, showing heroism and climbing steep cliffs. We have destroyed their army by fighting against cannons and tanks with light weapons and knives. Where were they? They fled and hid in Yerevan. One of them ventured to come here but ran away like a rabbit five days later. The other did not speak at all. There is a third one, war criminal Ohanyan, who was born here on our lands. He allegedly came here to defend Shusha during the war. We chased him away like a dog. He is still hanging around in Armenia. Whenev-

er he opens his mouth, he says ugly words. Everyone saw the fate of those who were trying to annoy us. Let no-one forget this iron fist. We broke the enemy's back. If necessary, we will break it again. Kocharyan-Sargsyan, enemies of the Azerbaijani people, you have brought this place to this condition. I came as the Commander-in-Chief of a victorious Army and I stand here. I stand here on my own land. There will be no traces of you here again.

Today, some elements calling themselves politicians in Nagorno-Karabakh are trying to raise their heads again. Let them not forget, let them not mess with our patience, let them not forget the 44-day war. They are claiming that they will build an army and take back the lands. Come on! Take it! Come here, you are close. Come and try to take it, and I will see how do that. We have chased you away like dogs, we have thrown you out, we have sent you to hell.

Vagif Poetry Days will be restored. I have already issued the instruction and they will be held this year. The Kharibulbul festival will be held this year. We are already starting the reconstruction of Shusha. A master plan is being prepared. All buildings have been inspected. Shusha will become one of the most beautiful cities in the world as the cultural capital of Azerbaijan. In fact, it has always been the case. The loathsome enemy has simply destroyed all our historical sites. But we will restore them. We will return their real appearance to them. The people of Azerbaijan will live in Shusha forever. Shusha is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

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As part of the visit to Shusha, President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva also visited the Jidir Duzu.

President Ilham Aliyev said:

- This is the Jidir Duzu plain, so dear and so native to all of us. It is impossible to imagine Shusha without Jidir Duzu, just as it is impossible to imagine Azerbaijan without Shusha. We have returned to Shusha, we have returned to Jidir Duzu. The sound of mugham will be heard in this historic place, Azerbaijani

songs will be performed here, major events will be held, weddings and celebrations will take place here.

Some time ago, the occupying forces committed ugly actions to insult our dignity, to insult the people of Azerbaijan in this place that is sacred to us – the whole world is already aware of this. They danced "Yalli" here. There is no trace left of them here, we have thrown them out of here. Jidir Duzu, Shusha and Karabakh are free now. The true owners of this land have returned – with weapons in their hands, with flags in their hands and with patriotism in their hearts. Patriotism brought us to Victory. Patriotism has become the main factor in our victory.

I am very delighted that a patriotic and strong young generation raised in the national spirit has grown up in Azerbaijan in recent years. I have been the leader of Azerbaijan for 17 years. Those who grew up over these years have liberated these lands. Our citizens of all generations have made a great contribution to this victory but I must also say that the main burden, the main task was performed by the younger generation. Those who were 10 and 15 years old in 2003 are now 27-32 years old. It was their patriotic upbringing and hatred of the enemy that led us to Victory and restored Azerbaijan's historical justice. The younger generation, the older generation, experienced people, all our people, all ethnic groups, all religions are united in one fist. This symbol of our victory was not chosen by chance. I have said this before, but I want to say again here that this fist is both about strength and unity. We already had a sufficiently high level of unity, and it will be even stronger from now on. United countries get the upper hand. Determined leaders get the upper hand. Leaders who do not look up at anyone, who are not afraid of anyone and defend national interests get the upper hand. Everyone saw this in the example of Azerbaijan.

We have won and Armenia has lost. At the same time, we are right. Our cause was one of justice. Armenia's cause is a cause of aggression. Justice has prevailed at the expense of the strength, at the expense of our resolve, at the expense of our policies and at the expense of our unity! Kudos to the people of Azerbaijan! Long live Azerbaijan!

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During the occupation, the Armenians started to construct a new building to move the the "parliament" of the so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh republic" to Shusha. Shusha was liberated from occupation on November 8, 2020. The construction of the "parliament" building of the so-called regime was left unfinished.

President Ilham Aliyev said:

- The so-called regime stated that it would move the "parliament" of the "Nagorno-Karabakh republic" to Shusha. This would have been yet another attempt to Armenianize Shusha. They started to construct this building as the "parliament" building of the "Nagorno-Karabakh republic". But they could not complete it. We are back, the true owners of this land are back. We have driven them out of here, so their ugly deeds never took place. The "parliament" went to hell, the status went to hell. Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

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President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva then viewed the destroyed by Armenian vandals building of Shusha Realni School.

President Ilham Aliyev: There is no other nation in the world as fraudulent as them. This building will also be restored.

It should be noted that the Shusha Realni School was considered a model educational institution in its time. Prominent Azerbaijani novelists Abdurrahim bay Haqverdiyev and Yusif Vazir Caminzamanli were graduates of this school.

After the occupation of Shusha in May 1992, the Armenian vandals set fire to the Realni school and razed it to the ground.

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On January 15, President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva visited the Jidir Duzu plain again.

President Ilham Aliyev said:

- On the morning of January 15 today, we came to the Jidir Duzu plain again. We are now leaving Shusha for Baku. Before leaving, we wanted to visit this sacred and historic place again, see this beauty again and say, "Thank you very much" to Shusha and "See you next time". We have returned to our homeland, we have liberated Shusha. From now on, the people of Azerbaijan will live in Shusha forever.

We visited all historical sites, our sacred mosques in Shusha yesterday. I can say with heartache that the level of destruction here is very upsetting for every Azerbaijani. However, we are extremely proud to see Shusha unbent and majestic, albeit destroyed. Shusha is on its feet. Shusha is not broken. Shusha is standing tall! Hard as the hated enemy tried, they could not change the appearance of Shusha. We will heal all the wounds of Shusha. Shusha will become one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

We decided to stay the night in Shusha yesterday, although we were supposed to return to Baku. But I thought we had to stay in Shusha because this is the first time the President of Azerbaijan has visited Shusha. Our independence is about 30 years old. However, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Commander-in-Chief came to Shusha for the first time in 30 years, stayed in Shusha and, frankly, does not want to leave.

The unique architecture, natural terrain, landscapes, atmosphere and aura of the city are unparalleled. As I mentioned yesterday, I visited Shusha twice in 1982. At that time, several events were held here. So I didn't get to see Shusha the way it was yesterday, the way it is today. I saw once again that the unique aura, nature and architecture of this city are our great assets.

I slept only five hours last night. I woke up at 5 o'clock. I don't know why. Perhaps yesterday was too exciting because it is such a unique feeling to see Shu-

sha, to return to Shusha. It is possible that the pleasant nature and air of Shusha are enough for a person not to want to sleep much. Before returning to Baku, I came here again, to the Jidir Duzu plain, to the historic place of Shusha, to address the people of Azerbaijan again. I want to say that we are a lucky nation to have restored our territorial integrity. We are a lucky nation to have asserted ourselves as an independent state. Let me say again – Shusha is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

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President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva were invited to a tea table on Jidir Duzu.

President Ilham Aliyev: We are having tea in pear-shaped glasses and baklava on Jidir Duzu. Let our friends rejoice and the enemies get blind!

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First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva shared footages from Shusha visit on her official Instagram account

16.03.2021

First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva has shared video footages from visit to the city of Shusha on her official Instagram account.

The post highlighting the visit says:

"Dear sisters and brothers!

Today, on the day of Torpag Charshanbasi, we visited our native Shusha city again. It is with great pleasure that I share with you footages from our visit. I wish each of you the best of health, long life, happiness, and peace! I ask God's mercy for all our martyrs who died for the Motherland! May Almighty God bless you and your loved ones!

Best wishes and kind regards,

Your MEHRIBAN"

https://azertag.az

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva visited city of Shusha

17.03.2021

As reported earlier, on March 16, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva visited the city of Shusha.

AZERTAC reports that **President Ilham Aliyev** said:

- We left Azykh and came to Shusha yesterday. The roads are still in a very bad condition, because there is no road. We came here along Victory road. So far it is only a ground road, because the weather is cold and it is impossible to lay asphalt. It was muddy and there was a heavy fog. This is why we came from Azykh to Shusha in 1 hour and 45 minutes. We stayed in Shusha overnight. We left at 9 in the morning and are going to attend several events. The weather is clear, but there are still clouds above the city.

We last came here in January. We returned the busts of Natavan, Uzeyir Hajibayli and Bulbul to Shusha. It is a great pleasure to come to Shusha again today. On the left, there are snowy and foggy mountains of Shusha.

Restoration of Vagif's mausoleum will begin soon. The former appearance of the mausoleum will be restored. Restoration work will begin today.

Relevant instructions have already been given to restore the mosques. Preliminary studies have begun and the project will be presented in the near future.

Shusha is beautiful in every season.

We will also restore the springs. For 30 years, Armenians dried up all our springs. Notice what the city is like now, what the enemy has done to Shusha.

We are approaching Vagif's mausoleum. Work has already begun. I have looked at the project. Here are the photos. National leader Heydar Aliyev attended both the opening and Vagif Poetry Day. We are restoring history. This project will be implemented by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation at its own expense, with

the taste typical of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and under the leadership of Mehriban Aliyeva.

President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva visited the museum complex of Molla Panah Vagif in Shusha.

Assistant to the President Anar Alakbarov briefed the President and the First Lady on the project to restore the complex. This project will be implemented by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. During the project, special attention will be paid to the restoration of the mausoleum. When the Armenians occupied Shusha in 1992, they also brutally destroyed this monument.

President Ilham Aliyev: I have found these photos in the archive. Vagif Poetry Days were held in the summer of 1982. Great leader Heydar Aliyev is in front of the mausoleum in the summer of 1982. People also took part in this event here. Last time I was here, I noticed this place and asked to find pictures of what happened here in the archives, and this picture has been found. You see, Vagif's image was on this wall. The hated enemy dismantled it and the marble. This was a tombstone. Armenian vandals demolished it too. We will restore it. I found a few more photos of the great leader visiting Shusha at the time, and I am also there. This picture was taken on Jidir Duzu. I showed it once, in front of the Natavan spring. There is another picture here and I have to show it too. There was also a bust of Vagif here. Last time I was in Shusha, I showed that the Armenians had dismantled the bust and built a shop. Here it is. The bust of Vagif and the great leader is looking at it. We will restore this bust as well.

The President, the First Lady and Leyla Aliyeva then reviewed the remains of Panahali khan's palace. This building is located in the historical center of Shusha and was the residency of Panahali khan, the founder of the Karabakh khanate. Armenian vandals also destroyed this historic building during the occupation.

President Ilham Aliyev: This was the palace of Panahali khan. Panahali khan, who built and established Shusha, built a palace for himself here. Notice what the Armenians have done to this palace. It was a historical site. The despicable enemy came here, seized our lands, expelled our people, destroyed our

historical sites, demolished, vandalized and barbarized everything around them.

Let all international organizations come and see this. Let the circles defending and supporting the Armenians, those who always support them, come and see what these savages have done.

The liberated lands are a witness to Armenian atrocities. There has never been such atrocity in the history of the world. They came here, lived on someone else's land and then took the opportunity to drive out the locals, kill them, burn them and commit genocide. Then they also took advantage of the hospitality of the people who embraced them, accepted them, allowed them to live here, and brought their historical sites to this condition. Savagery! This is exactly what I mean when I say that a savage tribe has passed through these places.

Then President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva arrived at the future site of Molla Panah Vagif's bust.

The project to restore the bust of Mullah Panah Vagif will also be implemented by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation.

President Ilham Aliyev: This is the pedestal of the bust. The Armenians have destroyed it but we will restore it.

During the occupation, Armenian vandals also destroyed the XIX century Caravanserai historical and architectural complex located in the central square of Shusha.

President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva visited the Caravanserai historical and architectural complex.

The head of state was informed about the work to be done here.

One of the buildings left face to face with Armenian savagery is the building of the Shusha State Art Gallery.

The gallery was established in 1982 and operated until the occupation in 1992.

President Ilham Aliyev: This was an art gallery of Shusha. The Azerbaijani government organized a gallery here. During the occupation, the enemy used it for its own needs. It will now be completely rebuilt and operate as an art gallery again.

President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva then viewed the repairs to be carried out at the Karabakh Hotel. The hotel was built in the early 1980s. The building has fallen into disrepair due to neglect. As a result of the work to be done here, the hotel will be brought to a modern level and all conditions will be created for the comfort of visitors to Shusha.

The President and the First Lady were informed about the work done to restore historical and religious sites in Shusha.

President Ilham Aliyev: The rooms of the hotel will be like this. During the occupation, the hotel was almost destroyed and only one floor was used. It was in bad condition and has been quickly prepared as a show room. All rooms of the hotel will be in this style.

We have got acquainted with the ongoing reconstruction work at the Karabakh Hotel. During the occupation, the hotel practically did not operate. Only one or two floors did. This hotel was also built during the Soviet era at the expense of Azerbaijan and was named Karabakh. Then the contemptible enemy changed the name of the hotel to "Shushi palace". There is no city called Shushi, it has never been and never will be the case.

President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva also visited the Shusha Carpet Museum. This museum, established to study and preserve the traditions of Karabakh carpet weaving, was also severely damaged during the occupation.

The President, the First Lady and Leyla Aliyeva also viewed the building where the Park Hotel will be located in Shusha. After the reconstruction, the hotel will be able to meet guests at a modern level.

President Ilham Aliyev: This was a former sanatorium building. During the occupation, it was used as a small hotel, but in a very primitive way. The conditions were pretty embarrassing. It is now being restored. This is also a showroom, the rooms of the hotel will be like this. The hotel will be commissioned this year.

Special Representative of the President in Shusha Aydin Karimov reported

to the President on the projects to be implemented.

President Ilham Aliyev gave instructions on the work to be done in Shusha.

President Ilham Aliyev: We have also visited the Shusha sanatorium. Many buildings there were destroyed by Armenians. But it will be possible to use some buildings. There are also plans to create small hotels here. We must take into account that there will be a huge influx of tourists to Shusha, so there should be five-, four- and three-star hotels here.

This is a beautiful view of the city and the mountains around it. But we see again that the Armenians did not build a single building here. They may have built this one, an ugly looking building. However, they used the buildings built by Azerbaijan in Soviet times and settled in the houses of Azerbaijanis. All these houses are Soviet-era houses, Khrushchev-era houses. They have long used up their service life. We now need to pay attention to the condition of these buildings.

About 2,000 people lived in Shusha during the occupation, most of them servicemen and their families. Therefore, most of these buildings are empty. Notice if there is a single normal building here or not.

The Armenians want to describe Shusha as an Armenian city. However, it was Panahali khan who laid the foundation of Shusha and Azerbaijanis have always lived here. If it was an Armenian city, why didn't you look after it? It is barbaric to bring a city with the landscape and nature of Shusha to this condition. They have destroyed the homes of Azerbaijanis and believed that this occupation would last forever. We have put an end to the occupation.

I have said that Shusha will become not only one of the most beautiful cities in Azerbaijan, but also in the world, and we will achieve this – 100 percent. This is the ruined building of the Realni School. Notice what the Armenians have done to it. According to my information, there was a boarding school on the left. It is also demolished, only a part of the facade remains.

We are leaving Shusha, but we do not want to leave again. Shusha attracts people so much that those who come here do not want to leave. But we must re-

turn to Baku. We will stop on the way at Dashalti village. We will also look at the village. Then we will head for Baku.

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva: The weather is sunny and clear, the sky is blue.

President Ilham Aliyev: We are saying "so long" to Shusha. The Azerbaijani flag is waving at the entrance to Shusha and will be waving forever. Down below is the Lachin corridor. The weather favors us again. The sun illuminates our path. This is the building of the Shusha substation. This building was constructed in a short time and will provide Shusha with sustainable energy. Last time we came to Shusha in January, the air was clear and the sun greeted us as we approached Shusha.

The rocks of Shusha look beautiful from here as well. Because we are on the path of truth and ours is the cause of truth. Nature also greets us. Because this is the nature of Azerbaijan.

This is Dashalti village. We will also get acquainted with Dashalti village.

President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva arrived at Dashalti village of Shusha district.

Aydin Karimov: This is the Great Kirs Mountain. One of Shusha's water sources comes from its foothills.

First Lady: Is this considered Yeni (New) Dashalti?

Aydin Karimov: Yes.

First Lady: And that is Kohna (Old) Dashalti.

President Ilham Aliyev: Our servicemen came from there.

This is a beautiful view of Dashalti village both on the right and on the left. Dashalti village was also liberated from the occupiers. Our victorious army rose from Dashalti, crossed the steep cliffs and entered Shusha. Ahead of us is Great Kirs Mountain. The beautiful nature of Azerbaijan is right before us. Whichever way you look, there is beauty and greenery. This is the land of Azerbaijan, the land of Karabakh. From now on, the people of Azerbaijan will live here forever.

xxx

The village of Dashalti, occupied by Armenian invaders in 1992 was also subjected to all-round terror. President Ilham Aliyev gave instructions to restore the village.

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Message of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

20.03.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva have lit the holiday bonfire on Jidir Duzu, Shusha.

The head of state then made an address. AZERTAC presents the address.

- Dear sisters and brothers, I heartily congratulate all of you on Novruz and wish all the people of Azerbaijan good health and happiness!

This year we are celebrating Novruz in Shusha, in Jidir Duzu. This is a historic event. Every year since 2004, when congratulating the people of Azerbaijan on the occasion of Novruz, I was saying that we would return to our ancestral lands. I was saying that we would restore the territorial integrity of our country. I was saying that we would celebrate Novruz in Karabakh after the liberation of our lands, and this day has come. Today we are celebrating Novruz in our ancient city Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan. This is a historic event. This is a great happiness. God heard the prayers of the Azerbaijani people. Every year, on the eve of Novruz, we probably all thought and said to each other that next year we would celebrate Novruz in Karabakh Inshallah, that we would celebrate Novruz in Shusha next year, and this day has come. After 28 years, we have returned to Shusha. We are celebrating Novruz in Jidir Duzu. We have restored historical justice.

On November 8,, when announcing the great news of the liberation of Shusha to the people of Azerbaijan, I said, "Shusha, you are free!" Today, we are celebrating our national holiday Novruz in free Shusha. Shusha was held in captivity for 28 years. For 28 years, it was ruined and destroyed by the contemptible enemy. The historical appearance of Shusha was destroyed. The enemy wanted to Armenianize Shusha. They wanted to erase the heritage of the Azerbaija-

ni people in Shusha. But they did not succeed in doing that. Shusha may have been destroyed, our historical sites in Shusha may have been destroyed by the loathsome enemy. However, Shusha did not bend. Shusha did not break. It preserved its dignity, protected the national spirit of Azerbaijan, and today, while in Shusha, we are witnessing this once again. Shusha was able to protect the spirit of the Azerbaijani people and was waiting for us. We had to come and we did. But we had to gather strength to come here. We had to get ready to come here. Preparations had to be and were made in all directions. We had to ensure the development of our country. We had to ensure the unity of our people. This was not an easy task for a country and nation that has emerged from civil war. The processes taking place in the country after the civil war united our people around a common idea, a common cause – the liberation of our lands. We managed to secure this national unity and national solidarity. If it were not for this, the victory would not have happened.

We had to communicate the truth about the Karabakh conflict to the world community at the international level, and we managed to do so. We have been active in international organizations and managed to have important decisions adopted that reflect our interests, reflect the truth, reflect international law and are based on it. This was the legal basis of our victory, the legal basis for the restoration of justice. We had to gather economic strength and we did. Perhaps no other country in the world has developed as fast as Azerbaijan has in recent years. We had to gather military strength, and this direction was a priority. It is no coincidence that during my presidency, military spending has always been at the forefront. I was saying that we had to continue to increase our military spending. We must prepare for war, we did. I told the whole world openly that if the enemy did not leave our lands of its own free will, we would expel them. And this is exactly what happened.

We have created a strong army. We have created a professional army. We have created a heroic army. Our servicemen deserve the highest praise. We had martyrs during the war. May God have mercy on all our martyrs. May God grant

patience to their relatives. We liberated Shusha by shedding blood. There were fierce battles for Shusha. The remains of the invaders were scattered along the Lachin corridor. Hundreds, perhaps even thousands of invaders were killed in the battles for Shusha. Our servicemen came to Shusha with light weapons, climbing steep rocks, crossing ravines and hills, Khojavand forests and paths. We fought with light weapons, pistols and bayonets. Cannons and tanks were used against us here. But the enemy saw our strength, saw our will, saw our national spirit, and was defeated. The liberation of Shusha is a special event in the Patriotic War. Shusha was our goal and we were moving towards it. The presence of the Azerbaijani Army in all the liberated lands before Shusha also conditioned the liberation of Shusha. Jabrayil district, Sugovushan, Hadrut, most of Khojavand district, Zangilan, Fuzuli, Gubadli districts, the southern part of Lachin district, Kalbajar mountains, Murov mountain and then Shusha. During the war, more than 300 villages and towns were liberated. The enemy was brought to its knees, surrendered and signed an act of capitulation on 10 November.

I said in the first days of the war that the enemy should give us a timetable, that the leader of the enemy should give us a timetable of when they would get out of our lands, and we would have stopped the war. I kept my word again – as soon as we were given a date, as soon as the act of capitulation was signed, the war stopped and we returned to Aghdam, Kalbajar and Lachin districts without firing a single shot or any casualties. Thus, we have restored our territorial integrity. I repeat – we had to prepare. Shusha was waiting for us. But we had to solve this problem once and for all.

In recent years, I have repeatedly said in speeches and interviews that we do not need an incomplete solution. The people of Azerbaijan probably understand very well what this means. I said that everything should be done in its time. I know what, when and how to do. For me, there has never been a more important task than the liberation of lands. I have dedicated my entire presidency to this. This goal, this objective was behind every decision – whether this step will bring us closer to victory or not. I said that each of us must bring victory closer

every day. My speeches are available. They are part of the history. Every day, each one of us must bring victory closer. We were bringing it closer, preparing, and then we came, defeated and crushed the enemy. We are standing here now. As the Commander-in-Chief of the Victorious Army, I am standing on the land of ancient Azerbaijan and no-one can take us out of here.

Shusha is our ancient city. No matter how hard the Armenian propaganda, fake scientists, fraudulent politicians and international circles may try, it is all in vain. There is history. Panahali Khan laid the foundation of Shusha, built Shusha. We freed Shusha from captivity and returned it to our people, to our state. Shusha is an ancient Azerbaijani city, and this has always been the case. Hard as the hated enemy tried in the last 28 years, it failed to change the Azerbaijani spirit and appearance of Shusha. True, houses have been knocked down, historical sites have been demolished, mosques have been demolished, several ugly buildings have been built. As a matter of fact, there was no construction here. There were about 2,000 Armenians living in the Khrushchev-era apartment blocks left over from the Soviet era, and most of whom were servicemen and their families. If it was an Armenian city, why didn't Armenians come and live here? Because Armenians have no history here. If it is an Armenian city, why did they bring it to such a deplorable state? Why did they plunder Shusha? Why didn't they restore it in 28 years? Where are their benefactors? They were saying that philanthropists did this and that, that they gave money here and there. They organized marathons every year, raising tens of millions of dollars. It is now clear that the money disappeared in the pockets of the former leadership. I have visited the liberated lands many times, but the abject poverty I see here is probably nonexistent elsewhere in the world. But what did they do after all? It was all a lie, a lie, just as they falsified history and reality. Their networks operate in various capitals around the world, transmitting false information. Then there is a discussion around this false information and they write what is completely wide of the mark.

We will restore Shusha. We will definitely restore it. Restoration work has already begun. Today, while in Shusha, I am getting acquainted with the implementation of the tasks I have already given. We will restore not only Shusha, but also all the liberated lands. Construction work has begun and infrastructure projects have been launched. Damage is being calculated. Master plans of cities are being prepared. First of all, the master plan of Aghdam city and Agdam district as a whole is being prepared, and a draft of it has been submitted to me. In line with my instructions, work on it is currently underway and the master plan will be approved in the near future. After that, restoration work will begin on all liberated lands. Armenians have destroyed our lands for 30 years. But we will restore these lands, because we are the owners of these lands – the people of Azerbaijan.

While in Shusha, one realizes the greatness of the Azerbaijani people. We did not come to terms with the defeat in the first Karabakh war. We did not even give the punishment the hated leaders of the PFPA-Musavat duo deserved for that betrayal and treachery. They do deserve any punishment. We never reconciled with this situation, and I have repeatedly said that the Azerbaijani people would never reconcile with this situation. Focused policies were pursued in the political, economic, military and spiritual spheres, in the direction of educating the young generation. And this young generation grew up and sacrificed their lives for the land. A young generation grew up and took our lands from the enemy at the cost of their lives. Representatives of all generations took part in the war and showed heroism, but everyone should know that the main mission was fulfilled by young people who grew up during my presidency, the young people who were children in 2003. First of all, we are indebted to them, we are indebted to all the people of Azerbaijan. All our people brought this Victory closer, and all the factors came together to determine the outcome of this war.

Our war, the second Karabakh war, is being studied today in the military schools of the world's leading countries. We waged the war of the XXI century and destroyed the enemy. There is no Armenian army any more. We have destroyed it. Today, while celebrating Novruz in Jidir Duzu, I proudly say: "Shusha, you are free!", "Shusha is Azerbaijan!" and "Karabakh is Azerbaijan!"

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First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva shared footages from her next visit to Karabakh with President Ilham Aliyev on her Instagram page

12.05.2021

First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva has posted footages from her next visit to Karabakh with President Ilham Aliyev on her official Instagram page.

The post says:

"Dear sisters and brothers!

It is with immense pride that I announce that today is a remarkable day. The "Kharibulbul" music festival is being revived in our ancient native Shusha city, declared the cultural capital of Azerbaijan. After so many years of longing, the Azerbaijani mugham will again be performed on legendary Jidir plain.

With great pleasure, I share with you the footages of our trip to Karabakh!

With deep respect and love,

Your MEHRIBAN".

xxx

In a video shot in Khojavand, **President Ilham Aliyev says:** We are going to Shusha. The "Kharibulbul" music festival will be held in Shusha. As I said, the "Kharibulbul" music festival will be held in May this year after a long break. Along the way, we stopped over in Khojavand district, one of the fascinating corners of Azerbaijan, where we are drinking tea in a pear-shaped glass in the open air, just as we did in the Jidir Duzu plain. Now we are drinking tea in Khojavand. The Azerbaijani people will live in this ancient land of Azerbaijan forever. Long live the people of Azerbaijan, long live Azerbaijan!

Show yourself too, Mehriban. Mehriban khanim, as always, is the person doing the filming, but for some reason she does not want to show herself.

Mehriban Aliyeva: I am behind the scenes.

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President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva are on visit to Shusha. 110/35/10 kV substation launched in Shusha

12.05.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva are on a visit to Shusha.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva first attended the inauguration of 110/35/10 kV Shusha substation.

In order to connect Shusha to the general power system of Azerbaijan, to provide the city with reliable, stable and uninterrupted electricity, the construction of a 110 kW Shukurbayli-Shusha overhead power line at a distance of 75 km from Fuzuli's Shukurbayli substation to the Shusha substation started in December 2020. The substation is fully digitalized by connecting to the remote control SCADA Dispatcher Management System. The perspective development has also been taken into account here.

The construction of the substation and power transmission line was completed in the shortest possible time, despite the difficult geographical conditions. The construction of a 110 kW two-circuit power line from the Shukurbayli substation in Fizuli to Shusha was carried out on a continuous, rotating basis for 73 days, which is a record not only in the energy history of Azerbaijan, but also in the energy history of the region.

As a whole, the work is underway to provide the liberated areas with uninterrupted and high-quality electricity. At present, a total of nine substations and 110 kW transmission lines connecting them are under construction in Kalbacar, Fizuli, Cabrayil, Zangilan, Qubadli, Agdam.

In accordance with the requirements, set by President Ilham Aliyev, to turn the liberated territories into a "green energy" zone, the reconstruction, repair

and restoration work at two small hydropower plants in Suqovusan has been completed. In the near future, the construction and rehabilitation of two small hydropower plants will begin in Kalbacar.

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President Ilham Aliyev inaugurated "Kharibulbul" hotel after renovation

12.05.2021

The inauguration of the newly renovated "Kharibulbul" hotel has been held in Shusha.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva attended the ceremony.

The head of state viewed conditions created at the hotel.

Anar Alakbarov: These hotel employees are originally from Shusha.

President Ilham Aliyev: Very good! As I said, people from Shusha should be involved here. You didn't live in Shusha, did you?

Hotel employee: No I didn't.

President Ilham Aliyev: You will live here now.

There are 49 rooms in the hotel. All of them are provided with all necessary infrastructure for visitors to stay and relax. All of them are equipped with all the necessary infrastructure for guests to stay and relax. The commissioning of such facilities not only plays a very important role in strengthening the tourism potential of Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, but also demonstrates the consistent and rapid implementation of social projects in our liberated territories, including the historic city of Shusha.

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President Ilham Aliyev viewed conditions created at block and cottages under "Kharibulbul" hotel

12.05.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have viewed conditions created at a 48-apartment block and the cottages under the "Kharibulbul" hotel in Shusha.

The head of state and the First Lady were informed of the work done at the block and the cottages. It was noted that these facilities have also been reconstructed at a modern level.

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President Ilham Aliyev laid foundation stone for new mosque in Shusha

12.05.2021

A foundation stone for a new mosque has been laid in Shusha.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have attended the event.

Laying the foundation for the mosque, **President Ilham Aliyev** said:

- We laid the foundation for a new mosque in Shusha today. A new mosque will be built in Shusha. I made the decision to build a mosque a long time ago. After the liberation of Shusha from the occupiers, I began to think about the architecture of this mosque. We need to take into account the fact that there used to be 17 mosques in Shusha and the hated enemy destroyed all of them. Three mosques were in a run-down state – the Yukhari and Ashaghi Govharagha and the Saatli mosques. The instruction has been issued to repair them.

The Yukhari Govharagha mosque has already been repaired. The architecture of Shusha has its own characteristics and all of the mosques built in Shusha at one time were built in the same style. This is why I was thinking about the architecture of the new mosque. I thought about it for almost a few months. Finally, an idea came to my mind that this mosque and its architecture should be symbolic. Therefore, I suggested that the shape of the mosque reflect figure "8" because we liberated Shusha from the occupiers on November 8, and November 8 is officially Victory Day in Azerbaijan. The two minarets of the mosque should reflect figure "11" because it was in the eleventh month that Shusha and Karabakh were completely liberated from occupation. Based on these ideas, architects began to work, and the presentation demonstrated here reflects the future appearance of the mosque. This is an initial version. Some work will still be done on it and some changes may be made.

Of course, proposals for the interior design of the mosque are not yet ready. However, conceptually, the architecture of the mosque will reflect November 8. It will be possible to see figure "8" both from above and from the ground. The location of the mosque was not chosen by chance either. This is the upper part of the city of Shusha, and the mosque to be built here will tower over the city. And this should be the case because Shusha is our ancient city, the city of Azerbaijan built by Azerbaijanis. Azerbaijanis have always lived here. The Azerbaijani population was simply deported from here by force during the occupation.

We have returned to Shusha and we have returned forever! A building towering over the city should be the building of a mosque, and this building should be located in the upper part of the city. The day on which the foundation of the mosque is being laid was not chosen by chance either. Tomorrow, the entire Muslim world will celebrate the sacred holiday of Ramadan. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the people of Azerbaijan on this blessed holiday of Ramadan. The groundbreaking ceremony of a new mosque in the ancient city of Shusha on the eve of the holiday has a great historical and symbolic meaning. From now on, the architects will deal with the entire mosque project and construction work will begin.

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President Ilham Aliyev viewed administrative building for Special representation in Shusha

12.05.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have viewed the administrative building for the Special representation in Shusha.

The head of state and the First Lady were informed of the restoration work carried out here.

It was noted that all-round conditions for the effective work will be created here, and the office building will be reconstructed at the most modern level.

The head of state gave instructions on the work to be done.

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President Ilham Aliyev inspected area in front of Khan gizi Natavan's palace

12.05.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have inspected the area in front of the palace of Khan gizi Natavan in Shusha.

The house of Khan gizi Natavan in Shusha was also destroyed during the occupation. The Shusha Music School, the first children's music school established in Azerbaijan, started operating in the house of Khan gizi Natavan. The historical and architectural monument of the XVIII century was also a victim of the Armenian savagery and vandalism.

The head of state was informed that an assessment of the damage caused to the building during the occupation had already begun. After this process, the restoration work will be launched here.

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President Ilham Aliyev visited the restored "Khan gizi" spring in Shusha

12.05.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have visited the "Khan gizi" spring in Shusha.

The head of state and family members drank from the spring water.

President Ilham Aliyev said:

- Water runs again from the Natavan spring. We have restored the "Khan gizi Natavan" spring. When I last visited Shusha in January, I said that we would restore the Natavan spring. The spring will be at the disposal of Shusha residents and visitors again. The contemptible enemy had dried up this and all other springs. This shows that Shusha has always been an alien city to Armenians. But now Shusha is reviving and the "Khan gizi" spring, one of the symbols of Shusha, has been restored. I drank water from this spring today.

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President Ilham Aliyev viewed building for Shusha Creative Center

12.05.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have viewed the building for Shusha Creative Center.

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva were informed of the work to be done in the center.

It was noted that the caravanserai of Aga Qahraman Mirsiyab oglu was located in this building. The architectural monument of national importance dates back to the XVIII century.

The head of state gave instructions on the work to be carried out.

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President Ilham Aliyev viewed work done at Shusha Art Gallery

12.05.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have viewed the work done at Shusha Art Gallery.

President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva were informed of the work done at the gallery.

The gallery will feature an exhibition of returned Karabakh carpets, as well as the "Karabakh before and after the occupation", "Karabakh on the motives of Azerbaijani artists" exhibitions.

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Foundation stone laid for school No 1 in Shusha

12.05.2021

A groundbreaking ceremony for a school No 1 has been held in Shusha.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have attended the event.

The head of state laid the foundation stone for the school.

President Ilham Aliyev was informed that the foundation of the first secular school in Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus was laid here in 1830. In 1980, on the initiative of great leader Heydar Aliyev, the 150th anniversary of this school was marked.

Armenian vandals have completely destroyed the school, which functioned as school No 1 prior to the occupation.

For the design and construction of a new high school for 960 pupils, the Ministry of Education was initially allocated 3 million manats from the president's reserve fund.

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President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva attended opening of "Kharibulbul" festival in Shusha

12.05.2021

Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan is hosting the "Kharibulbul" music festival. After 29 years, Shusha, the cradle of ancient culture, welcomes its natives and guests again.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva attended the "Kharibulbul" festival organized on Jidir Duzu plain in Shusha.

The head of state made an opening speech at the festival.

Speech of President Ilham Aliyev

- Dear friends, it is a significant day in the history of our country today. After a long break, the "Kharibulbul" festival is being held in the Jidir Duzu plain in Shusha, a city sacred to each of us. I heartily congratulate you and all the people of Azerbaijan on this occasion.

We have been looking forward to this day for 30 years. We have lived with a longing for the Motherland for 30 years. We had to reconcile with this injustice for 30 years, but we did not put up with it. We were always saying that we would never come to terms with this situation and that we would liberate our native lands from the occupiers at any cost, and we did exactly that. The "Kharibulbul" music festival, being held this year for the first time after a long break, is dedicated to the memory of our martyrs. We are indebted to our heroic soldiers. We are indebted to the people of Azerbaijan. Our people united and showed solidarity, or people united like a fist, and this victory was won by the people of Azerbaijan. This is a victory for all of us. I would request that we commemorate our heroic martyrs of the Patriotic War with a minute of silence.

May Allah rest the souls of all our martyrs in peace!

We have restored this remarkable tradition, and "Kharibulbul" festival will now be held in Shusha every year. This year's festival covers representatives of the peoples living in Azerbaijan. Representatives of different nations living in our country will perform in this festival. I gave this recommendation to the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the organizer of the festival, because all the peoples living in Azerbaijan have contributed a great deal to the Patriotic War. The Patriotic War has once again shown that all peoples in Azerbaijan live in friendship, brotherhood and solidarity, and this 44-day war showed again that there is national unity and national solidarity in our country. It is no coincidence that the first festival will feature representatives of the peoples living in Azerbaijan. So we are sending another message to the whole world from here, from Shusha, from our ancient land. Countries should develop in this way, in multi-religious, multi-ethnic countries and societies. There is development, there is unity, there is national solidarity, there is peace here. We follow what is happening in different parts of the world, and I can say that we could foresee the present-day situation a few years ago. Therefore, we promoted multiculturalism, promoted the coexistence of different peoples both domestically and internationally, including through numerous events held in our country. We were saying that this was possible. We were saying in the example of Azerbaijan that it was possible, we were showing that, we shared our experience, we shared our views, and I think that our efforts have paid off because the world has a clearer picture of this issue now.

The 44-day war resulted in a complete victory for Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan won a complete victory, expelled the invaders from ancient Azerbaijani lands and raised the Azerbaijani flag in all liberated lands. The 44-day war is our glorious history. Every day of the 44 days represents a heroic saga. Every day we gave martyrs, shed blood and yet we moved forward. Every day we moved forward. There was not a single day in the 44 days on which we would take a step back. We only moved forward, giving martyrs and shedding blood. Our

people were and we united, and this conditioned this Victory. More than 300 towns and villages were liberated from the invaders on the battlefield, and the liberation of Shusha, the impregnable fortress, is a separate heroic saga. Everyone visiting Shusha and Azerbaijani citizens who have already come to Shusha can confirm that liberating it from occupation required great heroism, courage and self-sacrifice. Our heroic soldiers climbed these steep rocks and liberated Shusha from the invaders in a hand-to-hand battle although the occupiers fired at us from tanks and artillery. We gave martyrs in the battles for Shusha. But the national spirit that drove us forward secured this victory. The liberation of Shusha actually meant the collapse of the Armenian army and the Armenian state. Because a day later, Armenia was forced to sign an act of capitulation, which was drafted in accordance with our conditions, and we returned Lachin, Kalbajar and Aghdam districts without firing a single shot. It is no coincidence that the day of the liberation of Shusha, November 8, was declared an official public holiday in Azerbaijan, it was declared Victory Day, and we will celebrate this holiday every year.

Shusha is a national treasure of the Azerbaijani people. The recent announcement of Shusha as the cultural capital of Azerbaijan shows this again. Shusha is an ancient Azerbaijani city. Next year we will celebrate the 270th anniversary of Shusha. Panahali Khan founded Shusha in 1752, and from that time until the occupation, Azerbaijanis always lived in this city. Hard as the Armenians tried, they could not erase the Azerbaijani spirit from Shusha. Yes, the loathsome enemy destroyed our buildings, our mosques, our historical monuments. However, Shusha was able to preserve its Azerbaijani spirit. Shusha was in captivity for 28 and a half years, but it did not bend, did not break, preserved its dignity, protected its national spirit, protected the spirit of Azerbaijan.

Dear friends, I am sure that many of you are here for the first time since the occupation. You can see and feel that. This is my third time in Shusha, and every time I come here I say that I want to stay. I do not want to leave here. Shusha has a unique aura. I have never seen a city like Shusha elsewhere in the world. There

probably isn't one. We are gathered in free Shusha after a long break today. Azerbaijani mugham will be performed on the Jidir Duzu plain today. After a long break, we will celebrate this wonderful music holiday in Shusha. It is a music holiday in the true sense of the word. Yes, we did return to Shusha on November 8 by fighting and shedding blood, but Azerbaijani culture, prominent representatives of Azerbaijani culture have returned to Shusha today, and this return is a reality, and everyone must reckon with this reality.

From now on, we will live in Shusha forever. The restoration of Shusha has already begun. The instructions are being fulfilled. The Yukhari Govharagha mosque has already been repaired and holiday prayers will be held there tomorrow.

It is no coincidence that the festival has been organized on the eve of Ramadan. We are a nation bound by our religious, national and spiritual roots. Otherwise, we would never have been able to end the occupation. For all these years, we have lived with one goal – to liberate our lands, restore justice, protect our national dignity, and we have achieved this. Today's event shows again that we have returned to Shusha and will live here forever. Restoration work has begun in the city and, as I already said, the Yukhari Govharagha mosque has been repaired. Five years ago, after the liberation of Jojug Marjanli, I had a mosque similar to the Shusha mosque build there. I said at the opening of the mosque back then that one day we would restore mosques in Shusha, we would build new mosques. Today, on the eve of Ramadan, the foundation of a new magnificent mosque was laid in Shusha. The "Khan gizi Natavan" spring, which was once dried up by the Armenians, now abounds in water. All this has a great symbolic meaning. This is our return. We will build and restore Shusha, while the contemptible enemy has destroyed Shusha. Those here, our friends will walk around and see the ruins Shusha has suffered. But let me say again that we kept Shusha, Aghdam, Jabrayil, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Gubadli, Lachin, Kalbajar in our hearts. We will restore the destroyed mosques, but we had built those mosques in our hearts during the occupation. And we are gathered here now, on the Jidir Duzu plain, a place sacred to every Azerbaijani, and celebrate this holiday of music, this hol-

iday of unity, this holiday of return, this holiday of dignity. Long live Shusha! Long live Karabakh! Long live Azerbaijan!

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The "Kharibulbul" festival then began.

President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva listened to the performances of festival participants.

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Meeting with journalists after the concert, President Ilham Aliyev said: Thank you for being here, in difficult times. Hello Mirshahin.

Mirshahin: Kudos, Mr. President. Congratulations!

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you, thank you very much, and I congratulate all of you.

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The head of state posed for a photo with journalists.

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President Ilham Aliyev: Anar reminded me that you said at the press conference that you wanted to come here. We have fulfilled your request. I wanted our journalists to come first and hold this festival. Where are you staying?

Journalist: We came here directly.

President Ilham Aliyev: OK, directly.

Anar Alakbarov: They will stay here overnight.

President Ilham Aliyev: There are opportunities to stay here now. Let's

invite foreign journalists to come and see this.

Journalist: Mr. President, thank you for your attention. We always feel your support, thank you very much.

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, I have always supported you. Thank you for raising such topical issues. In many cases, I learn about the processes taking place in the country from you. This in itself encourages executive bodies to work more responsibly.

Journalist: This is our first meeting with you after the war.

President Ilham Aliyev: Indeed.

Journalist: With your permission, I also want to say that I have seen wars in the world for 40 years. This has been the first war in which one person was doing military, political and informational work.

President Ilham Aliyev: Because if you had not communicated the realities associated with this war to the attention of the world community, the international opinion about this issue would have remained distorted. You remember perfectly well that we did not have access to world media at that time. Only you were here and took photos. Meanwhile, the Armenians were using every opportunity to spread utter lies in all countries. This time, however, both you and I communicated the truth about the war. Our brave soldiers climbed those rocks and drove the enemy out of here. Mirshahin, you were here a long time ago, before the occupation. Some are probably here for the first time.

Mirshahin: I was here before the occupation.

President Ilham Aliyev: Someone who comes here for the first time can see that it is generally considered impossible to liberate Shusha. It is hard to just climb here on foot, not to mention carrying a machine gun. And the enemy is on top, with tanks, cannons and firing positions. Indeed, this is an unprecedented heroic saga.

Journalist: I have seen wars in the mountains of Afghanistan. I couldn't believe this. After the liberation, I came here and saw everything. I climbed from here on foot myself in 1992. The roads were closed, cars wouldn't be allowed to go through.

President Ilham Aliyev: Which road did you use?

Journalist: Directly from Dashalti. I walked to this place four hours. Snipers fired on me three times, but the shots went wide.

President Ilham Aliyev: You recently published this photo – I have seen it. Remember the state of Azerbaijani soldiers at that time? There was no outfit, no weapons, no controls. Today our soldiers are like lions, they are like lions. They have created a miracle.

Journalist: It is possible to say that nobody lived here.

President Ilham Aliyev: Nobody.

Journalist: Only at the entrance to the city, but not many people.

Mirshahin: I was in one of the houses in Zangazur.

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, in the Shurnukhu village.

Mirshahin: That man also shared some good refutations related to the Armenian government. It worked out quite well, very well. He cited five aspects. He also talked about the low pension. He said that Karabakh is Azerbaijan.

President Ilham Aliyev: Moreover, he said that he had broken into the house of an Azerbaijani.

Mirshahin: Yes, he made some very important statements.

Journalist: Mr. President, we are particularly grateful to you for the victory in Shusha. This is a truly wonderful victory. This is a huge victory indeed. You seem to have returned life to the Azerbaijani people. You have breathed life into us. Believe me – just a year ago, we could not even dream of coming to Jidir Duzu and attending a concert here. This is an incredible miracle, Mr. President. May Allah bless you and our army.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you!

Journalist: Mr. President, I am saying quite sincerely that there is no such head of state elsewhere in the world.

President Ilham Aliyev: Thank you, thank you very much. A year ago, different music was played here. Other actions were taking place here. The enemy has received a worthy response for those actions, for all its crimes. From now on,

only Azerbaijani music, the music of the peoples living in Azerbaijan will sound here. This is truly a great historic achievement. Every time I come here, I experience special feelings. I am sure that you are also experiencing these feelings, because we have been lucky to see Shusha again. This is great happiness. Of course, we are seeing again that Shusha is a truly Azerbaijani city because one can feel the Azerbaijani spirit here. Architectural sites, springs – although the Armenians have changed the patterns and erased the inscriptions on these springs. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani culture is in full swing all around us, so to speak. We are back forever. We will live here forever. I have said that Shusha will become one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Not only Shusha, but also all other liberated cities.

Journalist: I have been traveling in Karabakh for six months and am an engineer and architect myself. Indeed, I haven't seen such beautiful places anywhere else in the world. Indeed, the beauty of Shusha and Kalbajar is unique.

President Ilham Aliyev: People lived here, albeit only a few. According to the information we have – we later clarified this information – about 1,600 Armenians lived here, mostly military personnel and their families. In other words, there was never an Armenian population here. You can see the way the city looked during the occupation. We have tidied up the city a little, we have been cleaning for six months now, trying to make the city clean and orderly. All buildings were destroyed and unfinished. There are no new buildings. They have built several villas for themselves – you have probably seen them. Historical buildings have been destroyed and there is no urban infrastructure. Have a look – those pylons were not there before. They were using the pylons from ancient times. They claimed that this was an Armenian city, but if it was Armenian, then why did you bring it to such a state? Why didn't you live here? Why didn't you build anything? Why did you destroy it?

Journalist: Nobody would burn their house when leaving.

President Ilham Aliyev: Of course!

Journalist: But they did, which means that these houses were not theirs.

President Ilham Aliyev: You have also visited other liberated lands. There is pristine nature there, the color of those trees and the sky. I have not seen such colors.

Journalist: Aghdam is completely ruined. Seeing this picture, one thinks that this was done only in an attempt to erase memory. After all, why would someone settle scores with a grave? They simply wanted to erase history, to erase memory. I think that only this was their goal.

President Ilham Aliyev: Of course it is. They wanted to erase history so that we never come back. They believed that Azerbaijan would never get on its feet. They didn't believe that we could get on our feet. They did not believe that we could have both strength and determination. This is why they were saying: let's destroy everything so that they never come back, let's erase history, destroy monuments and graves. And tomorrow we will say that it was Armenian land, and they said exactly that. Shahbulag was brazenly renamed into Tigranakert. What a falsification! They claimed that Shusha was an Armenian city. But this city was founded by Panahali Khan. We all know this well. He also called it Panahabad. How can it be an Armenian city if Panahali Khan arrived here from Aghdam 275 years ago?

Journalist: Moreover, Mr. President, they also threw some new stones there. I saw it myself.

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes.

Journalist: Supposedly it was Tigranakert.

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, there?

Journalist: Yes, right next to Shahbulag.

Journalist: I have seen several churches in Kalbajar, old churches, and the Armenians added new stones to them. And they did this in such a way that it is immediately noticeable. Seeing this, I immediately said that they were all fake stones. I asked people and they said that these stones were brought here 10-15 years ago.

Serviceman: Mr. Commander-in-Chief, with your permission, Special Forces want to have a photo with you.

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, absolutely!

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A photo was taken with Special Forces fighters.

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Everyone said together: Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

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Fireworks in the sky of Karabakh, in Shusha

12.05.2021

Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, is hosting the Kharibulbul (Xaribulbul) music festival. After 29 years, Shusha, the cradle of ancient culture, welcomed its next of kin and guests on May 12.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva attended a spectacular fireworks display at the Kharibulbul Music Festival in Shusha.

The participants in the festival watched with great interest the holiday fireworks that painted the sky of Karabakh and ancient Shusha in bright colors. Also, the tricolor flag of Azerbaijan was projected on the walls of the magnificent fortress of Shusha. Festival participants watched this scene with pride.

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First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva shared footages of fireworks organized in Shusha on her Instagram page

12.05.2021

First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva has posted on her Instagram page the footages of fireworks organized as part of the "Kharibulbul" music festival in Shusha.

The post on her official Instagram page says:

"Dreams come true! Congratulations to all the people of Azerbaijan!
With deep respect and love,
Your MEHRIBAN".

https://azertag.az

First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva made post on Ramadan Holiday

13.05.2021

First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva has made an Instagram post on the
occasion of the Ramadan Holiday.
The post on her official Instagram page says:

"Dear compatriots!
It is with an indescribable sense of pride and joy that I extend my best wishes and sincere congratulations to each of you on the occasion of the holy Ramadan Holiday from our native city Shusha! May this holiday, which invites people to peace, unity, solidarity, kindness and spiritual perfection bring health, mutual understanding and tranquility to the hearth of each of you!
I respectfully commemorate our martyrs who died for the motherland. I wish patience to their relatives and loved ones. May the Almighty never spare his mercy for our people!
I cordially congratulate all Muslims around the world on the occasion of Ramadan Holiday, and ask Allah to accept their prayers and fasting.
With deep respect and love,
Your MEHRIBAN".

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President Ilham Aliyev visited Yukhari Govharagha mosque in Shusha

13.05.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva have visited Yukhari Govharagha mosque in Shusha.
The head of state and the First Lady were informed of the restoration work being done at the mosque.
The restoration work are carried out by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation here. Built in 1768-1769, the mosque also became a victim of Armenian vandalism during the occupation.

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First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva shared footage from gala concert of "Kharibulbul" music festival on her Instagram page

13.05.2021

First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva has posted a video footage from the gala concert of " Kharibulbul" music festival on her Instagram page.

The post on her official Instagram page says:

"Thanks God! Almighty God, always protect Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani people!

With deep respect and love,

Your MEHRIBAN".

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"Kharibulbul" music festival wrapped up with gala concert in Jidir Duzu plain, Shusha

13.05.2021

The "Kharibulbul" music festival, held on the initiative of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and organized by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation on Jidir Duzu plain of the country's cultural capital Shusha, has wrapped up with a gala concert.

President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva listened to the performances of festival participants.

The gala concert featured performances by People's Artists Rauf Abdullayev, Yalchin Adigozalov, Honored Artist Fuad Ibrahimov and the Uzeyir Hajibayli Azerbaijan State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Murtuza Bulbul, the Azerbaijan State Choir Capella under the artistic direction of People's Artist Gulbaji Imanova. Also featuring in the concert were works by Uzeyir Hajibayli, Fikrat Amirov, Gara Garayev, Alakbar Taghiyev, Muslim Magomayev, Niyazi, Tofig Guliyev, Vasif Adigozalov and other composers.

The performances by People's Artists Alim Gasimov, Azerin, Dinara Aliyeva, Elchin Azizov, Alikhan Samadov, Farhad Badalbayli, Mansum Ibrahimov, Murad Adigozalzade, Natig Shirinov, Polad Bulbuloglu, Samir Jafarov, Teyyub Aslanov, Yusif Eyvazov, Honored Artists Fargana Gasimova, Miralam Miralamov, Sahib Pashazade, Shahriyar Imanov, Shirzad Fataliyev and others were also acclaimed by the audience.

The concert featured the screening of a video clip showing national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev's words about the occupied territories: "I want to go to Shusha together with you. We will go there, believe me we will. Shusha is the pupil of the eye for Azerbaijan, a source of pride for every Azerbaijani. Shusha is a symbol of our culture and history. Shusha is dear to everyone. But Shusha is not alone – the mountains of Lachin are also very dear. We

can never live without Lachin. A beautiful city such as Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Gubadli, the springs of Kalbajar, that hot water spring of Kalbajar. We cannot live without them." Also demonstrated in the video was the statement of the victorious Commander-in-Chief, President Ilham Aliyev he had made during an address to the nation on the day of the liberation of Shusha, november 8 2020. "I am happy to have fulfilled my father's will. We have liberated Shusha! This is a great victory! The souls of our martyrs and of the Great Leader are happy today! Let your eyes be clear, Azerbaijan! Let your eyes be clear, Azerbaijanis of the world! Dear Shusha, you are free! Dear Shusha, we are back! Dear Shusha, we will revive you! Shusha is ours! Karabakh is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!"

The "Kharibulbul" music festival, held for the first time after the liberation of lands by the Azerbaijani Army under the leadership of victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, ended with a collective performance of the song "Azerbaijan" by artists.

After the concert, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva met with the artists participating in the festival. Everyone chanted "Karabakh is Azerbaijan!" on the Jidir Duzu plain.

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On May 12, on the first day of the "Kharibulbul" music festival, the music compositions of different peoples living in Azerbaijan were demonstrated in the concert themed "Multiculturalism in Azerbaijani music". With their performances, music groups and performers of different nations living in different regions of the country conveyed the message to the whole world that everyone, regardless of nationality or religion, has a single homeland. Speaking at the opening of the festival, President Ilham Aliyev said: "All peoples in Azerbaijan live in an atmosphere of friendship, brotherhood and solidarity, and this 44-day war has once again shown that there is national unity and solidarity in our country. It is no coincidence that the first festival will feature representatives of the peoples living

in Azerbaijan. So we are sending another message to the whole world from here, from Shusha, from our ancient land."

At the end of the 44-day war the heroic Azerbaijani Army under the leadership of President and victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev managed to liberate lands occupied by Armenia and restore territorial integrity. At present, large-scale construction projects are being implemented in the liberated territories. These projects include the restoration of liberated territories, administrative, historical and cultural monuments, as well as the reinstatement of cultural events and traditions that have not been held in Azerbaijani historical lands for years. So the lands liberated from occupation are also reviving spiritually. The "Kharibulbul" music festival held on the Jidir Duzu plain on May 12-13 is graphic evidence of that.

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President Ilham Aliyev viewed construction of Ahmadbayli-Fuzuli-Shusha highway and Victory road

14.06.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has viewed the work done on the Ahmadbayli-Fuzuli-Shusha highway and Victory road.

The head of state was informed of the construction progress on the highways.

It was noted that the length of the Ahmadbayli-Fuzuli-Shusha road, consisting of four and six lanes, will be 81 kilometers, and the length of the Zafar road will be 101 kilometers. Tunnels, bridges and all necessary infrastructure will be created along both roads.

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President Ilham Aliyev viewed construction of bridge over Victory road

14.06.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has viewed the work done on the bridge constructed on the Victory road passing through a part of Khojavand district.

The head of state was informed of the technical indicators of the bridge.

It was noted that the length of the three-span bridge over the Quruchay will be 86 meters. Like all restoration and reconstruction works in our liberated territories, the construction is being carried out at a high speed, and this bridge will be ready before the road is put into operation.

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President Ilham Aliyev laid foundation stone for tunnel to be constructed on Ahmadbayli-Fuzuli-Shusha highway

14.06.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has laid a foundation stone for a tunnel to be constructed on Ahmadbayli-Fuzuli-Shusha highway passing through a part of the territory of Dashalti village.

The head of state was informed of the technical indicators of the tunnel.

It was noted that a total of two tunnels will be built there and each of which will have two lanes. Each of the tunnels will be 530 meters long and 12 meters width.

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Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev welcomed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Fuzuli district

15.06.2021

President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan has today left for the city of Shusha.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev welcomed President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his wife Emine Erdogan in Fuzuli district.

President Ilham Aliyev: My dear brother, welcome to the Karabakh land!

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Pleased to see you! However, the Karabakh lands are devastated.

President Ilham Aliyev: You will see even more now. See?

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: We do.

President Ilham Aliyev: Welcome, Emine khanim!

Emine Erdogan: Nice to meet you!

President Ilham Aliyev: This is Fuzuli district, or Lower Karabakh. When you come from Baku, Fuzuli is the first Karabakh region.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: There are road construction projects here.

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, we have started them. And these are Karabakh mountains and forests.

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The heads of the states then headed to Shusha.

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President Ilham Aliyev: At present, the master plan of Fuzuli is being prepared. We will probably approve it in a few months. After that, we will start

restoration work.

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On the way, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan viewed the territories adjacent to Shusha.

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President Ilham Aliyev: I will show you where Shusha is from here.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Do please, let's have a look.

President Ilham Aliyev: Over there, on the top of that rock from left to right. And that village below Shusha is called Dashalti.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Dashalti means a stone and place underneath it.

President Ilham Aliyev: Dashalti means underneath a stone.

Emine Erdogan: Is Shusha right behind it?

President Ilham Aliyev: Shusha is right above it.

Emine Erdogan: On a plain.

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, on that plain. That mountain ledge on the right is the Jidir Duzu plain. It is the famous Jidir Duzu plain where equestrian competitions are held. We will go and see those places as well.

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They posed for photographs here.

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Official welcome ceremony was held for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Shusha

15.06.2021

An official welcome ceremony has been held for President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who arrived in Azerbaijan for an official visit, in Shusha.

A guard of honor was arranged for the Turkish President in the square decorated with the national flags of the two countries.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva welcomed President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan and First Lady Emine Erdogan.

The chief of the guard of honor reported to the Turkish President.

The Turkish President saluted the Azerbaijani soldiers.

President Ilham Aliyev and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reviewed the guard of honor.

The state anthems of the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan were played.

The guard of honor marched in front of the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the accompaniment of a military march.

The presidents posed for official photos.

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Azerbaijani, Turkish presidents held one-on-one meeting

15.06.2021

Following the official welcome ceremony in Shusha, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan have held a one-on-one meeting.

After the meeting, President Ilham Aliyev presented the Karabakh Order to Lutfi Haluk Bayraktar, the General Manager of Baykar.

Under the Order of President Ilham Aliyev, Lutfi Haluk Bayraktar has been awarded this high award for his contribution to the strengthening of fraternal relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey, the development of cooperation, and to the just cause of ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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President Ilham Aliyev, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited monuments of famous Azerbaijani personalities Natavan, Bulbul and Uzeyir Hajibayli in Shusha

15.06.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, First Lady Emine Erdogan have visited the monuments of famous Azerbaijani personalities Natavan, Bulbul, and Uzeyir Hajibayli in Shusha.

The guests were informed that during the occupation, Armenians took the statues to Armenia to have them melted, Azertac news agency reports. It was underscored at the initiative of the great national leader, Heydar Aliyev, the statues were bought back from Armenia and brought to Azerbaijan and kept in the yard of the Art Museum in Baku. After the liberation of Shusha, the statues were restored.

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Azerbaijan, Turkey signed Shusha Declaration on allied relations

15.06.2021

Following the one-on-one meeting of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Shusha, a "Shusha Declaration on allied relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey" has been signed.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed the Shusha Declaration.

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Azerbaijani, Turkish presidents made press statements

15.06.2021

Following the ceremony of signing Shusha Declaration, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan have made press statements.

The head of state made the statement first.

Statement of President Ilham Aliyev

- Dear Mr. President, my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan,

Distinguished guests from Turkey,

Ladies and gentlemen!

It is a significant day in our lives today. It is a historic day. Today, we are welcoming the dear President of the brotherly country, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to the Karabakh land, to the land of Shusha. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome my dear brother to Shusha and Karabakh on behalf of all the people of Azerbaijan.

My dear brother has visited Azerbaijan a number of times, but we are together in the Karabakh land, in Shusha for the first time. This visit has a historic significance because the Joint Declaration, the Declaration on allied relations, signed today raises our relations to the highest peak. The name of the Declaration is the Declaration on allied relations, and this name in itself indicates everything, it says it all. Today we have established a qualitatively new relationship, and all the provisions of this Declaration are a guarantee of our future cooperation.

I have repeatedly said in press conferences and in my speeches that Turkey and Azerbaijan today are the closest countries in the world. There are many factors that bind us together. First of all, history, culture, common ethnic roots, language, religion, national values, national interests, brotherhood of our peoples. Today, we

are setting a unique example of cooperation and alliance on a global scale.

The Declaration signed today is based on history. The Declaration reflects the words of the great leaders of our peoples – Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and Heydar Aliyev. At the beginning of the XX century, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk said, "Azerbaijan's joy is our joy and its sorrow is ours too." At the end of the XX century, Heydar Aliyev said, "Turkey and Azerbaijan are one nation in two states." These historic words are the key factor for us, for our activities. We remain committed to this testament, demonstrate our commitment to our ancestors and guide future generations by signing the Declaration on allied relations in the city of Shusha, which was liberated in the XXI century.

The Joint Declaration refers to the historic Kars Agreement. The historic Kars agreement was signed exactly 100 years ago. This also has a great symbolic meaning. The Joint Declaration on allied relations signed in the liberated city of Shusha after 100 years shows the direction of our future cooperation.

The Declaration covers many important issues. At the international level, it dwells upon our cooperation, joint activities, political relations, economic and trade relations, culture, education, sports, youth policy and practically all other areas. It demonstrates the importance of energy security and the Southern Gas Corridor for Turkey, Azerbaijan and Europe. Every issue reflected in it is of great importance. I would like to highlight two issues among them. First, the issue of cooperation in the field of defense. The issues of defense industry and mutual military assistance are reflected in this Declaration. This is a historic achievement. We are showing again that we will always be together. We will continue to ensure each other's security, just as Turkey and Azerbaijan have been together on all issues so far. This will continue to be the case.

The second important issue is transport. The declaration contains very clear statements about the opening of the Zangazur corridor. This is the result of a new geopolitical situation that has emerged as a result of the second Karabakh war. Today, we are not only talking about the Zangazur corridor, which will connect Turkey and Azerbaijan by rail and road, we are creating this corridor through

tangible work. It is important that this issue is reflected in the Joint Declaration on allied relations.

Today we are meeting in liberated Shusha. Today, the attention of the entire Azerbaijani people and indeed of the Turkish people too, I am sure, are here. The eyes of the world are here. Because this visit was eagerly anticipated in Azerbaijan. I know that it is of great interest. The statements made here in our ancient city of Shusha today will reverberate in the whole world. They will have great repercussions. The historic significance of this visit will be spoken about for many years to come.

The city of Shusha was liberated on November 8, last year. The liberation of Shusha required great heroism. Everyone who comes to Shusha and looks at these steep rocks can see that it takes great heroism, professionalism, courage and self-sacrifice to liberate this city, which is considered an impregnable fortress. Heroic Azerbaijani soldiers shed blood, became martyrs, climbed steep cliffs only with light weapons, liberated Shusha from the enemy and raised the Azerbaijani flag.

The Azerbaijani and Turkish flags waving in Shusha today show our unity. From the first days of the second Karabakh war, from the first hours, my dear brother, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed unequivocal, clear and open support for Azerbaijan. From the first hours of the war, he said that Azerbaijan was not alone. This both inspired us and, at the same time, stopped all the forces and circles that were going to intervene. He said that Turkey was with Azerbaijan, and from the first hours to the last minutes of the war, the support of my dear brother and the Turkish Republic, the brotherly Turkish people gave us additional strength. This political and moral support inspired us. Messages of congratulation, expressions of support and solidarity from all over Turkey once again demonstrated our unity to the whole world.

Today, the Turkish media are here in Shusha, and I want to emphasize their activities. They risked their lives to show the real situation at the most dangerous moments of the war and to convey it to the audience and the world. I personally

often watched the reports on Turkish TV channels during the war and saw again that it was not only about professionalism, but also about solidarity and love. The true voice of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan's just cause was conveyed to the world from the most dangerous places, from places where bombs were falling. The Turkish media immediately went there and prepared reports. They were well aware that since Armenia could not resist us on the battlefield, it fired on our civilians with long-range missiles, Tochka-U and Iskander M missiles, killing more than 100 civilians, including children and women. We saw the love, affection and solidarity of the entire Turkish people during the war again. We already knew that we are one nation in two states, as my late father said, but the war showed this to the whole world again, and we will never forget this support.

The second Karabakh war is now in the past. As a result of the 44-day war, the Armenian army was completely destroyed. Armenia was brought to its knees, waved the white flag, surrendered and was forced to sign an act of capitulation after the liberation of Shusha, after which our other districts were returned to us without a single shot being fired. The occupation, which lasted nearly 30 years, came to an end. Azerbaijan put an end to this with the support of brotherly Turkey. Thirty years of negotiations had yielded no results. This shows again that where there is a will, resolve, strength and justice, everything is possible. Of course, inspired by this support from an ally like Turkey in the second Karabakh war, Azerbaijan fulfilled its historic mission, restored justice and restored its territorial integrity.

A new era begins now. I met my dear brother in Fuzuli city today, met him there and showed him the ruined landscape of Fuzuli. There is no Fuzuli city. You have also been there and seen that there is not a single safe building. The hated enemy has destroyed all our buildings. Aghdam is in a similar situation. Our historical monuments have been destroyed, demolished and looted.

Notice what state the city of Shusha is in. Shusha is a historic city and not a single building has been built here in the 28 years of occupation. I showed this building to my dear brother. The building of Shusha governor's office was built

during the time of my late father. The buildings in Shusha were built both during his time and during the reign of Panahali Khan and Ibrahimkhalil Khan. The loathsome enemy did not leave a single stone unturned. You can see the ruined places of Shusha. In fact, we have slightly refurbished some places here. When I first came here earlier this year, the city was completely devastated.

Shusha is a historical city of Azerbaijan because Panahali Khan laid the foundation of this city in 1752 and after that 98 percent of the population of Shusha were Azerbaijanis. Despite the 30 years of occupation, Shusha did not bend, was able to preserve its national spirit, dignity, and was waiting for us. And we came and liberated Shusha.

Today, the President of the brotherly country is our guest in the historic city, and it is impossible to express the feelings we have. I am sure that everyone who comes here feels the same, and we are grateful to the Almighty God for giving us the opportunity to experience these very emotional days.

My dear brother, we were looking forward to seeing you in Shusha. I invited you. In December last year, we, the Presidents of the two countries, agreed to hold our next military meeting here, and this is what happened. Welcome again, welcome to your homeland, welcome to Shusha!

Turkish-Azerbaijani unity and brotherhood are eternal!

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Then the President of Turkey made a statement.

Statement by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

- Dear Mr. President, my dear brother,
Dear members of the delegation.
I greet you with the most sincere feelings and love.
Of course, we experience special excitement and feelings today. Praise be

to the Almighty for the fact that we are keeping the word given earlier. It is good that as a result of the well-known 44-day war, Karabakh has returned to its real masters and got rid of Armenian oppression and occupation.

Unfortunately, the building we see in the background today is, in fact, evidence of what the Armenian oppression has turned these masterpieces into. My brother chose a very explicit location for the press conference as a background. On the one hand, the building of the executive authority and, on the other, unfortunately, the building the Armenians have razed to the ground, so to speak.

On June 15, the Day of National Salvation of Azerbaijan, we honor the memory of national leader Heydar Aliyev. May his soul rest in peace.

As you know, together with my brother, Mr. Aliyev, we shared the joy of the Karabakh Victory by the Azerbaijani army in Baku on December 10. On that day, there were completely different feelings, a completely different excitement. I am very pleased to be alongside him in the ancient city of Shusha six months later. It is good that we are keeping our promise.

Once again, I congratulate the Azerbaijani people on the Karabakh Victory. I am sure that the messages that we will send to our region and the whole world from Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan which has presented mankind with many artists, will be very important. We closely follow the work on the reconstruction of Karabakh, which has gained freedom under the visionary leadership of my brother Ilham Aliyev, the victorious Supreme Commander-in-Chief. On arrival in Shusha, both you and us saw this work. There is continuous work, hard work in the field of infrastructure. Roads and high-voltage power lines are being extended, power stations are being opened. Along with all this, this non-irrigated region is now provided with water. This work is currently ongoing. Inshallah, there will be airports in the region very soon. My dear brother specifically informed me about this during our one-on-one meeting. After the construction of airports, the number of visitors to these places will increase. I am sure that this region will achieve serious progress in terms of tourism during that period.

Of course, the former splendor and uniqueness will return to Karabakh. We

have no doubt about that at all. In the near future, we will together see the days of the revival of such ancient settlements of Karabakh as Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Gubadli, Lachin, Shusha, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Khojavand.

Turkey provides and will continue to provide our brothers with all necessary support in the restoration work, just as we did during the liberation struggle. We will also make every effort to return our Azerbaijani brothers to their homes as soon as possible. Naturally, my esteemed brother is doing special work in this regard. The main thing is that the real owners of these places will return to their homes and regions. Providing them with both financial assistance and support related to jobs will allow our Azerbaijani brothers to return to their homes and to their lands, which will seriously enrich these places.

Of course, we will together take the necessary measures both to eliminate the consequences of the destruction and prevent such disasters in Karabakh and other Azerbaijani lands in the future.

Inshallah, together with our Housing Administration, we are planning on certain steps in this region. We will take these steps as a result of interaction of our Housing Administration with the relevant local authority.

We call on everyone who has influence in the region to see the realities, accept the Victory of the Azerbaijani people and look to the future. Following the ceasefire in the region, new opportunities for cooperation have emerged for all parties. We are direct witnesses of the keen interest of our Azerbaijani brothers in this issue.

Turkey also wants to channel its geographic ties into deep cooperation. We want Armenia to accept the hand of solidarity extended to it with good intentions and to take advantage of the opportunity to jointly shape a common future. We are talking about a six-sided platform. As you know, this platform includes Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Iran. Together with this six-party platform, we want calm and peace in the region. In order to take this step, my brother and I are committed to doing everything in our power. And so is Mr. Putin. Thanks to the steps taken in this direction, the region will turn into a region

of peace.

We very much want this historic opportunity not to be wasted due to the intentions, expressions and activities that are not based on reality. The main condition is that everyone who wishes to benefit the new reality and abandon the policies of hatred and incitement be focused on promoting peace and cooperation. When creating such an environment, we also say at every opportunity that we will do everything possible to normalize relations with Armenia. We are confident that this encouraging process will be continued in a very healthy form if the ceasefire agreement signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia ends with a comprehensive and forward-looking peace treaty.

Dear representatives of the media and distinguished guests. At the meeting just held with my brother Aliyev, we had the opportunity to once again thoroughly examine our ties. In the coming months, we will host a high-level meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Council in Turkey. As you know, since April 1, 2021, travels between the two countries have been carried out on the basis of domestic passports only. This step will facilitate our mutual ties and bring us even closer together.

We have recently taken important steps in bilateral trade. On March 1, 2021, the Preferential Trade Agreement entered into force. Step by step, we are approaching the goal of bringing our turnover to $15 billion in 2023.

Many of our companies headed by "Türkiye Petrollari", have made large investments in Azerbaijan. At the same time, we are pleased with the investments of Azerbaijani companies led by SOCAR in Turkey. My brother and I have e discussed the issue of investing not only in Turkey, but also, if necessary, SOCAR and "Türkiye Petrollari" investing in third countries. Inshallah, we are working and will continue to work on this.

In the coming period, we will further expand the scope of our trade and economic cooperation. Together with Azerbaijan, we have completed such giant projects as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars and TANAP. Along with our own countries, these projects contribute to the well-being and stability of the en-

tire region. Since the completion of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, the TAP project, our country has been supplying Azerbaijan's natural gas passing through its territory to the European market.

Today, as my dear brother said, we have taken a new historic step that will contribute to the further development of ties built on the basis of "one nation in two states" concept. This is a very important step. We will further strengthen this and continue our path.

As my brother has just said, by signing the Shusha Declaration we have outlined a roadmap for our ties at a new stage. The Declaration, consisting of eleven A4 pages, is turning into reality in Shusha today. This is extremely important. The Declaration between Turkey and Azerbaijan covers a number of issues. As we take forward-looking steps, we see that this document expresses a determination that encompasses not only two countries, but also the entire region.

Inshallah, Turkey plans to open a consulate general in ancient Shusha in the near future. We will thus ensure the implementation of activities planned in the region in a faster and more efficient manner.

On the other hand, we consider very important and support the South Zangazur corridor project of Azerbaijan. With the implementation of this project, a new common corridor will be opened, which can be used by everyone from East to West. This is of great importance.

Despite the pandemic, we resolutely continue our joint efforts to promote cooperation in all areas from agriculture to energy, from transport to tourism, from defense to education. Naturally, along with all this, we are further strengthening our ties in the field of the defense industry using technological transfers and joint production projects. My brother has just presented the "Karabakh" Order to the General Director of "Bayrak", Haluk bey. On behalf of our family, I would also like to express my special gratitude to him. Of course, unmanned aerial vehicles have done some serious work here. From now on, our ties in the field of the defense industry will be further developed. Along with this development, Azerbaijan will have the opportunity to become not only a market but also

a production center in this process. Our strength is the strength of Azerbaijan and the strength of Azerbaijan is ours.

With these thoughts, let me express my gratitude to President Aliyev for the kind hospitality shown to me and my delegation. I do hope that the decisions made at our meeting will be implemented. Love and respect for all. Good luck to you!

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Azerbaijani, Turkish presidents visited "Khan gizi" spring in Shusha

15.06.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, First Lady Emine Erdogan have visited the "Khan gizi" spring in Shusha.

The Turkish President was informed of the "Khan gizi" spring.

It was noted that the Khan gizi spring, which was put into operation shortly after the liberation of Shusha, is one of the most famous places in the city. Khan's daughter Khurshidbanu Natavan was famous not only as a poetess, but also for her kindness. The water pipeline that Natavan once had laid to the city was known as the Khangizi spring. The spring, which dried up during the Armenian occupation, is still used by residents and visitors.

It was noted that the area around the spring will be completely renovated in the near future.

A photo then was taken in front of the "Khan gizi" spring.

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Then the Presidents and their family members headed to the Jidir Duzu plain by bus.

President Ilham Aliyev: This is Karabakh hotel. It was built during my father's leadership. The Armenians used only two of its floors.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: What about the other floors?

President Ilham Aliyev: They were in a deplorable state.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Is the hotel being restored now?

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, restoration work has begun. They will be completed within three to four months.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: When work in this building and at the airport is completed, tourists will start coming here.

President Ilham Aliyev: The one you are staying at did not work either.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Was it there before?

President Ilham Aliyev: It was there in Soviet times. This is a place to live. These are the places left after the war. And this is the Govharagha mosque. We have renovated it too.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Is it operational now?

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes. Mehriban and I came here and prayed last time. One mosque here was dilapidated. And this is a spring.

Emine Erdogan: How many springs are there?

President Ilham Aliyev: There are 17 springs here because there were 17 blocks, 17 mosques and 17 springs in Shusha. This is what the Armenians have done to our buildings.

Bilal Erdogan: In other words, did they live in poverty?

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, they lived in poverty. These are all buildings of the Soviet era. Have a look – these are traces of war. There were street fights here. Everything here is in such a ruined state.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Kharibulbul.

President Ilham Aliyev: Kharibulbul is the name of this flower.

Bilal Erdogan: It just grows here?

President Ilham Aliyev: Yes, we will show it there. And this is Vagif's mausoleum. He was the vizier of the Karabakh khan.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Is it newly built?

President Ilham Aliyev: My father built it. The Armenians destroyed it. We are rebuilding it now. It should be ready within a month. Molla Panah Vagif, the vizier of Ibrahimkhalil Khan, was at the same time a very famous poet. In 1982, my father built this mausoleum on his grave. And the Armenians destroyed it.

And now we are going to the historic place of Shusha – the Jidir Duzu plain.

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Azerbaijani, Turkish first ladies met in Shusha

15.06.2021

A meeting has been held between First Lady of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva and First Lady of the Republic of Turkey Emine Erdogan in Shusha.

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"Musical heritage and Karabakh horses on Jidir Duzu plain" composition organized by Heydar Aliyev Foundation was presented in Shusha

15.06.2021

The "Musical heritage and Karabakh horses on the Jidir Duzu plain" composition organized by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation has been presented in Shusha.

According to AZERTAC, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, First Lady Emine Erdogan viewed the musical composition.

The composition featured dances by the ballet troupe of the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater, the Azerbaijan State Song and Dance Ensemble named after Fikrat Amirov, the Azerbaijan State Dance Ensemble, the "Mirvari" dance ensemble and students of Baku Choreography Academy, accompanied by a spectacular performance of Karabakh horses of the Azerbaijan Equestrian Federation and the "Natig" rhythm group. Also folk and composer songs of Azerbaijan and Turkey were performed at the event.

During the event, President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan was presented with a Karabakh horse "Zafar", one of the oldest horse breeds, and a "Kharibulbul" composition. The "Kharibulbul" composition features two Kharibulbul flowers, considered the symbol of Karabakh, uniting and embodying the eternal friendship and brotherhood between Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The participants of the event organized in Shusha were also presented with a collection of publications of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation called "Cultural Heritage of Karabakh". The collection includes separate publications in the fields of literature, music, architecture, folk art and carpet weaving. The guests were also presented with commemorative medals related to the visit to Shusha.

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Presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey had joint dinner in Shusha

15.06.2021

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan have had a joint dinner in Shusha.

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Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addressed members of Milli Majlis

16.06.2021

President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is on an official visit to Azerbaijan, has visited the Milli Majlis.

According to AZERTAC, Speaker of the Milli Majlis Sahiba Gafarova welcomed the distinguished guest.

They had a one-on-one meeting first.

Following the one-on-one meeting, President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan addressed the parliament.

Speech of President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan

- Dear Speaker of the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan,

Dear MPs, ladies and gentlemen!

On behalf of your 84 million brothers in Turkey, I am greeting you with love and joy – all members of the parliament of the victorious country – with the phrase "We are one nation, two states." I am happy because I am in my native Azerbaijan. I am happy because I am with you in the Milli Majlis of fraternal Azerbaijan, which has liberated Karabakh. I am happy because I am in Azerbaijan, which is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its independence. The liberation of Karabakh is the most significant event in the history of Azerbaijan in 30 years of independence.

This Victory has healed the bleeding wound in the Caucasus and created a great opportunity for the establishment of sustainable peace and stability in the region. Not only Azerbaijan will benefit from peace and stability in the Caucasus, but also all countries of the region, including Armenia and the whole world.

We, in turn, together with our Azerbaijani brothers, are ready to make every effort to fulfill the tasks entrusted to us for the comprehensive development and well-being of the region and strengthening stability in it.

It is clearly visible who won and who lost during the crisis period that reigned in Karabakh over the past 30 years. Only people living in Karabakh experienced suffering, they shed blood, they experienced bitterness, they suffered material and moral losses. For 30 years, they went through hard times. Unfortunately, my Azerbaijani brothers left their native lands and remained internally displaced for 30 years. These lands were under occupation. After 30 years, glory to Allah, these lands have returned to their true owners.

Those who observed the unresolved nature of the conflict in Karabakh, which continued for 30 years, or, to put it more precisely, sought to continue the conflict were always on the side of the winner. We believe that the path leading to sustainable peace depends on the development of cooperation between all pe-

oples and states in the region on the basis of mutual trust.

I once again congratulate the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Azerbaijani Army and the President of Azerbaijan, my esteemed brother Ilham Aliyev, who, having demonstrated great leadership, presented this Victory and this peace to Azerbaijan. I congratulate the people of Azerbaijan, who, in the name of the Victory in Karabakh, rallied into a single fist around their leader, demonstrated national unity and equality at the highest possible level. I congratulate the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan, which heroically fought in the name of the Motherland, for Karabakh, for the freedom of Karabakh. May Allah grant peace to the souls of all our martyrs. I express my condolences to their loved ones.

During the sacred Patriotic war, Turkey, as a state and as a nation, was next to Azerbaijan with all its heart. Today, we are close to Azerbaijan with all our capabilities. Let the whole world know that we, Inshallah, will be by your side tomorrow as well. We will be together today and forever, just like the author of the words of the national anthem of Azerbaijan, Ahmad Javad, fought in the ranks of the Ottoman army together with Azerbaijani youth during the Balkan War, just like heroes from Azerbaijan fought together with Anatolian fighters in Canakkale and ascended the peak of martyrdom together, just like the heroes of the Caucasian Islamic Army and soldiers of Nuru Pasha came to the aid of their Azerbaijani brothers. The joy of Azerbaijan is our joy, its freedom is our freedom, its fate is our fate, and its sorrow is ours too.

My dear brothers, during the times when Nuru Pasha arrived in the Caucasus, the Armenians killed more than 12,000 Turks, Muslims. A massacre, which is inscribed in the black pages of our history, was perpetrated in the Caucasus. Those who slander the Turkic nation in every possible way should first look at what happened in the Caucasus, in Azerbaijan. And not only at the events that took place a hundred years ago, but also at the bloodshed that took place in Karabakh, in Khojaly 30 years ago. And then, if their conscience permits, we will sit down and discuss all the accusations leveled against us. However, their eyes do not see and their ears do not hear all this. Their hearts have not felt anything for

a long time. They are not able to see those who, over the 30 years of occupation of Karabakh, destroyed and ravaged the occupied Azerbaijani lands and, when leaving, set everything on fire. They mobilized their efforts to create obstacles in the struggle for freedom. Let them come and see Fuzuli today. Everything around is destroyed, burned and devastated. Let them come and see Karabakh now. Everything is obvious. We saw it all on our way yesterday. We saw what have they turned these places into. They blew up and burned everything. They came as occupiers and left as barbarians.

This behavior alone is enough to prove whose homeland Karabakh is. When the Azerbaijanis had to leave Karabakh 30 years ago, they did not destroy anything. They did not burn a single home because no-one can destroy and burn their homeland. However, Karabakh is not their (Armenians - editorial) homeland and therefore they left it having destroyed and burned everything around them. Today Azerbaijan is restoring the villages and towns that they have destroyed and burned and, Inshallah, together we will restore and build a new Karabakh.

My brothers, those who want to see the difference between culture and vandalism should come to Karabakh and see the difference. Along with being one of the most beautiful regions in the world from a geographical point of view, Karabakh is also rich with its culture. Inshallah, this will continue to be the case in the future too. Turkey, Inshallah, will be next to brotherly Azerbaijan in this process.

Dear brothers, together with my brother Ilham Aliyev and our delegation, we were in Shusha yesterday and experienced the joy of seeing the proudly waving flag of Azerbaijan on the free Karabakh land. Ever since it was founded by Panahali Khan of Karabakh, Shusha has been a natural Academy of Arts, a city where music, literature and art developed and flourished at the highest level. Starting from the times of the vizier of Panahali Khan, Molla Panah Vagif, whose poems are still studied with great love, Shusha has been able to preserve itself as a center of culture. Shusha, like an eagle's nest located on the rocks and stretching towards the sky, has always been conducive to the creation of works of art, literature and culture. This city is the birthplace of genius composer Uzeyir Hajibayli,

Bulbul, Khurshidbanu Natavan, Rashid Behbudov and many other artists and poets. Shusha, which gave birth to such thinkers as Ahmad bey Aghaoglu who is known not only in Azerbaijan and Turkey but also throughout the Turkic world, is being restored today.

From this point of view, the declaration of Shusha as the cultural capital of Azerbaijan and the holding of the "Kharibulbul" music festival on the Jidir Duzu plain is a message to the whole world. I am very glad to hear that preparations are under way for the Vagif poetry festival. We will be happy to declare Shusha, which has been declared the cultural capital of Azerbaijan this year, the cultural capital of the entire Turkic world next year. Figures of culture and art from all over the Turkic world will gather in this beautiful city, and this will become the most remarkable tribute of respect and recognition of Shusha and its ancient history.

Of course, not only Shusha or Karabakh, but also the whole of Azerbaijan and the entire Turkic world have brought up great poets and artists. For example, this year marks the 880th anniversary of the birth of Nizami Ganjavi. For centuries, poets competed with him in skill and strove to get closer to him. The work of FatehSultan Mehmet, who wrote poetry under the pseudonym of Avni, reflects the same feelings (recites a poem of Fateh Sultan Mehmet).

This year also marks the 850th anniversary of the birth of Ahi Evren, the 580th anniversary of the birth of Alisher Navoi, the 750th anniversary of the death of Haji Bektashi Veli, and the 700th anniversary of the death of Yunus Emre. The 1300th anniversary of the birth of Farabi was marked last year. There are very few nations in the world that have such a rich and high culture. We must communicate our values to both the younger generation and the whole world. All those I have named and those I haven't are honored with respect are founding fathers of our culture and pillars of world culture.

As humanity comprehends the valuable thoughts reflected in their works, it will become much easier to resolve the problems of our world. Advancing our culture by building bridges from the past to the future will help our culture take the place it deserves. The more we strengthen our unity, equality, friendship and

brotherhood, the closer together we are, the faster we can achieve this goal.

My brothers, over time we will become even better aware of the benefits that the Victory in Karabakh will bring to Azerbaijan, the Caucasus and the whole world. Let no-one be worried about this Victory because this is a Victory of justice, a Victory of peace and soul. Indeed, looking at the work being done and the work that will be done after the Victory, we can imagine a picture of the future. First of all, stability, peace, tranquility and hope are back to every corner of Karabakh. The way has opened for our Azerbaijani brothers to return to their homes, to their land they have been separated from for 30 years. Inshallah, during our next trip, we will experience the joy of people returning to their native lands. Today I am already addressing them in the Azerbaijani parliament. The construction of your houses has already begun. Inshallah, everything will be built and we look forward to you returning.

The tedious tension caused by the prolonged conflict as a result of the occupation have already been left behind. Today, roads are being built at a rapid pace, water pipelines are being laid, power plants are being built and commissioned. I saw all this with my own eyes and am telling you. On the other hand, infrastructure facilities are being built. Inshallah, we will also build schools, hospitals, etc. with our TOKI in the region.

It is impossible to describe the comfort and wealth that the opening of the Zangazur corridor connecting Nakhchivan and Baku will bring to our region. Everyone knows that good always triumphs, justice always gets the upper hand. At the same time, Karabakh has become a place where plans of those who wanted to see the world as the arena of their political and economic interests were disrupted. In addition, together with Azerbaijan, all these processes mark the start of a new period for Armenia as well. For example, the railway that will operate in the Zangazur corridor can only be used by the Armenians to comfortably travel to Moscow and go out to the whole world. Thus, they will be able to escape from the blockade in which they found themselves thanks to the Armenians themselves.

Together with my brother, we put forward a new proposal. What is our

proposal? Let six countries – Russia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, Armenia and Georgia – unite into one platform. Thanks to this platform, stability will reign in the region and hostility in the region will be eliminated. Only Georgia had questions in this respect. During his last visit to Turkey, the Prime Minister of Georgia and I discussed these issues as well. I said that it would be in Georgia's interests too. Let's take this step. We know the problems between us and Armenia. However, despite all this, we wish to eliminate all the problems of our Azerbaijani brothers. At the same time, this platform will contribute to resolving your problems with Russia. He said, "I will try." We answered, "Everything will be fine."

This region needs peace. We must achieve it. While the problems of Armenia and Azerbaijan are being addressed, Turkey will also take the necessary steps. The opening of the borders with Turkey will bring great benefits to Armenia. It is in our hands to turn this Victory into a victory for everyone. All of us together must assess the possibilities so that the Caucasus never becomes dependent again. We are fighting for this cause together with our friends at the global level under the motto "The world is more than five".

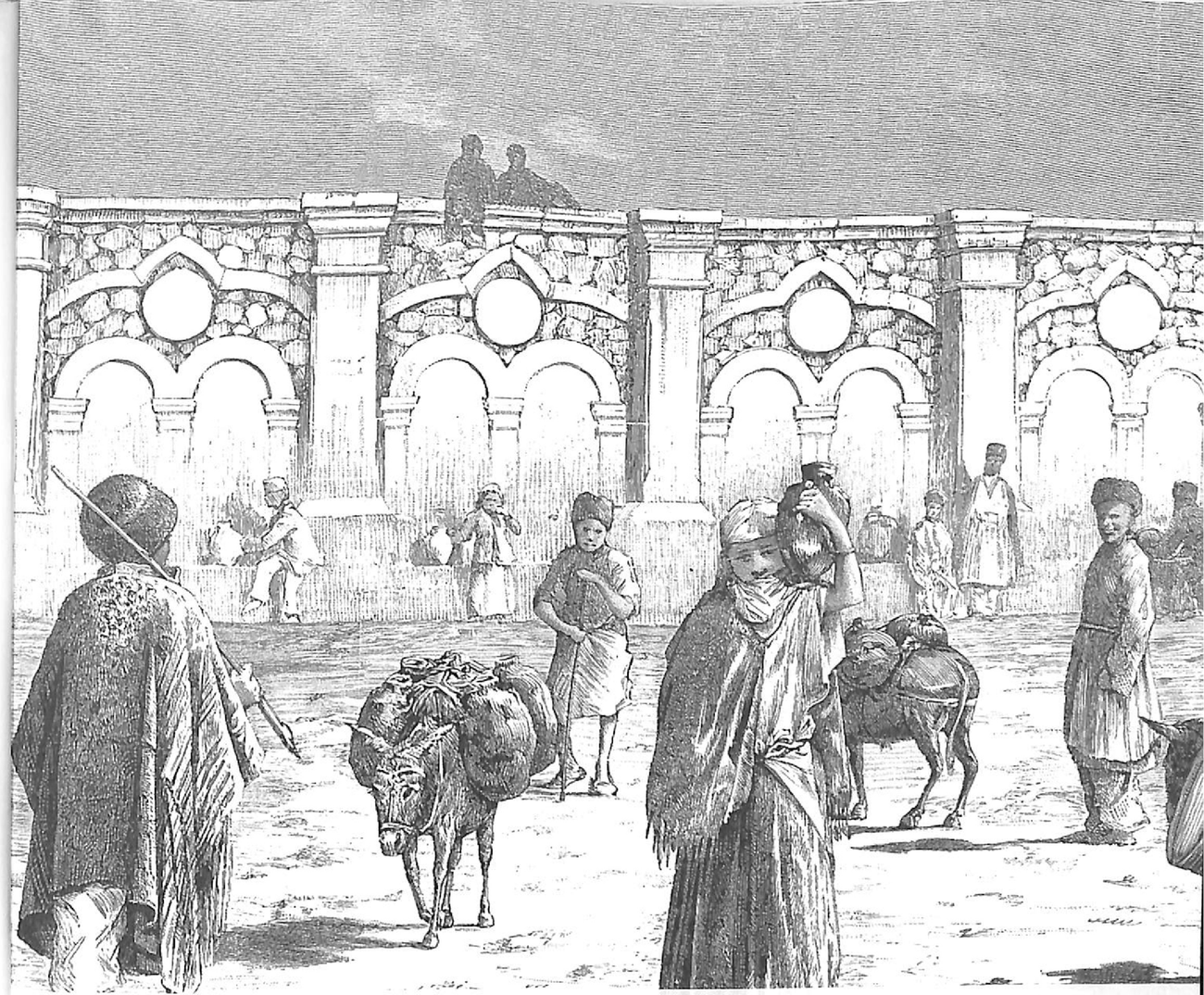
I came here after the NATO summit. At the NATO summit, we also discussed these very issues and assessed them. Glory to Allah, we had fruitful meetings. However, the problems in the world do not end there and there are still many unresolved problems in the world. But if we are strong and united, by the grace of Allah we will be able to solve them. Inshallah, by raising our culture to the highest peak, we will bring closer the days when peace and justice will reign in our region and throughout the world. I would like to end myspeech with the lines of great poet Bakhtiyar Vahabzade (recites a poem of poet Bakhtiyar Vahabzade).

With heartfelt wishes, I say good-bye.

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SHUSHA

(BRIEF HISTORY)



Shusha in 1756-1805s

Panahali Khan Javanshir, the founder of Shusha city, was born in Sarijali village of Karabakh. As a talented military commander, he served in Nadir Shah Afshar's army in the 30s of the XXIII century and came back to Karabakh with his associates in 1737 to pursue an independent policy. He managed to reach his goal after Nadir Shah's death. With the death of Nadir Shah, the central government was abolished and 20 khanates emerged on the territory of Azerbaijan. Of them, 12 (Quba, Darband, Baku, Salyan, Cavad, Lankaran, Shamaxi, Shaki, Karabakh, Ganca, Yerevan, Naxcivan) and eight (Tabriz, Urmiya, Ardabil, Khoy, Garadagh, Maragha, Maku, Sarab) were respectively established in the northern and southern Azerbaijan. [33, p. 29] Each khanate was represented as a small Azerbaijani statelet with separate territories, flags and other state attributes.

Historian Mirza Jamal wrote that although Adil Shah, who succeeded Nadir Shah, conferred the title of khan on Panahali Javanshir in 1748 and appointed him the governor of Karabakh; by that time, he had long ago gained that title by his willpower.

As a talented commander and statesman Panahali Khan had castles and cities, known as defense installations, built in Karabakh and further increased his prestige and influence. Initially, the Khan had the Bayat castle built in Kabirli area of Karabakh in 1748 and made it an administrative center of the khanate though the architect of the castle remained anonymous.

However, later in 1751-1752, he had a new castle built in a strategic location, in the territory of Shahbulag, located 10 km away from Aghdam, where the center of the khanate was transferred. Probably, the castle got its name from a pure and gushing spring on the territory. [40] As the historical monument was built in the area, called Tarnout, sometimes, that it was also called the Castle of Tarnout.

Currently, from the Shahbulag fortress complex, there remained a castle, erected on the hill near the spring and a mosque building. After Armenians occupied Aghdam in 1993, they tried to Armenianize Shahbulag castle, like several other monuments, and introduced the nearby mosque as a church. [52]

Residential buildings, a hammam, a mosque and a bazaar were built inside the Shahbulag castle, surrounded by high walls with the khan's residence located in the oc-



Shahbulag or Ternout castle, XVIII century

tagonal castle built with uncut stones in a rectangular form. [20, p. 96]

However, none of these castles was able to provide security of the khanate amid the continuous civil wars. Panahali Khan decided to have a new castle built to secure its reliability and inaccessibility against enemy attacks. "We must build such an eternal and impregnable fortress in the mountains, in a strong and impassable location, so that even strong enemy cannot besiege it," he was quoted as saying. [21, p. 112; 24, p. 6]

The mountain plateau, located 1,300-1,600 m above sea level and surrounded by steep cliffs from three sides, fully met these requirements. Panah Ali Khan, who realized that the selected territory was militarily and strategically pivotal, ordered the building of a new castle in 1752. After completion of necessary work, in 1756, the capital of Karabakh khanate was relocated.

The length of the castle wall is 2.5 km with 17 towers on it. The defense fortresses were built in important places around the castle. River stones, eggs and lime solution were used in the construction of the castle. The fortified city of Shusha was formerly called Panahabad after the Karabakh khan. The panahabadi - silver coins – named after the khan – was



Ganja gate of Shusha castle. The photo belongs to the first half of the XX century

the khanate's unit of currency. After a while, the city was called Shusha and got its name from the word glass - a symbol of purity - the incredibly clear mountain air of the area. Shusha is rich with its pure air and springs. Historically, there are Isa bulagi (spring), Saxsi bulaq, Sakilli bulaq, Shamil's bulaq and other springs there.

The castle of Shusha is one of the most beautiful pearls of the Azerbaijani architecture. The castle has round defense towers. A bridge with high architectural qualities, which connects the castle to external world, was built near the castle, known as the Qala Bridge. The castle has three gates: Ganca, Iravan, Aghoghlan.

The Ganca gate – the way out of the Shusha castle, connected Ganca city and Chilabord region of the Karabakh khanate. That is why, it was called the Ganca or Chilabord gate. In comparison with other gates of the Shusha castle, the Ganca gate remained in a better-preserved condition.

The Iravan or Khalfali gate is in the western part of the castle and the way out of this gate connected Shusha city with Khalfali village and Iravan city.

The Aghoghlan, also called Mukhtar or Shushakand gate, is located in the eastern part of the Shusha castle and provides access to the lower part of the city. The way out of this gate connected Shusha city with Shushakand and Mukhtar villages and extended until the Aghoghlan tower.

An inner castle, composed of a complex of monuments, was built near the northern Ganca gate; however, those monuments were destroyed as a result of the Armenian occupation.

Although the Shusha castle was impregnable, Mehrali bay, Panah Ali Khan's son, had the Asgaran castle built on the bank of Qargarcay River in 1758-1760, 25 km away from Shusha. The Asgaran castle was surrounded by rivers from both sides and protected the road to Shusha. The castle, which was built with river stones, was surrounded with circular towers and firm walls of 2m width and 9m length. There was also a double wall on the right side of the castle with 2,500 m length. [39, p. 75-76]

Other khanates, as well as the Urmia khanate, which challenged for the central government role, attacked the Karabakh khanate in different periods. Even Fatali Khan Afshar, the Urmia khan, defeated the Karabakh khan for a while and took Ibrahimxalil

agha, Panahali Khan's son to Urmia as a hostage.

Another military commander, who also fought for the central government role, Karim Khan Zand, sent Ibrahimxalil agha, who was hostage there, to Karabakh with a government order after capturing Urmia.

He took Panahali Khan with him to a "Shiraz party" in Qum and under different excuses, he did not let him return back. He entrusted the administration of the khanate to his son, Ibrahimxalil khan. Panah Ali Khan appointed his younger son Mehrali agha as the governor of Karabakh. After it, a quarrel between Mehrali and Ibrahimxalil brothers broke out, and in 1763, Ibrahimxalil won the struggle and became the Khan of Karabakh. [16, p. 218]

As a city, the formation of Shusha has seen three stages:

• The first stage refers to the rule of Panah Ali Khan (1748-1762). Over this period, the Khan relocated inhabitants of Shahbulag and surrounding villages to the new capital – Shusha, where the construction was carried out spontaneously, without a plan. At this stage, the Tabrizli quarter, the most ancient quarter of the city was laid out. After the abolition of Karabakh khanate, this quarter was called Ashagi mahalla (quarter). The first quarters of Shusha were Chuxur, Qurdlar, Culfalar, Seyidlar, Quyular, Haci Yusifli, Mardinli, Qazanchali and Cholqala.

• The second stage is associated with the rule of Ibrahimxalil Khan (1763-1806s). During this period, the upper neighborhood was laid out in a planned manner as against the lower quarter and the city was expanded. The number of population grew rapidly in the upper quarter and the formation of the second part – Yuxari mahalla, made up of eight quarters (Xanlıq, Saatli, Kocharli, Mamayi, Xoca Marcanli, Damirci, Hamamgabaghi, and Taza) completed.

• The third phase related to the period when a Russian garrison was stationed in Shusha as was envisaged under the 1805 Kurakchay treaty. During this period, the construction was done in the western upper section of the city. More people inhabited this part made up of 12 quarters. For instance, Chilabord, Dara, Baghlar and others were some of them. [49]

Starting from the 50s of the XXVIII century, Shusha city began to acquire the mil-



General plan of Shusha city. XIX century

itary, political, economic and cultural importance in the history of Azerbaijan. All place names in Shusha city are associated with names of Azerbaijanis and its population was made up of only Azerbaijanis since it was founded.

Shusha was made of 17 quarters, that is, Urudlar, Seyidli, Culfalar, Quyulug, Cuxur, Haci Yusifli, Dordlar Qurdu, Dord Cinar, Chol Qala, Kocharli, Mamayi, Mardinli, Saatli, Damircilar, Hamamqabagi, Taza mahalla, Xocamircanli.

Shusha was the capital of the Karabakh khanate from 1756 to 1823.

One of the first fundamental buildings adjacent to the castle walls and to the Shusha towers was the palace of Panahali Khan. The construction of the palace that was commenced on a rock in the area that was later called Chuxur. The arched facade of the palace, decorated with a front door, overlooked the Topxana forest. There were auxiliary buildings on the right side of it. Later, Panahali Khan had palaces built for his sons in the proximity of his palace in the same fashion with the same construction materials.

The palace of Mahammad Hasan agha, the elder son of Ibrahimxalil Khan, extended towards an abyss along the castle walls, was distinguished for its special beauty and comprehensive ornaments.

In order to eliminate the feudal fragmentation and restore the central power in Azerbaijan, the Qajars, after subjugating the most of the centralized state that had existed under the Safavids, launched attacks on Northern Azerbaijan, including the territory of Karabakh.

The major purpose behind the military campaigns of the Qajars was not to occupy foreign lands, but to subjugate territories to the centralized government that had previously been under the rule of the centralized state, but were later divided into khanates. [33, p. 28-29]

The kinship ties between the Qajars and Ibrahimxalil khan of Karabakh, i.e. his wife Tutu Bayim, a daughter of II Shahverdi khan Ziyad oglu Qajar, a sister of Javad khan - the ruler of Ganja, the existence of a shrine belonging to Qajars in Karabakh and so on once again proved that the Karabakh khanate was no stranger to them. [39, p .213]

In 1757, Mahammad Hasan Khan Qajar's troops attacked Karabakh. He was defeated in a battle near the Khatin aryk, 30 km off Shusha. Panahali Khan captured two

heavy cannons as trophies. [16, p. 217] Later, the forest, where Mahammad Hasan Khan Qajar's troops abandoned two heavy cannons, was called the Topxana forest.

In 1791, Agha Mahammad Qajar (1780-1797) sent letters to the khans of the northern Azerbaijan, demanding them to accept his authority.

In the summer of 1795, Qajar attacked Karabakh with 85,000 troops and besieged Shusha. The Karabakh khanate formed an alliance with Irakli II, the Talish and Iravan khans against Qajar. Poet Vagif, vizier of Khan, had a great role in forging the alliance.

Shusha's siege lasted 33 days. At that moment, Ganca ruler Javad Khan, who was from descendants of the Qajar dynasty, visited Agha Mahammad Khan in his camp and accepted his patronage. Javad khan proposed Agha Mahammad Khan to end Shusha's siege and attack Tbilisi. Agha Mahammad Khan moved from Aghdam towards Ganca with 20,000 troops. On September 12, 1795, after heavy clashes, his troops entered Tbilisi.

In autumn 1795, Qajar's troops returned Azerbaijan and set up a camp on the Mughan plain. Agha Mahammad Khan was planning to attack Shusha again in spring after spending the winter in Mughan. However, the arrival of the Russian troops in Azerbaijan and the uprising in Iran forced him to withdraw. In the spring of 1796, Agha Mohammad Khan returned to Iran and proclaimed himself the Shah of Iran. [16, p. 248]

In April 1796, under Zubov's command 30,000 Russian troops approached Darband. Pavel I, who came to power after the death of Catherine II on November 6, 1796, called the Russian troops back from the Caucasus.

In the spring of 1797, Qajar's troops again attacked Karabakh. Ibrahimxalil Khan went to Car and Tala with his associates to see his close relative, Umme (Omar) Khan, son of Nusel Khan – the governor of these territories. Bika, a sister of Umme (Omar) Khan, was Ibrahimxalil Khan's wife.

As Shusha was left defenseless, Qajar's troops captured the city. The troops retreated after his servants - Safarali and Abbas assassinated Agha Mahammad Shah Qajar in his bed on July 4, 1797.

In 1797, the second attack of Agha Mahammad Shah on Georgia was expected. However, his assassination in Shusha (July 4, 1797) thwarted this attack. [1, p. 400-401]

After the death of Agha Mahammad, Mahammad bay, a son of Mehrali bay, seized

power by taking advantage of the absence of his brother Ibrahimxalil Khan from Shusha, and his unwillingness to hand power over to his uncle further strained the situation. Vaqif's letter to Ibrahimxalil Khan about the events in Shusha and inviting him to Karabakh angered Mahammad bay. After that, he had Molla Panah Vagif, a prominent Azerbaijani poet, and his son Ali bay, executed.

Agha Mahammad Shah Qajar's nephew Fatali Shah came to power in Tehran. Ibrahimxalil Khan sent the body of Agha Mahammad Shah Qajar, accompanied by his envoy, to Fatali Shah with great honor and asked for reconciliation. In return, Fatali Shah demanded him to send Abulfat agha, the Khan's son, to his palace as a hostage and hand his daughter Aghabayim over to the harem of Shah.

Ibrahimxalil Khan met his demands. Ibrahimxalil Khan had six children - four sons and two daughters. Mahammadhasan agha (1775-1806); Javad agha (1757-1779); Abulfat Khan Tuti (1766-1839); Aghabayim agha (1782 -1831); Khanlar agha (1785-1832) and Govharagha (1796-1844)

Since there is information about the Khan's children in other historical sources, we would like to provide detailed information about his two little-known daughters. They are Aghabayim khanim - a spouse of Fatali Shah, and Govharagha khanim. The "Agha" title in both names indicated that they were descendants of Seyyeds.

Aghabayim khanim was born in 1782 in Shusha. Her mother Tutubayim was a daughter of II Shahverdi Khan Ziyad oglu Qajar, the governor of Ganca, a sister of Javad Khan, a brave khan of Ganca. She spoke Persian, Arabic and French freely besides her native language.

In March 1798, Aghabayim khanim was sent to Tehran together with his brother Abulfat agha, accompanied by 200 cavalries and a large number of servants, Karabakh historian Mirza Jamal Javanshir wrote. "Fatali Shah sent envoys with gifts. He sent an expensive robe and a sword to Ibrahimxalil Khan and granted a part of Karabagh province with all its income to him."

Aghabayim khanim was the most favorite wife of Fatali Shah. She was famous as an author of beautiful poems under Aghabaci pen name. It is said that she wrote a poem, of which verbatim translation into English sounds as below:

I am in love, Karabakh,
Shaki, Shirvan, Karabakh.
If Tehran turns into heaven,
Karabakh will never be forgotten. ***(verbatum translation)***

The shah had a luxurious palace built for her. She asked the shah to lay out a garden similar to the ones in Shusha to diminish a little her longing for Shusha. The garden was laid out, although all flowers brought from Karabakh grew in this garden, but only khari-bulbul, which is dear to Shusha residents, did not grow there. Grieved by this, Aghabayim khanim wrote the following verses:

"Homeland garden" is colorful,
But there is no Kharibulbul,
Why is everywhere colorful,
But under your chest is yellow, bulbul?! ***(verbatum translation)***

This poem soon gained great success in Karabakh and spread all over Azerbaijan. A song composed of the words of the poem still remain very popular among the people. [39, p. 75-76]

Famous Kharibulbul flower is a rare endemic plant species. It is mainly met in Karabakh territory. It distinguishes itself with its special beauty and as one of the symbols of Shusha.

Aghabayim khanim is one of the women, who played an important role in the life of the country. She corresponded with prominent persons from Europe and Middle East and made friends among them. She was also prominent as a compassionate and heroic woman. Under some information, she even avenged her dynasty by plotting the killing of her father Ibrahimxalil Khan's murderer major Lisanevich. The other daughter of Ibrahimxalil Khan, Govharagha khanim was known as a poetess and philanthropist. She was one of the famous intellectuals and philanthropists of her period. In 1865, she built the famous Govharagha mosque in Shusha at her own expenses and repaired the mosque built



Khan gizi Khurshidbanu Natavan with sun Mehdigulu and daughter Khanbika

by Ibrahimxalil Khan in 1769 in Meydan quarter. [39, p. 216]

Another prominent poetess, an artist and philanthropist from the dynasty of Karabakh khans was Khurshidbanu Natavan (1832 -1897). She played a great role in the cultural life and development of Shusha.

About 30 poets came together in the Majlisi-uns literary maclis, founded at her initiative and expense in 1872. In 1873, she had a drinking water pipeline constructed to Shusha at 100,000 rubles from a source seven kilometers away. [31, p. 11-12; 4, p.235]



One of the houses in the palace complex of Khan gizi Khurshidbanu Natavan

This water pipeline became famous as a Khan gizi bulagi (spring).

She was a daughter of Mehdiqulu Khan Javanshir, second son of Ibrahimxalil Khan, who was the khan of Karabakh after Panahali Khan and Ibrahimxalil Khan. As Khurshidbanu was the only child of the family and last heir to the Karabakh khanate, she was called Durruyekta (only pearl) in the palace and Khan gizi (a daughter of Khan) among people. Natavan was a successor of two great dynasties – the Cavanshirs and Ziyadoqlu Qajars.

Together with Mahsati Gancavi, Heyran Khanim Dunbuli, Ashiq Peri Khurshidbanu Natavan was also one of the poetesses, who had unique services to the Azerbaijani

literature. Natavan, who popular as Khan gizi among people, won people's affection with her kindness, philanthropy, generosity, helping the poor, her delicate lyrical poems, her great efforts and funds for development of Shusha city, the revival of his literary and cultural life.

Her multifaceted talent, painting along poetry, knowledge of music and mugham was highly appreciated by prominent personalities of her period. Creative work of the poetess was always in the center of attention, her works were published in 1928, 1938, 1956, 1981, 1984, 2004, and 2012, and books on research of her literary heritage were published."

Apart from being a poetess, she was also a talented artist. A part of her artistic embroideries was collected in the album Flower notebook (1886).

Two-storey house belonging to Khurshidbanu Natavan is a historical-architectural monument of the XVIII century in Shusha. The first children's music school, established in Azerbaijan at Bulbul's initiative, the founder of the Azerbaijani vocal art, the Shusha Music School started its activities in this building in the early 1930s. After 1984, the school was called Nizami Shusha city Children's Art School. After major repairs and restoration of the school in 1987, a Karabakh branch, named after Khurshidbanu Natavan of the Nizami Gancavi National Museum of the Azerbaijan Literature started functioning there.

A monument of the poetess was erected in Baku. Researchers dedicated a number of works to the activities of her. [7; 8; 17; 27 etc.]

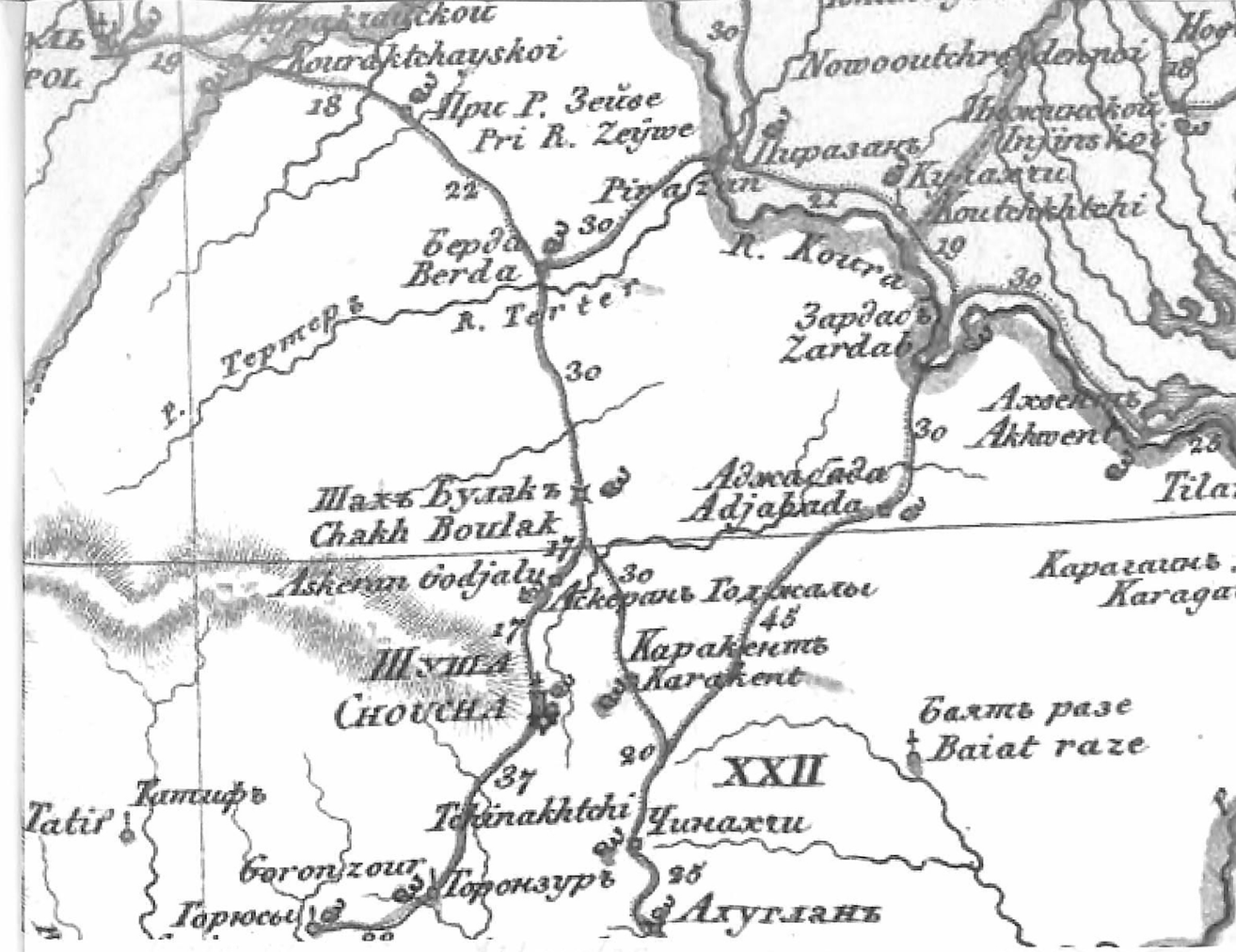
In line with a decree of the Azerbaijani president, the 180th anniversary of Khurshidbanu Natavan (April 3, 2012) was marked festively. On this occasion, a postage stamp was issued in 2014.

Shusha was one of the main carpet-weaving centers both in Karabakh and in the whole South Caucasus. Local people called carpets gaba. The carpets weaved in Shusha and nearby villages were distinguished themselves with motley colors, weaving techniques and the variety of forms.

An author, who was in Karabakh in mid XIX century, wrote that Shusha carpets were of high quality as compared with the Iranian carpets for their patterns, colors and tightness, and were better than the Khorasan ones. At the outset of the XX century, A. S.

Piralov, who especially emphasized that Shusha city played an irreplaceable role in the formation of artistic tastes in the carpet-weaving across the whole South Caucasus, wrote that "the most skillful female carpet weavers, who dominate carpet weaving in the whole region, work here".

As in other regions of Karabakh, ornamental and plot carpets spread widely in Shusha as well. Plant elements were essential in ornamental Shusha carpets that mostly were characteristic for the XVIII and XIX centuries. Samples of such carpets were Ajdahalı (Draconian); Açma-yumma (Opening-closing); Bağçada güllər (Flowers in the garden); Nalbaki gül (Saucer flower); Saxsıda güllər (Flowers in pottery); Qoca (Elderly); Balıq (Fish); Butalı (Almond shaped); Lampa (Lamp); Daryanur (Daryanur); Bulud (Cloud) and others. [49]



Shusha after the Treaty of Kurekchay (1805-1918)



After the 1805 Treaty of Kurekchay, the Karabakh khanate was actually annexed by the tsarist Russia. The khan undertook to entrust his grandson. He had to stay in Tbilisi. The internal administration of the khanate was kept at the disposal of the khan. The khan undertook to pay Russia an annual tribute of 8,000 chervonets. [2, p.18]

As against the propaganda of the Armenian falsifiers, historical documents, like the Treaty of Kurekchay (May 14, 1805), signed between Karabakh khan Ibrahimxalil Khan and the tsarist Russia; the Gulustan (October 12, 1813) and Turkmenchay (February 10, 1828) treaties between Russia and Iran proved that the empire solely invaded the Azerbaijani lands. Armenians were settled there, like other non-Muslim population, such as Molokans, Dukhobors and so on after the Turkmenchay treaty in line with the resettlement policy of tsarism.

The Treaty of Kurekchay

In The Name Of God Almighty

We, i.e. Ibrahim-khan Shushinsky (of the city of Shusha) and Karabakhsky (of the khanate of Karabakh) and General of infantry of all Russia's troops Caucasian inspection on infantry and others Prince (knyaz) Pavel Tsitsianov with the full power given to me by his Emperor's Highness the dearest and greatest Sir Emperor Alexander Pavlovich took up with the help of God the matter of granting everlasting citizenship of all Russian Empire to Ibrahim khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky with all family, posterity and possessions of his. The Treaty was concluded, confirmed and signed with the following articles.

The First Article

Ibrahim khan Shushinsky on my behalf, on behalf of my heirs, successor abdicate and vassalage and whichever title it might be any dependence from Persia or any other state and in this way I declare the fact to the whole world that I don't consider myself and the successors of mine of having any power. The only power we recognize is the Supreme Power of His Emperor's Highness All Russia's great Emperor and his greatest heirs and successors of All Russia's Emperor Throne. I promise to keep faithfulness to the throne like faithful slave and to which I have to swear on Koran in accordance with the custom.

The Second Article

His Emperor's Highness on behalf of his openhearted promise he gives his word of honour and reassures with his Emperor's word of honour for himself and for his successors that favour and care towards Ibrahim Khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky and will never cease to exist.

To prove this fact His Emperor's Highness gives the guarantee to keep the whole possessions and successors of His Majesty (khan) intact.

The Third Article

To repay the openheartedness of Ibrahim-khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky to recognize the supreme and sole power of All Russia's Emperor over himself and his successors this article states that he, the Khan and later his elder son and each elder successor when accepting the khanate has the right to receive Emperor's confirmation on the khanate from the Governor of Georgia. It consist of the deed (official document), official state seal. While receiving it the new Khan is to take the oath to be faithful to Russian Empire and to recognize the supreme and sole power of Russian Emperor over himself and his successors. The form of the oath is enclosed in this Treaty. The present Ibrahim-khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky took the oath in presence of Governor of Georgia and general of infantry prince Tsitsianov.

The Fourth Article

I, i.e. Ibrahim-khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky to prove that my intentions towards me and my successors' faithfulness to All Russia's Empire and recognition of the Supreme and sole power of the highest possessors of the Empire promise not to have any relations with neighboring possessors without preliminary consent of Governor of Georgia. And when the envoys from them come or the letters are sent I promise to send most important ones to the Governor and demand the solving of the questions from him and the ones with less importance to be reported and discussed with the person representing the Georgian Governor at my place.

The Fifth Article

His Emperor's Highness accepts the recognition of his supreme and sole power over the possessions of Ibrahim-khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky with good will and promises: 1) to treat the peoples of these possessions with the same honour as his own faithful citizens without sorting them out from those inhabiting the vast Russian Empire.

2) to preserve continuously the honour of Ibrahim-khan, his spouse, heirs and posterity in the area of Shusha khanate. 3) to give all the power of internal governing, court and persecution, income and its possession to Ibrahim-khan. 4) in order to guard Ibrahim-khan, his spouse and his possessions I promise to send troops (500 persons) with cannons, headquarters and officers and in case of greater defence the Governor of Georgia will have to increase the number of troops due to circumstances to defend militarily the possessions of All Russia's Empire.

The Sixth Article

I, i.e. Ibrahim-khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky in response of my faithful diligence make commitment: 1) At the beginning and later on to store up the necessary quantity of wheat and corn by reasonable price determined by the Chief Governor because its supply from Elisavetpol is rather difficult or even must be stated as impossible. 2) The above mentioned troops should be provided with houses to stay in Shusha Fortress. They should be selected by the will of the Commander. They should be supplied with reasonable quantity of firewood. 3) To make the Elisavetpol bound entrance into Shusha fortress comfortable and to build the road suitable for araba passing. 4) It would be convenient for the government to build up a road from Shusha Fortress in direction of Djevad. The workmen must be paid the salary determined by the government.

The Seventh Article

His Emperor's Highness showing his goodwill and kindness to his majesty Ibrahim-khan kindly presents his banner with the state Emblem of Russian Empire which is to be kept with him a symbol of khanate and power. Nobody except the khan has the right to carry it to war as it was presented by his Emperor's Highness.

The Eighth Article

I, i.e. Ibrahim-khan Shushinsky and Karabakhsky having His Emperor's Highness permission to spend my usual income make the commitment to pay contribution into the exchequer treasury of His Emperor's Highness in Tifliss 8.000 chervonets (gold piece coin) a year, to pay it in two halves. 1st half on February 1st and the second half on September 1st beginning with the 1st payment of 4.000 chervonets. Conforming the concluding this treaty by his Emperor's Highness and according to Asian tradition, besides the oath to faithfulness I pawn my elder son's Mamed-Hassan-Aga's son of the second Shukur-Ullah to stay forever in Tifliss.

The Ninth Article

His Emperor's Highness kindly expressing his mercy as a taken of faithfulness guarantees his Majesty khan's grandson 10 roubles of Russian money a day.

The Tenth Article

This Treaty is concluded forever and is not to be subjected to any changes from now to forever.

The Eleventh Article

The confirmation of this Treaty by His Emperor's Highness with the state sealed deed (official document) must be presented within 6 months after its signing or sooner if possible.

In confirmation of that the undersigned parties signed these articles in the camp of Elisavetpol region near Kurek River in summer of 1805 A. D. (Mohammedan 1220) on May 14th. [57]

The death of Mammadhasan agha, who, according to the Treaty of Kurekchay,

was declared an heir of Ibrahimxalil Khan, and the nomination of Mehdiqulu agha (father of poetess Khurshidbanu Natavan) instead of him intensified the civil strife. As Colonel Cafarqulu agha, son of Mammadhasan agha, wanted to succeed his father, he did not accept his uncle Mehdiqulu agha's legacy and intensified mischief making with his supporters. The other son of Khan, Abulfat bey, was fighting against Russians together with Abbas Mirza. In such a situation, a nephew of Ibrahimxalil Khan, Mirza Ali bey secretly contacted his son Behbud bey, who was held hostage by Russians in Ganca, and his nephew Feyzi bey and joined Abbas Mirza together with them. Stressing that this intensified the process, historian M. Khazani wrote. "Even Karabakh's key beys were joining the Kizilbash. [33, s.46]

Under such tense situation, Ibrahimxalil Khan was cautious about Lisanevich, the murderer of Javad Khan, who was branded as "a crazy major". The relocation by Ibrahimxalil Khan of his family from his house in Xanbagi to the Shusha castle, which was three kilometers away, was reported by enemies of the Khan to Lisanevich as his betrayal. The "crazy major" with 200 Russian soldiers attacked the Khan's house and slaughtered 17 people while they were asleep. Ibrahimxalil Khan, Tutu bayim – a daughter of Huseyn Khan of Shaki; Harami Khan; Saltanatbayim; Abbasqulu agha-Farzan Khan; Haji Huseynali bey Kabirli; Mirza Haqverdi Kabirli; Qarvandli Hummat bey Javanshir; his son Hasanagha Gulumali bey Sarijali Javanshir; Mirzataghi Afshar; Alipanah- Pishkhidmat; Haji Hasan Ajam oglu Kabirli; his two sons, two people from Shelli and two from Shusha were among the victims.

The tsarist Russian soldiers even showed little children no mercy. Little Naciba from the Khan's dynasty and a 13 years old boy were also brutally murdered. It was impossible to save lives of the Khan's wounded wife and a daughter though they were transferred to the castle. The Russian soldiers plundered the belonging of the Khan in the house.

When the tragedy happened, Mehdiqulu Khan was in the castle with his entourage and was informed about the incident later. Despite all the efforts of Cafarqulu agha, who had claims on the khanate, Mehdiqulu agha was proclaimed the Khan of Karabakh under a decree, dated September 13, 1806. After it, he and his brother Khan-

can bey sought protection with Abbas Mirza. [16, p. 265-267]

The murder of Ibrahimxalil Khan in 1806 proved that the tsarist Russia was indifferent to laws. [38, p. 79-80]

The rule of Mehdiqulu Khan was not firm. Under such circumstances, the tsarist government was trying to weaken the economic welfare of local Muslim rulers by providing Armenians with a privileged role in order to get consolidated across the khanate. After the abolition of the khanate, the rule of a major-general was also introduced there as in other territories of the northern Azerbaijan, and it was subordinated to the Muslim military district with the center in Shusha.

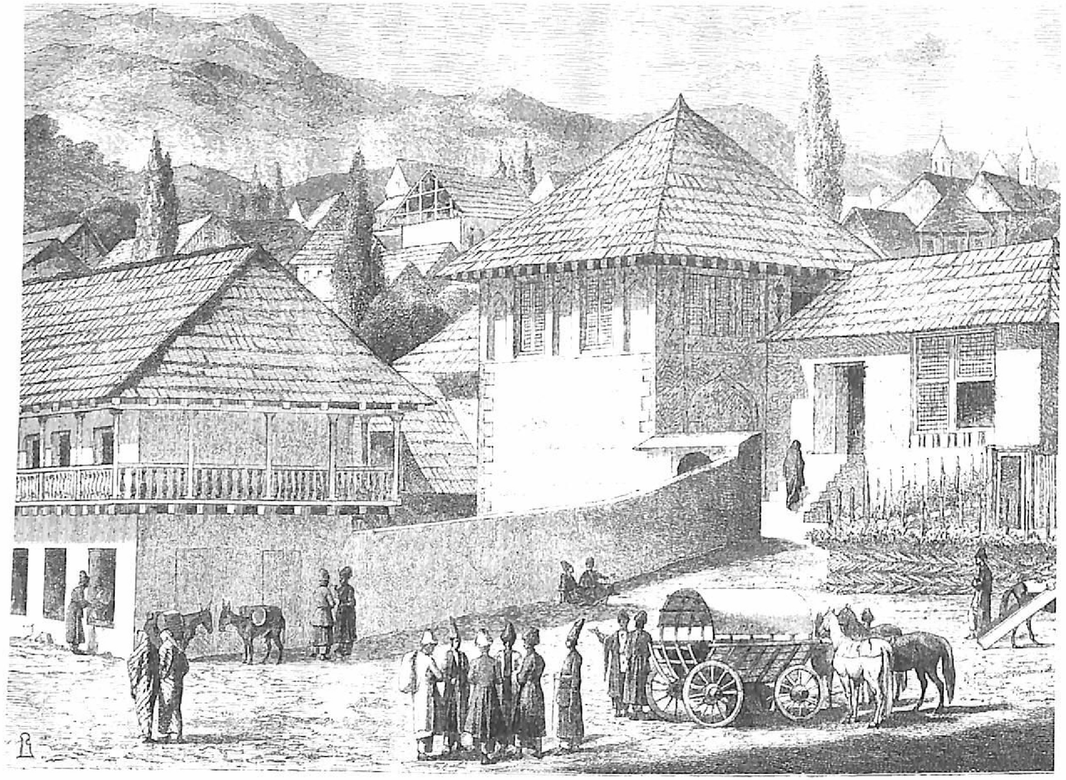
During this period, Lt-Gen V. G. Madatov (1782-1829), an ethnic Armenian, established a real Armenian-Russian colonial system in Karabakh. The tsarist government was obliged to carry out administrative-military reforms in the Caucasus on April 10, 1840 as a result of the 1830s riots. Under the reforms, Karabakh province was converted to Shusha uyezd (county) and was subordinated to the Kaspi province with the center in Shamaxi. Thus, the Karabakh notion lost its political essence and remained purely as a geographical term.

After 30s of the XIX century, resettlement of Armenians in the northern Azerbaijan as a whole, particularly in Karabakh went on. After the Turkmenchay treaty, within the first three months, 1,200 Armenians were resettled to Iravan, Naxcivan (Nakhchivan) and mostly in the Karabakh khanate.

Russian historian N. Shavrov wrote about the resettlement policy. "We started the colonial activities not with the resettlement of ethnic Russians to the South Caucasus but aliens. Within two years after the war, from 1828 to 1830, we resettled over 40,000 and 84,000 Armenians respectively from Iran and Turkey to the South Caucasus in the best treasury lands in Yelizavetpol (Ganca) and Iravan provinces where Armenians were in minority. Those Armenians settled in the mountainous part of Yelizavetpol province (currently Nagorno-Karabakh) and on the shores of the Goycha Lake. The total number of the settlers along with unofficial ones exceeded 200,000. As a result of the resettlement, at the outset of the XX century, over one million Armenians out of 1.3 million in the South Caucasus were none natives of these lands and they were settled

there by us." [33, p. 66; 43; 59-61]

After the khanate was annexed by the tsarist Russia, travelers, who visited Shusha, noted that big Shusha houses differed from houses in other Caucasus cities in appearance with their stained-glass pane shabakas (windows). Sketches of Russian artist V. Vereshschagin proved it.



View of the city of Shusha. Photo by V. Vereshchagin, 1865

As it can be seen from the artist's paintings, the shabakas (windows) engraved from the ceiling to the floor had completely replaced the entire wall of the room or a part of it, depending on the layout of the room. Such windows combined with bright carpets on the floor and colorful decorative wall paintings created a festive mood. Craftsmanship was highly developed in Shusha and there was no problem to find a craftsman and wood for production of shabaka traditional for Azerbaijan. There were 3,000-5,000 such components in a square meter of a shabaka (window). Colorful glasses in a shabaka (window) constituted a combination of 10-12 stars. [39, p. 208].

In the first half of XIX century, Shusha was assigned a city status and under the 28-29th article on the "City regulation" (1785) of the tsarist Russia, the coat of arms of Shusha was approved.

Shusha, which was located at an altitude of about 1,300-1,600 meters above sea level, was surrounded by nearly 400-600m long valleys and above with Girxqiz, Kirs, Murov, Bagriqan and Saribaba mountains. The western part of the city is above sea level, the southern part is relatively higher and horizontal plain and is called Jidir Duzu (Horse racing plain). There was only one road to Shusha from Agdam through Asgaran, Xocali, Xanbagi, Agha Bridge and it ended in the city center. A hill that is not so high in the eastern part of Shusha is called Dovtalab.

In the middle of the XIX century, there were 1,856 houses, 476 shops, 11 streets, 4 caravanserais, 2 bazaars, 7 hammams, 979 water wells, 6 squares, 4 stone, 2 wooden bridges, and 9 mosques in Shusha. Within 50 years, the population of Shusha increased drastically. At the outset of the XX century, the Caucasus calendar reported about 2,983 houses in Shusha, of which 2,742 were made of stone. The roofs of 1,191 of them were covered with iron, 139 with tile and 363 with soil. There were 17 mosques, 52 streets, one city park, 3 caravanserais, 36 buffets, 879 craftsmanship workshops and approximately 200 shops. [39, p. 103].

The first and second water pipelines were respectively built in 1871 and 1896; a Realniy school was built in 1880 and a separate building for this school opened in 1906. A Saint Maria Girls' School was organized in 1884 based on two private girls' schools. For the first time, Azerbaijani girls got an opportunity to get European-style education

there.

In the second half of the XIX century, Shusha again started to develop as a cultural center of Azerbaijan. In 1872, Mir Mohsun Navvab and Khurshidbanu Natavan founded Majlisi faramush and Majlisi uns literary circles respectively. At the end of the XIX century, the municipal and city Duma were established in Shusha. During this period, Mir Movsun Navvab created Majlisi Xananda music ensemble and in 1897, the first library was opened in the city. In the same year, "Majnun at Leyli's grave" opera by Abdulrahim bey Haqverdiyev: "Leyli and Macnun" by Uzeyir bey Hacibayli in 1908; "O olmasin, bu olsun" (If not this one, that one) in 1911; and "Arshin mal alan" (The cloth peddler) in 1913 premiers of operas were staged. [39, p.7-9]

According to the information of the Azerbaijani Academy of National Sciences, in the XIX century, there were 95 poets, 22 musicologists, 38 singers, 12 calligraphers, 5 astronomers, 18 architects, 16 doctors and approximately 42 teachers in Shusha. [11, p. 96]

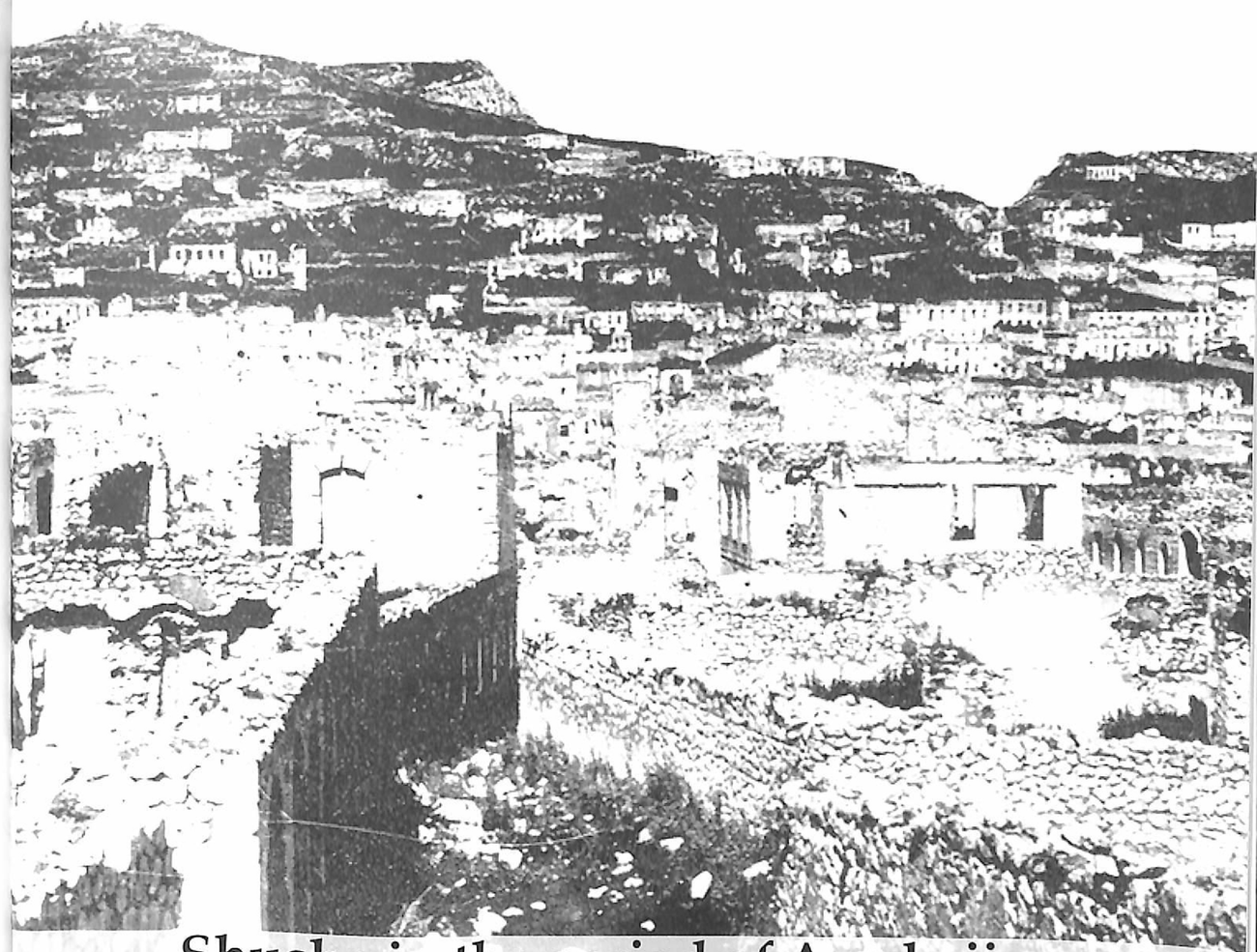
Since the end of the XIX century, the weaving of thematic carpets was broadly spread in Shusha. There is information about weaving of politically-motivated carpets in Shusha. The carpet, woven by a carpet weaver, Humay Hasanzada, in honor of Sattarxan, the hero of Iran's 1905-1911 Constitutional Revolution, is now preserved at the Azerbaijani State Museum of Art. [49]

At the outset of the XX century, concerts were organized in European countries with participation of mugham performers and musicians from Shusha, consequently, the whole world started to recognize the Azerbaijani mugham. The 43rd page of Kavkazskiy Vestnik magazine, published in 1903 in Tbilisi, said that "the appearance of Shusha resembles middle age European cities". Most of houses, caravanserais, mosques, palaces and other buildings were the product of labor of famous architect Karbalayi Safixan Qarabagi (1817-1910). [11, p. 10-11]

Starting from the end of the XIX century, Armenians began to sow discord and fuel confrontation in the city and caused resentment among population. First, such a confrontation took place in 1895, but they could not achieve their insidious intention. In March 1918, the Armenian gangsters committed genocide in Baku, Shamaxi, Quba and in Karabakh apart from other territories.

As a whole, until the establishment of the Soviet regime in Azerbaijan, Shusha was exposed to destruction four times by Armenians. Although Armenians, who faced resistance of Azerbaijanis, retreated each time, residential areas, especially Shusha was subject to great destructions and numerous human losses.

Azerbaijani newspapers of the period carried lots of reports about the 1905-1906 tragedies in Shusha. For instance, Irshad newspaper's 170th issue on July 20, 1906 said: "Caucasus news. Shusha story. Telegrams were sent from Aghdam to Mr. Haji Zeynalabdin Tagiyev, Murtaza Mukhtarov, Mahammad Hasan Hajinski and Behbud agha Javanshir in Baku. Agdam, July 18, since yesterday the shooting stopped in Shusha, however the situation is scary and exciting. Goloshchapov stationed the troops in the area where Armenians live. Several Armenian volunteers joined the troops against Muslims. The Muslims are deprived of external assistance. We are asking you and people of Badukuba to delegate two men to the Baku governor for the in-depth investigation of the tragedy [26, p. 145-146].



Shusha in the period of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920)



The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, established on the historical Azerbaijani lands in 1918, divided between the tsarist Russia and Iran during the first and second Russian-Iranian wars, was recognized by world countries. Nevertheless, even after international recognition of Azerbaijan, Armenians made groundless claims on Karabakh, an integral part of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic rejected this claim. A. M. Topchubashov (1892-1934), the parliamentary speaker the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, stated in his talks with the then foreign minister of the Ottoman state on November 18, 1918 in Istanbul: "The Karabakh issue raised by Armenians is not about five



One of the neighborhoods destroyed as a result of massacres committed by Armenians in 1905 and 1920



The neighborhoods of Mamayi, Agadedeli and Kocharlin, which were severely damaged as a result of the Armenian armed attack on Azerbaijanis on March 22, 1920

or 10 villages. The dispute refers the whole four Shusha, Javanshir, Jabrayil and Zangazur provinces. It is the territory of such a khanate that although the number of Armenians and Muslims are not equal there, it is wide of the mark to speak about the absolute majority of Armenians, even they are not natives there. They came from Turkey and settled there after the war with Russia. Finally, Armenians do not live in Karabakh compactly but together with Muslims. Nevertheless, we support a peaceful solution to the issue." [15; 13]

In January 1919, the Azerbaijani government set the governorate-general in Karab-

akh, made up of Shusha, Javanshir, Jabrayil and Zangazur, to prevent insidious intentions of Armenians and to improve administration of the region. Xosrov bey Sultanov, brother of Sultan bey Sultanov – a heroic defender of Lacin, was appointed the general-governor of Karabakh.

Until recently, Armenians carried out actions similar to their inhumane policies against the Azerbaijani population in 1918-1920, blocking water supplies from the Sarsang and Suqovusan reservoirs. They organized attacks against foothill villages of Javanshir district in spring-summer months of 1918 and apart from other brutalities and violence; they deliberately deprived people from water.

"By blocking the Tartar River, Armenians diverted it to different direction and caused damage to lowland villages of the district, depriving them of water. Even the situation worsened to such a degree that there was a shortage of drinking water in the villages."

The brutalities of Armenians were more ruthless in Shusha district and Shusha city, the political center of Karabakh. Over the period of existence of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, one of the traitorous armed riots of Armenians in Shusha occurred on March 22, 1920 during the Novruz holiday. Although Shusha escaped occupation owing to heroism of Azerbaijanis, who gave many martyrs, more than half of the city was almost destroyed. The separatist riotous Armenians committed acts of genocide against Azerbaijanis in Karabakh, inflicted a heavy blow by weakening the defense of the northern borders of the country ahead of the April invasion of Azerbaijan by Soviet Russia in 1920 and thus created conditions for invasion of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic. [15; 13]



Shusha during Soviet rule (1920-1991)



The situation in Karabakh strained further after the establishment of the Soviet rule in Baku on April 27, 1920 following the invasion of Azerbaijan by the 11th Red Army. The Dashnak government of Armenia pursued aggressive policy against Azerbaijani lands. Up until November 1920, under the instruction of the Armenian Dashnak government, the Armenian troops carried out aggressive actions against Azerbaijan's border regions. Their brutal aggression was the severest and bloodiest in the territories of Zangazur. [3, p.32]

During this hard situation, Nariman Narimanov, the head of the Council of People's Commissars of the Azerbaijan SSR, came to Shusha to morally support the Karabakh people.

After the establishment of the Soviet regime in Azerbaijan, the administrative status of Shusha city was changed several times. Under the July 5, 1921 decision of the plenary session of the Caucasian bureau of the Russian Communist (b) Party Central Committee, Shusha was identified as the center of the newly established Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. However, during implementation of this decision on July 7, 1923, Xankandi was chosen as the center of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast instead of Shusha.

On the other hand, under the July 16, 1923 special resolution of the supreme council of the central committee of the Azerbaijani Communist (b) Party, Shusha was made part of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. The city became the center of the same-name district and Malibayli volost, made up of 12 villages. Despite venomous attitude of the Soviet regime towards Shusha, different areas of the art as a cradle of the Azerbaijani culture further developed there.

Irrespective of the Soviet-era difficulties, different areas of the art were developing in Shusha. Throughout this period, Shusha was not only known as a cultural center of Azerbaijan, but also as a political center of the country promoting independence and Azerbaijanism ideas. The embodiment of the first flag of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic of 1918-1920 on a carpet made in Shusha in 1926 proves it. A similar carpet was not traced in other regions of Azerbaijan. At a time when the Soviet regime was fighting against national values, it required huge courage and determination to weave such a carpet. [49]



Maydan square

Similar cases proved that six years after the Soviet occupation, the struggle for the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence went on in Shusha. The tricolor flag of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was praised in the words of Shushanin daglari (The Mountains of Shusha) popular song, composed by Xan Shushinski, a singer from Shusha.

Foggy mountains of Shusha,
With red blouse and green pants.
There are likely many people ready to die for you
(verbatum translation)

The first version of the song contained "abi dumanli" as against "bashi dumanli" now. The fact that the words "foggy", "red blouse", "green pants" symbolize the tricolor flag once again proves how loyal Shusha intellectuals were to Azerbaijan's independence. [30]

V. Vinogradov, famous researcher of the oriental music, wrote in 1938: "There are different types of music in Shusha. You can hear folk songs, dances, mugham and saz performers here more than in any other regions of Azerbaijan. Shusha is famous as a cradle of music since ancient times and became popular as the inexhaustible spring of folk music talents in the whole Transcaucasia. `Shusha musicians' created the history of Azerbaijani music and



Hamamgabaghi neighborhood



Novruz holiday related event

presented it not only in their homeland, but also in other eastern countries." [37, p. 9]

As a result of indifferent attitude of the leadership of the republic and the province, the city started to lose its previous appearance and the fame. Not only construction work was carried out there for a long time, but also some of the historical and architectural monuments were savagely destroyed. The iron frames of the complex, which Ibrahimx-alil Khan had built on Xazina Qayasi, and was consisted of a palace, a harem, a stable, a hammam and a military barrack, were removed during WWII, and the buildings gradually demolished and were rendered useless. The demolition of Shusha's historical and architectural monuments continued in the following years as well. On January 4, 1963, Shusha district was abolished and subordinated to Stepanakert district. Only after removal of N. S.



Heydar Aliyev and Ilham Aliyev outside spring funded by Khan gizi Khurshidbanu Natavan. July 29, 1982

Khurshchev from power, a district status of Shusha was restored again on January 6, 1965.

During the Soviet rule, an indifferent attitude to Shusha had a negative impact on the number and the ethnic composition of the population in the city. The number of the residents of Shusha, which, once was one of the big and prosperous Azerbaijani cities, dropped over three times during nearly 50 years. Thus, against 43,869 residents in the city in 1917, this number totaled only 13,644 in 1970. During the Soviet rule, the ethnic composition of the Shusha residents underwent significant changes. If in 1970, only 3,577 of the 13,664 people living in the city were Armenians, in 1989, only 1,377 of the total

population of 20,579 people in Shusha were Armenians.

After Heydar Aliyev's appointment as the head of Azerbaijan in 1969, first he took measures to prevent the destruction of the historical and architectural monuments of the city. In August 1977, on his initiative, the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR "designated the historical part of Shusha as a historical-architectural site".

A lot of activities were carried out for the restoration of the socio-economic and cultural life of the city. The sole oriental musical instruments factory in Azerbaijan that manufactured musical instruments, such as tar, kamancha, ud, naghara and so on was



Heydar Aliyev outside Vagif's shrine. Vagif poetry day; July 29, 1982



Heydar Aliyev in Maydan Square of Shusha January 14, 1982

opened in Shusha. House museums of luminaries of the Azerbaijani culture and art, such as Uzeyir Hacibayli, Bulbul, Xan qizi Natavan, M. M. Navvab, were established at the initiative of Heydar Aliyev. In January 1982, the mausoleum of M. P. Vagif was inaugurated in Shusha. This beautiful piece of artwork with a height of 20 meters was decorated with subtle-patterned shabaka and covered with red local marble. [50]

During his visit to Shusha on January 14, 2021, President Ilham Aliyev made a statement outside the mausoleum of the Azerbaijani poet, Molla Panah Vaqif: "The mausoleum of Molla Panah Vaqif, erected at the initiative of the national leader, Heydar Aliyev, was commissioned 39 years ago – on January 14, 1982. Opening of this mausoleum was a historical event. I remember that day very well. I remember Azerbaijani and Armenian poets reciting poems. Even Armenian poets recited poems in Azerbaijani language. It was a holiday of friendship and no one could imagine that after several years, the ugly head of separatism would rear its ugly head here, Armenia would commit an act of aggression against Azerbaijan, by taking control over our historical city and razing to the ground our historical monuments, mosques and this mausoleum in an attempt to erase the centuries-old heritage of the Azerbaijani people from Karabakh. No one could have imagined it. I have said several times and am reiterating if Heydar Aliyev did not go to Moscow from Baku in 1982, if he was not appointed a post in Moscow, he would have never ever let separatism to rear its ugly head here...

Under the Soviet rule, it was a unique event to erect a mausoleum in honor of a khan's vizier. Now, everyone can consider it an ordinary event, but under the socialism rule, erecting a tomb in the honor of a vizier was really an extraordinary event. Consequently, H. Aliyev's insistence and courage made it possible and Azerbaijan managed to have the mausoleum built and the venue was not selected haphazardly. Molla Panah Vaqif's grave is here. The construction and commissioning of the mausoleum, on the one hand, were a symbol of respect of the Azerbaijan Republic for its history and of the Azerbaijani people to their prominent personalities on the one hand. The commissioning of the mausoleum in Shusha once again endorsed that Shusha is an Azerbaijani city...

Throughout the rule of the national leader Heydar Aliyev from 1969 to 1982 as the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijani Communist Party, thanks



Music festival in Jidir Duzu plain, 1983

to his attempts and policies, a railway line from Yevlax and Aghdam to Xankandi was constructed, plants and factories were built in Nagorno-Karabakh and manned with specialists from various regions of Azerbaijan to change the ethnic composition in favor of Azerbaijanis." [54]

Heydar Aliyev, who advised and instructed on the restoration of historical monuments, also attended their opening ceremonies of architectural monument after restorations. As a result, 170 architectural and 160 art monuments were officially registered in Shusha. Festive events in Shusha, the music cradle of Azerbaijan, distinguished themselves for their originality. On May 19, an annual music festival (song holiday) was organized in Shusha. Musicians, singers, poets, actors, artists, jugglers and wrestlers both from Shusha and other cities of Azerbaijan, as well as from Baku participated in the song



Heydar Aliyev outside bas-relief of M.P.Vagif, 1982

festival usually held on the famous Jidir duzu (Horse-racing plane) - one of the places of interest of the city along with exhibitions dedicated to national values. The socio-economic development, public-political and cultural life of the city were constantly covered by Shusha newspaper, founded in Shusha in 1932, and the Shusha TV channel since 1989. [11, p. 11-12]

Under the initiative of the national leader, Heydar Aliyev, from 1970 to 1980, Shusha was developed both as a tourism and health center as well. Sanatoriums, boarding houses and tourist bases were constructed there. Numerous najran type mineral water sources with carbonic acid-hydro carbonate-sodium were discovered around the city. This healing water was successfully used at Shusha sanatoriums as both drinking water and taking a bath. This water is very beneficial in healing of illnesses, such as respiratory diseases, digestion and nervous system disorders and anemia. A beautiful mineral water gallery was built in the city. Water was pumped from a source 30 km outside the city. In addition, there was a mineral water bottling plant. At that time, famous Shusha resort was also known as a modern tourism center. Citizens from all other socialist countries along with Soviet citizens had a rest in Shusha and strengthened their health there. During this period, leaflets were published in Shusha for tourism promotion.



Struggle for independence in Azerbaijan, and Armenian invasion (1988-1993)



The policy of perestroika and glasnost policies under way in the USSR since April 1985 led to the aggravation of the interethnic relations and the growth in crimes by Armenian gangsters against Azerbaijanis in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh day by day. The barbaric expulsion of almost 200,000 people from 172 villages, covering 8,000 sq. m. areas in Armenia that was twice as large the territory of the NKAO, where Azerbaijanis lived historically in Armenia and the killing of 216 people, as well as 57 women, 5 infants, 18 children during this bloody crime further increased the tension. [41, p. 103]

The next Armenian provocation occurred in August-November of 1988. The provocative actions of Armenians in Topxana forest made the cup run over. The 1988 events in Topxana opened the way for the occupation of Karabakh, a charming corner of Azerbaijan and other territories. The Armenian provocation that led to the occupation took place in the following way:

"R. N. Engonyan, director of Armenia-based Kanaker aluminum plant of the USSR Ministry of Nonferrous Metallurgy addressed S. A. Babayan, chairman of the Council of the People's Deputies of the NKAO Executive Committee, with a letter, numbered 006-3186 dated from August 31, 1988, for the allocation of 10 ha of land in the territory of Engels collective far m in Askaran district for the establishment of a cooperative for making household goods. As the basis, the letter referred the decision of the Soviet Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, dated from November 22, 1987, on the development of production areas in the agro-industrial complex.

What was illegal in the address was that an Armenian plant wanted the allocation of a plot of land not in Armenia but in Azerbaijan. This was nothing than a clear attempt to seize Azerbaijani territories taking an opportunity from the crisis situation in the USSR. This was another provocation by Armenians after the February 20, 1988 appeal of the Council of the People's Deputies of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast on the annexation of the NKAO to the Armenian SSR by abandoning the subordination to the Azerbaijani SSR. By starting construction works, Armenians wanted to both occupy Azerbaijani territory and inflict environmental damage to the Azerbaijani nature, in particular the Topxana forest.

A decision, number 32/212 on the allocation of a plot of land for the construction, was adopted on October 28, 1988. In the decision, the name of Topxana was indicated as Khachentapa. In order to prove the authenticity of Khachentapa in lieu of Topxana, Kommunist (Communist) newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party, published in its December 4, 1988 issue in Russian an article, entitled "Topxana or Khachentapa". Later, Armenians realized that Khachentapa, like Khachinchay, Khachbulag and other names, is an Azerbaijani name and therefore, they changed the name Topxana for the second time to Tsakhkasar.

In conformity with the approved general plan of the construction, Armenians intended to conduct the building of a settlement from the sections No 3, 4 and 5, clearly seen from the Jidir plain, not towards Xankandi but Shusha. Thus, as the plan stated, Armenians were planning build a big city in this territory rather than a small cooperative, and justifiably, it led to the resentment among Azerbaijanis.

In response to this issue, the Azerbaijani State Nature Protection Committee sounded the alarm on the matter, sending protest telegrams to officials of the USSR and Armenia SSR on November 16, 1988 stating that the construction was illegal and it would seriously harm the nature. Having found out about this incident, the people of Azerbaijan gathered on Azadliq square of Baku to demand the republican leadership end this provocation within two days, and thus paved the way for the November 17, 1988 protest movement, dubbed as the National Revival Day in Azerbaijan.

Evidence indicates that Armenians had also caused great damages to the Topxana forest in previous years as well. By the decision No 56 of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijani SSR, dated from February 1, 1982, although the amount of penalty for cutting the trees was confirmed, this decision remained ink on the paper. Moreover, the same decision stipulated for laying out 450 ha of a sanctuary and the Dashalti wildlife refuge, it remained unrealized.

At the outset of the developments, although a large amount of money was gathered in the account No. 700075 for the Topxana forest at the Azerbaijan SSR Housing Construction and Social Bank, no practical measures were taken to solve the problem.

The then leadership of Azerbaijan tried to break the national will for struggle instead

of extinguishing the flames of the provocation ignited by Armenians in Topxana. Although on November 24, 1988, under the national demand, the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR adopted a decision No. 466 on the Topxana forest, this decision, like others, remained unfulfilled following with the dispersal of the protesters from the Liberty Square on the night of December 4-5. [32; 35]

While the Armenian separatism was on the rise in Nagorno-Karabakh, there were no scientific grounds to highlight a large number of social problems in the region. According to the 1978 statistics, "Nagorno-Karabakh outstripped developed capitalist countries for the number of doctors per 1,000 people. Although the average age in Azerbaijan was 72 years, this number in Nagorno-Karabakh was higher, that is, 75 years." [34, p. 104]

In 1992-1993, Kalbacar, Agdam, Fuzuli, Cabrayil, Qubadli, Lachin and Zangilan districts, beyond the boundaries of Nagorno-Karabakh region (4,400 sq. km.), four times bigger (17,000 sq. km) than that territory that amounted to 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's overall territories, were occupied by the Armenian armed forces. Over 1 million people (15% of the total population) from Azerbaijan's historical lands and the occupied territories have become refugees and IDPs; nearly 900 villages and towns were destroyed, looted and burnt down.

In 1992-1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolutions Nos 822, 853, 874, 884 to regulate the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict. However, when these Resolutions were passed, large states that are the permanent members of the Security Council disagreed to recognizing Armenia as an aggressor state and preferred to resolve the conflict within the framework of the OSCE Minsk process through a cease-fire and negotiations. Encouraged by impunity and taking advantage of it, Armenia rejected implementation of the four resolutions adopted by the UN SC on the conflict. [16, p. 475-476]

On May 8, 1992, when Shusha with an area of 289 sq. km was occupied by the Armenian armed forces, there lived nearly 25,000 people there. On the night to May 8, the Armenian armed forces carried out an operation for the occupation of Shusha. The intensive artillery shelling of the city went on until 6 a.m., after it, nearly 1,000 enemy soldiers attacked Shusha from three directions. With the occupation of this ancient city with rich history and culture by the Armenian armed forces, the invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh



M. P. Vagif street, one day after the occupation



Bazarbashi Square, destroyed in 1992

completed.

As a result of the occupation of Shusha, 480 innocent citizens were killed, 600 people were wounded, and 22,000 people were expelled from their homes. There is no yet any information about the fates of 68 Azerbaijani citizens, who were taken hostage. Following the invasion, numerous historical and cultural monuments were destroyed by the enemy. Some 279 religious, historical and cultural monuments including Khan and Qaxal caves, the Shusha castle were destroyed.

Armenians either destroyed a number of monuments belonging to Azerbaijan or Armenianized them. They demolished seven pre-school institutions, 22 schools, a cultur-

al-educational, an agricultural vocational schools, eight houses of culture, 14 clubs, 20 libraries, two cinemas, three museums and the factory for the oriental musical instruments in Shusha.

Thus, as a result of Shusha's invasion, 289 sq. km of territory of Azerbaijan came under the control of Armenians. [53]



The liberation of Shusha by our Victorious Army

Under the command of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, the victorious Azerbaijani army has gained a glorious victory in the 44-day Patriotic War (September 27- November 9, 2020) and liberated five cities, four settlements and 286 villages from occupation. Cabrayil city and 90 villages of the district, Fuzuli city and 53 villages of the district, Zangilan city, Mincivan, Agband, Bartaz settlements and 52 villages of the district, Hadrut settlement of Xocavand district and its 35 villages, three villages of Tartar District, Qubadli city and 41 villages of the district, nine villages of Khojaly district, Shusha city, three villages of Lacin District, as well as several strategic heights in the directions of Agdara and Murovdag, Bartaz, Sighirt, Shukurataz heights and five anonymous heights in Zangilan were retaken from the enemy control. [51] Shusha city was liberated on November 8, 2020, which had been under the Armenian occupation since May 8, 1992. [45]

In line with the November 10, 2020 trilateral statement, signed by the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the prime minister of the Republic of Armenia and the president of the Russian Federation, a complete ceasefire and an end to all military operations was declared in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. The defeated Armenia was forced to return the occupied districts of Agdam, Lachin and Kalbacar to the Republic of Azerbaijan in November-December months of 2020 and meet other obligations. The 44-day Patriotic War ended with a resounding victory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

President Ilham Aliyev: "Thousands of servicemen, who displayed courage and bravery in the war, were awarded by me with high orders and medals. The Order of the Patriotic War is the highest military order of Azerbaijan. The Victory Order, the Karabakh Order. I myself proposed the names of these orders. The medals bearing the names of districts were conferred on the servicemen, who were distinguished in the liberation of those districts. Our army marched Shusha victoriously and successfully liberated Cabrayil, Fuzuli, and Xocavand districts, Suqovusan and Hadrut settlements, the Murovdag mountain range, the southern part of Lacin District, Qubadli, Zangilan districts and on November 8 came the liberation of Shusha city...

We have destroyed their army. We have recaptured Shusha from the control of their army by displaying bravery, by climbing steep cliffs. We destroyed their army with light

weapons and knives fighting against their cannons and tanks." [54]

President Ilham Aliyev signed a decree on awarding servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan the medal "For the Liberation of Shusha" on December 29, 2020.

Under the decree, 4,646 servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan, who displayed personal courage and bravery by participating in the combat operations for the liberation of Shusha city and district was awarded the medal "For the Liberation of Shusha". Some 285 of them were posthumously awarded. Among those posthumously awarded the medal "For the Liberation of Shusha" are names of three lieutenant-colonels, three majors, four captains, 11 senior lieutenants, 14 lieutenants, four junior lieutenants, four senior warrant officers, 25 warrant officers, seven junior warrant officers, eight master sergeants, seven sergeants, seven junior sergeants, a senior soldier and 187 soldiers.

After the liberation of Shusha, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visited our ancient cultural capital four times - on January 14-15, March 16, May 12-13 and June 15, 2021.

During his first visit on January 14, 2021, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev was accompanied by First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughters Leyla Aliyeva. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has laid the foundations of the Fuzuli-Shusha road on the 27th kilometer of the Ahmadbayli-Fuzuli-Shusha road, as well as the Fuzuli airport with a 2,800-meter-long runway. The president said that a great return was beginning and all the activities had been started. The Azerbaijani state will restore Shusha, all other destroyed cities and villages as well as all historical monuments.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva once again visited Shusha on March 16, 2021 to see the remains of Panahali Khan's palace; the venue, where the bust of Molla Panah Vaqif, will be erected; the museum-mausoleum complex of Molla Panah Vaqif; the XIX century Caravanserai historical and architectural complex in the central square of Shusha, destroyed by the Armenian vandals; the building of the Shusha State Art Gallery that functioned from 1982 to 1992; the Shusha Carpet Museum, the demolished building of the Realniy School; the building of the Park Hotel in Shusha, and the Shusha sanatorium. They also got acquainted with the repairs of Karabakh Hotel and Dashalti village.

President Ilham Aliyev's third visit to Shusha coincided with the day when Shusha, the cradle of Azerbaijan's ancient culture, hosted the Kharibulbul Music Festival 29 years later on May 12, 2021. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva attended the music festival.

Although this festival has been held in Shusha since 1989, it was suspended after the May 8, 1992 occupation of the city by the Armenian armed forces. The resumption of the festival after the liberation of Shusha by the heroism of the Azerbaijani Army and its special forces under the leadership of the victorious Supreme Commander-in-Chief have aroused great pride and joy among the population.

The next visit of President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva to Shusha took place on June 15. The Azerbaijani president welcomed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and First Lady Emine Erdogan in Fuzuli District of Karabakh. On the way from Fuzuli to Shusha, the distinguished guests witnessed the destruction of Azerbaijani villages and towns by the occupiers and traces of the Armenian vandalism.

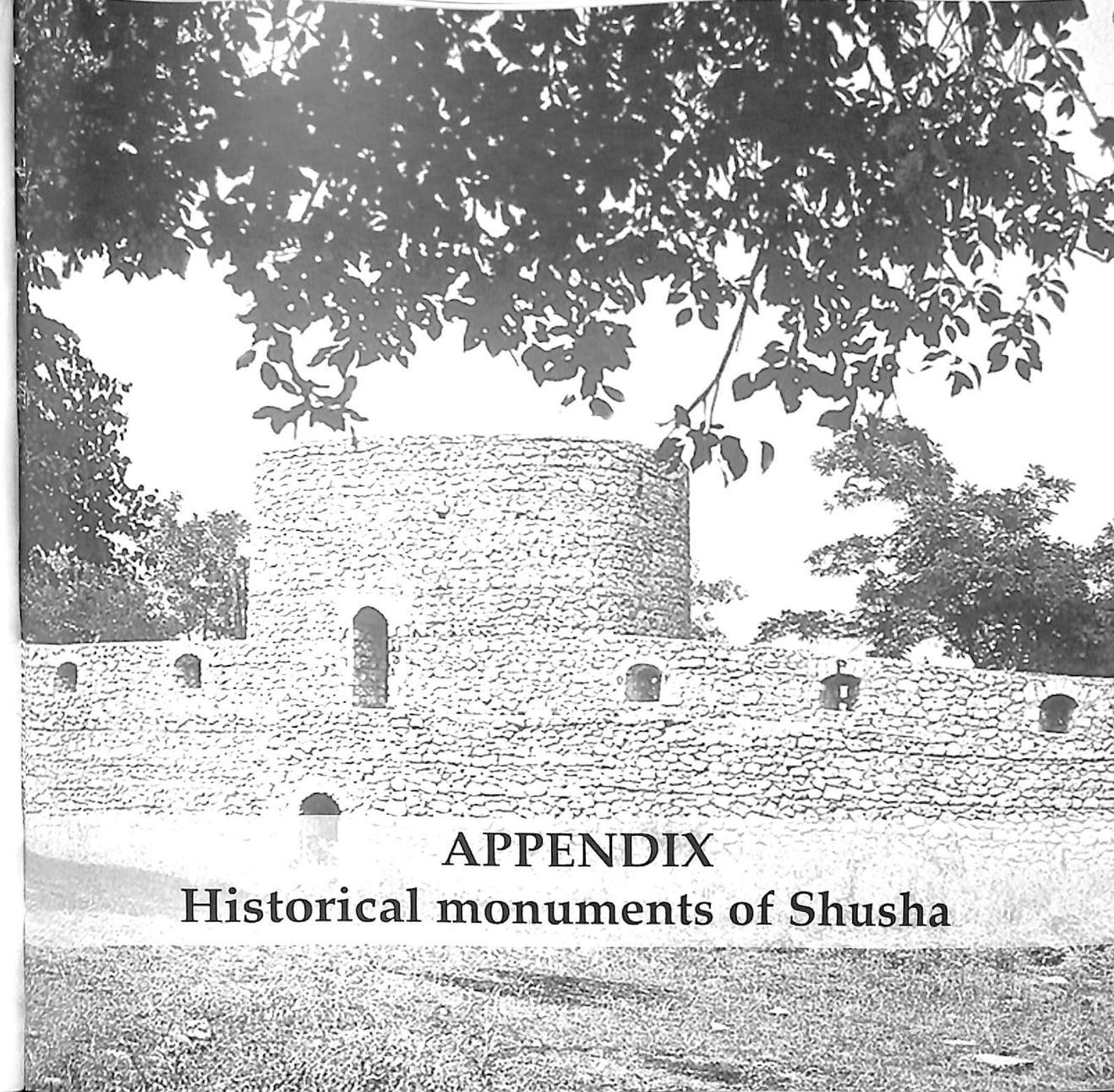
An official reception of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and First Lady Emine Erdogan was held in Shusha. Following the official reception and one-on-one meeting between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Shusha, the Shusha Declaration on the Allied Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey was signed on June 15, 2021. The Shusha Declaration, a logical continuation of all international documents, signed between the two friendly and brotherly countries, serves to combine opportunities and potentials in the political, economic, defense, cultural, humanitarian, health, education, social, youth and sports spheres.

After the signing of the Shusha Declaration, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made joint statements to the press. Emphasizing the historic significance of this visit, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev described the Shusha Declaration as the highest peak of the relations between the two countries.

Undescoring the importance of the Shusha Declaration not only for the two coun-

tries but also for the region, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that a Turkish Consulate General would be opened in the ancient city of Shusha as soon as possible.

During the visit, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, First Lady Emine Erdogan familiarized themselves with the Khangizi Spring, which was restored shortly after the liberation of Shusha. They also paid tribute to the statues of famous Azerbaijani personalities Natavan, Bulbul and Uzeyir Hajibayli and watched the muical composition "Musical heritage and the Karabakh horses on the Jidir Duzu" prepared by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation.



APPENDIX
Historical monuments of Shusha

There were 549 ancient buildings, paved streets with a total length of 1,203 meters, 17 courtyard wells, 17 mosques, six caravanserais, three tombs, two madrasas and two castles and castle walls in Shusha in total.

As well as, there were 72 important art and historical monuments, and houses of statesmen and other famous persons. A total of 17 quarters were laid out in Shusha and each quarter had own mosque, a courtyard well and a hammam. Shusha was rich in wells (Isa bulagi, Saxsi bulaq, Shor bulaq, Sakili bulaq, Shamil's spring and so on.) Thanks to great efforts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Shusha Historical-Architectural Reserve was included in the initial list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding of UNESCO on October 24, 2001. [55]

Some of these monuments are as follow:

Historical and religious monuments protected under the state inventory before the occupation

- *Haji Yusifli mosque (XVIII century) – G. Ismayilov street (INV.№ 5089)*
- *Chol Gala mosque (XVIII century) – former Kuybishev street (INV.№ 5103)*
- *Khoja Marjanli mosque (XVIII century) – Sabir street. (INV.№ 5137)*
- *Guyulug mosque (XVIII century) – former Shaumyan street (INV.№ 5146)*
- *Seyidli mosque (XVIII century) – former Telman street (INV.№ 5151)*
- *Mosque (XVIII century) – former Amiryan street. Chukhurlu neighborhood (INV.№ 5068)*
- *Mardinli mosque (XIX century) – A. Garasharov street (INV.№ 5077)*
- *Julfalar mosque (XIX century) – U. Hajibayov street (INV.№ 5092)*
- *Mamay mosque (XIX century) – G. Asgarov street (INV.№ 5166)*
- *Kocharli mosque (XIX century) – former Soviet street (INV.№ 5145)*
- *Malibayli mosque (XIX century) – Malibayli village (INV.№ 5056)*
- *Alban church (XIX century) – Geybali village (INV.№ 5059)*
- *Alban church (XIX century) – Dashalti village (INV.№ 5057)*



Remains of Chol Gala mosque

- *Remains of a church - G. Pirimov street (INV.№ 5041)*
- *Giz monastery (XVIII-XIX century) – Shusha city, former Gorki street*
- *Gazanchi church (XIX century) - Hagverdiyev street (INV.№ 358)*
- *Gaybali mosque (XIX century)*
- *Shirlan mosque (XIX century)*

- *Upper mosque madrasa (XVIII century) – Vazirov street (INV.№ 360)*
- *Madrasa (XVIII century) – Former Krupskaya street (INV.№ 369)*

Shrines

- *Shrine – Shusha city (INV.№ 5042)*
- *Heydar Shrine - Shusha city (INV.№ 340)*
- *Hazrat Ali cave (Nazir cave)*
- *Hazrat Abbas healing hearth*
- *Saggakhana and Pirgah shrines*
- *Seyid Mirfasih shrine*
- *Hearth of Mir Mehdi agha in Aghadadali neighborhood*
- *Double-minaret healing hearths in Chukhur neighborhood*
- *Hearth of Gasim agha*
- *Hearth of Seyid Khalil Seyid Ali in Seyidli neighborhood*

Historical architectural monuments

- *Mound (the Bronze Age) – in the north-west of Shusha (INV.№ 1770)*
- *Shusha and Shushakand stone box graves (late Bronze and early Iron age) - Near Shusha city and Shushakend (INV.№ 1771)*
- *Stone box necropolis (Iron Age) - Garabulag village (INV.№ 1773)*
- *Necropolis (Late Bronze and Early Iron age) – Dolanlar village (INV.№ 1774)*
- *Castle wall (2.5 km length, 1754) – Shusha city (INV.№ 337)*
- *Palace of Panah Khan (XVIII century) – Shusha city (INV.№ 338)*
- *Gara Boyuk Khanim palace (XVIII century) – Shusha city (INV.№ 339)*
- *Hajigullar's estate (XVIII century) – Shusha city (INV.№ 341)*
- *Natavan's house (XVIII century) – Shusha city, former Lenin street (INV.№ 342)*
- *Asad bay's house (XVIII century) – Shusha city, former Voroshilov street (INV.№ 343)*
- *Two-storey caravanserai (XIX century) – Shusha city, central square (INV.№ 346)*

- *Estate complex of Mehamandarovs: mosque, small house, big house (XVIII century) – Shusha city (INV.№ 347)*
- *Ibrahimxalil Khan's palace (XVIII century) – Shusha city (INV.№ 348)*
- *Isa spring (XIX century) – near Shusha city (INV.№ 349)*
- *Ibrahimxalil Khan's castle (XVIII century) – Dashalti village (INV.№350)*
- *M.P. Vagif's mausoleum tomb (XX century) – G. Guliyev street (INV.№ 367)*

Yukhari (Upper) Govharagha mosque (INV.№ 344)

According to the author of "Kitabi-tarikhi Karabakh", Mir Mehdi Khazani, the mosque built by Karabakh khan Ibrahimxalil Khan in 1182 of the Hijra calendar (1768-69 of Gregorian calendar) was repaired comprehensively in 1281 of the Hijra calendar (1866-1867 of Gregorian calendar).

Its internal area is 558 m2. It has two minarets approximately in 30 m height. It is written in the "Garabaghnama" of Baharli that in 1759, Panah Ali Khan built a two-door reed mosque in the main square of Shusha, and in 1768, a more magnificent mosque was built in its place by Ibrahimxalil Khan, the son of the late khan. Approximately, after 100 years, another mosque was built in this place by instruction and funds of his daughter, Govharagha by architect Karbalayi Safikhan Garabaghi.

We can get acquainted with appearance of Cuma mosque that was existent until that from the picture drawn by Russian artist Vasili Vereshagin, who then travelled to the Caucasus. The building of the mosque in the picture painted by the artist is magnificent. Its entrance part is constructed with an oversized arch, exclusive to Safavid architecture. The roof over the arch was designed in empire style characteristic to European architecture. The facade of the Yukhari Govharagha mosque that was built in the place of the building of this mosque was solved by three identical arches in the form of a balcony extending along the northern, i.e., the front part of the building. You can meet ayats (verses) from the Koran, a building history of the mosque and numerous stone inscriptions reflecting testaments of Govharagha. Second floor of the building and an ornament on the minarets, as well as inscriptions were made by famous Azerbaijani poet and painter



Yukhari Govharagha mosque

Mir Mohsun Navvab.

Khan's daughter Govharagha, who was famous with her generosity and charity, turned a cell of the mosque into a madrasa and helped those who came here to worship and those in need, once a week, and paid the muezzins who recited Koranic verses and called to prayer in the mosque. Govharagha was buried in the yard of the mosque; later her corpse was taken to Mecca and buried there.

Saatli mosque (INV.№ 355)

Architect Karbalayi Safikhan Garabaghi built Saatli mosque in 1883. According to Chingiz Gajar, who researched history of Shusha, there was a mosque and madrasa that was built by Panah Ali Khan in 1759 in the place of Saatli mosque, and great Azerbaijani poet Molla Panah Vagif taught in this madrasa.

The mosque was so named because it was built in the Saatli neighborhood of Shusha. Although Saatli mosque was a neighborhood mosque, it was distinguished from other neighborhood mosques with its capacity, architectural structure, as well as decorative design. Researcher Rizvan Garabaghi wrote that it was the last mosque with a minaret built by Karbalayi Safikhan Garabaghi.

In the following years, there were not minarets in mosques built by this beautiful artist, bouquet-shaped small drums on the roof replaced them. However, the reason for this drastic change in architectural style is not explained anywhere. Facade is only consisted of a wall, doors, and windows with asymmetric arrangement.

The interior solution of the Saatli mosque can be considered an example of the artistic perfection. Thanks to four, eight angled stone columns, which support the ceiling, the prayer hall has a triple space. As a result, as if indefinite number of arches appear in the hall. The surface of the walls is composed of geometrical figures and plant ornaments. Single minaret was placed behind the building. It is supposed that the minaret was not erected at the same time with the mosque, but later.

There are words on all buildings, built by the talented architect: "Built by Karbalai Safikhan of Karabakh". Of course, these signatures on stones are of great importance for



Saatli mosque

later periods as a document. However, without them if you look at mosques, designed by the architect, it will become obvious by whom they were built – architect Garabaghi.

The ethnonym Saqatli, Saatli originated from Chukhur Saad province, located on lower reaches of Arpachay and right bank of Araz River in the end of XIV century. Previously, most of the people of Saatli, who lived on lower reaches of Arpachay and right bank of Araz River moved into neighboring territories starting from 30s of the XV century. Some of them settled in Gazakh region and some in Karabakh during 1795-1798. The name of the Saatli tribe is an ethnic name of the tribe that lived in Chukhur Saad or of Saadli tribe - Azerbaijani Turks, named after Amir Saad, who lived in Agridag valley in ancient times. [48]

Ashaghi Govharagha mosque (INV № 345)

Ashaghi Govharagha mosque is a Friday mosque, located on Gapan square of Shusha city. The mosque was registered by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a significant historical-cultural monument. The mosque was first mentioned along with a nearby madrasa in the master plan of Shusha in 1855. As construction of the new mosque was funded by Govharagha, architect Karbalayi Safikhan Garabaghi, later Ashagi mosque was also known under the name of Ashagi Govharagha mosque. [46]



Ashaghi Govharagha mosque. Condition after the occupation.

Information & inquiry materials

Abbas Mirza Qajar (1789-1833) – son of Fatali Shah Qajar and a crown prince of Iran. He was a monarch of the southern Azerbaijan and Khorasan. He commanded Iranian army during the Russo-Persian war (1804-1813; 1826-1828) and Iran-Turkey (1821-1823) wars.

Alasgarov Suleyman Ayyub oglu (1924-2000) – Composer, bandmaster, a teacher, musician and a public figure. People's Artist of Azerbaijan.

Alexander Pavlovich (1777-1825) – Russian emperor Alexander I.

Ashiq Pari – founder of classical female ashiq poem, who lived in the first half of the XIX century.

Behbudov Rashid Macid oglu (1915-1989) – Prominent musician, Azerbaijani pop and opera singer (tenor), actor; People's Artist of the USSR.

Bulbul (full name: Murtuza Mashadi Rza oglu Mammadov; 1897-1961) – Azerbaijani opera singer (lyrical-dramatic tenor), tasnif performer, music folklore researcher; People's Artist of the USSR. Founder of Azerbaijani professional vocal art. Bulbul (nightingale) title was his popular name for his unusually pleasant voice.

Chervon – Russian gold coin worth 3 rubles, introduced in 1701 during the monetary reforms of Peter I and was in circulation in the XVII-XVIII centuries.

Chovkan, sometimes chovgan – equestrian sport spread in some Middle East countries, as well as in Azerbaijan in the middle Ages. A version of team sport played with horse and modern polo sport.

Qajars – the tribe of the union of Kizilbashs. It is assumed that Qajars came to the Western Asia in the 12th-14th centuries. They previously settled in a territory between Syria and Iran, later migrated to Azerbaijan and currently, they live in South Azerbaijan and other territories of Iran. Qajars participated in the ethnogeny of Azerbaijani nation. This tribe played an important role in political life during the Safavids period. Representatives of the Qajar dynasty who ruled in Iran during 1796-1925 came from this tribe.

Qaryagdioglu Cabbar – Cabbar Mashadi Ismayil oglu (1861-1944) – famous singer, musician, one of the prominent members of the Azerbaijani singing art.

HaqverdiyevAbdurrahim bey Asad bey oglu (1870 – 1933) – writer, playwright, theater and public figure, honored art worker.

Hacibayli (Hacibayov) Uzeyir Abdulhuseyn oglu (1885-1948) – genius Azerbaijani composer, musicologist, publicist, play writer, pedagogue and public figure. People's Artist of the USSR. Founder of modern professional Azerbaijani music and national opera.

Hajibeyli Soltan Ismayil oglu (1919-1974) – composer, teacher, musician and public figure, professor. People's Artist of the USSR.

Hacibayli Zulfuqar Abdulhuseyn oglu (1884-1950) – composer, libretto player, musician and public figure, honored art worker of Azerbaijan.

Hacinski Mammad Hasan Cafarqulu oglu (1875-1931) – first minister of foreign affairs of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, prominent statesman.

Heyran Xanim Dunbuli – famous Azerbaijani poetess of the XIX century. Played an important role in the development of the classic Azerbaijani poetry.

The Hijri calendar – migration of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina on July 16, 622.

Cavad Khan (?-1804) – The Khan of Ganca (1787-1804), from descendants of the Ziyadogullari. Cavad khan by carrying out independent policy ended nominal dependency of Ganca khanate on Georgia and Gazakh, Borcali, Shamshaddin, Shamkir, etc. territories were included in to Ganca khanate.

Cavanshir Behbud Khan Azad oglu (1886-1921) – state and public figure of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic. He was the interior minister in the government of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, and in October of 1918, meanwhile, served as trade and industry minister. Behbud Khan died in a hospital after he was wounded with a gun by an Armenian terrorist Toplagyan in Istanbul.

Karbalayi – a title of a person who visited holy places in Karbala city. Kableyi or Kabla are forms of "Karbalayi" that are used in daily language.

Khan Shushinski (full name: Isfandiyar Aslan oglu Cavansir; – singer, people's artist of Azerbaijan SSR (1901-1979).

Khrushchev Nikita (1894 – 1971) Secretary-General of the USSR from 1953 to 1964; chairman of the government of the Soviet Union between 1958 and 1964. A hero of the Soviet

Union, triple Hero of Socialist Labor.

Kizilbash – As the Gizilbash tribes had occupied a dominant position in the Safavids state of Azerbaijan (1501-1736), the Safavids state was also called the "Kizilbash state".

Mahsati Gancavi – great Azerbaijani poetess of XI and early XII century and bright representative of Muslim renaissance.

Mashruta – A constitution limiting right of an absolute governor or king (in Iran and Turkey)

Mir Mohsun Navvab (1833-1918) – A poet, painter, astronomer, literary critic, muralist, historian, calligrapher and Azerbaijani musician in Shusha city.

Muezzin – In Islam, the official who proclaims the call to prayer on Friday for the public worship and the call to the daily prayer five times a day.

Mukhtarov Murtuza (1855-1920) – famous Azerbaijani millionaire, philanthropist, prominent representative of oil industry in Azerbaijan.

Nadir Shah Afshar (1688-1747) – Shah of Azerbaijan, Turkistan and India (1736-1747) and founder of the Afshar dynasty of Turkic origin. Some historians described him as Napoleon of East and Alexander II of Macedon for his military achievements.

Narimanov Nariman Nacaf oglu (1870-1925) – prominent public-political and state figure, writer, publicist, doctor.

Novruz holiday – a holiday of ancient Turkic and Persian origin. Novruz holiday is marked in the first day of spring, on a day of vernal equinox (corresponds to March 20-21).

Pishkhidmat – domestic servant, maid.

Sattarkhan (1868-1914) – prominent figure of Mashruta revolution against the dictatorship of Mahammadali Shah, one of the popular leaders.

Seyyed dynasty – honorary title of Muslims in Islamic world, who are from the dynasty of the Prophet Muhammad and have kinship relations with his daughter Fatima and grandson Huseyn. In earlier medieval centuries, heads of tribe and tribal unions in Arabia were called Seyyed. In this sense, the term sometimes has the same meaning as the word sheikh. Seyyeds were considered the privileged class in Muslim society.

Tagiyev Haci Zeynalabdin Mahammadtagi oglu (1838-1924) – oil millionaire, prominent Azerbaijani philanthropist, educator and public figure.

Tsitsianov Pavel (1754-1806) – Tsarist Russian general of the Georgian origin, commander-in-chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus. He was assassinated by Aslan Bey near Baku in 1806.

Volost – area (side, edge), a small administrative-territorial unit in the tsarist Russia after district. According to the administrative-territorial unit implemented in Russia from the beginning of the XVIII century, each district was divided into several areas (volosts). As a result of the reforms in administrative-territorial system of the USSR, in 1929, areas were abolished.

Zubov Valerian (1711-1804) – Russian military figure, commander-in-chief of the Russian army during an Iran campaign (1796).

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Ilham Aliyev: "Dear Shusha, we are back!"

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The Association for Civil Society Development in Azerbaijan (ACSDA) has implemented a lot of memorable projects about Karabakh, which are of exceptional importance for our people.

Among these projects, the 2007 "Khojaly genocide: one million signatures, one demand" campaign deserves special mention. As part of the campaign, one million signatures of Azerbaijani citizens were collected for the international recognition of the Khojaly genocide, and a 16-volume collection of the signatures was published in a form of a book, were sent to parliaments, libraries and universities of leading countries, presented to the UN, OSCE, PACE and the International Criminal Court.

Over these years, the ACSDA has published several collections on the horrific act of genocide, including the books "Khojaly genocide (in documents, facts and foreign media)" and "A Khojaly Memory".

In 2012, the book "Invasion of Azerbaijani lands by Armenia and heavy consequences of occupation"

by ACSDA President Elxan Suleymanov and PhD in Economics Vurgun Suleymanov was published.

The book is the first comprehensive study of the material and moral damage inflicted on Azerbaijan as a result of the aggression, and it was determined that the damage to our country amounted to $431 billion. The book was published in English in Washington, in French in Paris, in Ukrainian in Kiev, in Russian in St. Petersburg, in Azerbaijani and Arabic languages in Baku.

In 2012-2016, conferences and hearings, organized by the ACSDA president, in support of Azerbaijan's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were held in the Italian, Belgian, Andorran, Spanish, Finnish, Slovenian and Polish parliaments.

In 2016, the ACSDA appealed to the US Presidential Administration on the White House's "We Are the People" platform with a petition "For Justice and Prevention of the Great Disaster". The goal was both to inform the whole world about Armenia's aggressive policy and to get support of the superpower - the United States - for the liberation of our lands from occupation.

The appeal of the Azerbaijani people to the Obama administration was posted on the website of the White House. The appeal stated the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and other territories of Azerbaijan by the Armenian state as mentioned by PACE's 2085 (2016) resolution, referred to the fact that the ecological crisis, committed by Armenia, is an ecological aggression, demanded for the immediate withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories, informed about the current state of the Sarsang reservoir on the occupied Azerbaijani territory that could lead to a humanitarian catastrophe, called upon the White House to support the PACE Resolution 2085 (2016) to help with the liberation of the Azerbaijani lands, occupied by Armenia, to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in the region.

According to the rules of the platform, the appeal had to be signed by 100,000 people within a month. Citizens of the Republic of Turkey also strongly supported the campaign. As a result of the ACSDA's large-scale campaign, 331,914 signatures were collected.

The petition "For Justice and Prevention of the Great Disaster" is the second most popular petition in the history of the White House Appeal Platform, initiated by Barack Obama in 2011.

These are just some of the ACSDA projects related to Karabakh...

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