

**DECLARATION
OF THE CAUCASUS MUSLIMS' BOARD
IN REGARD OF THE 29TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE TRAGEDY OF JANUARY 20**

In the name of Allah, Most gracious, Most merciful!

We are on the eve of the 29th anniversary of the terrible crime against the people of Azerbaijan -- the murderous January tragedy, which was engraved on our historical memory with a deep sorrow, but as a national pride and the school of Heroism. We keep in hearts the civic pride of the blessed memorial of our martyrs since years and nothing can erase our memory of those murderous days for centuries. Our People's respect of those who sacrificed themselves for the restoration of the statehood of Azerbaijan and reached one of the Godly most high peaks - the martyrdom, is endless and eternal.

Besides the January 20 will remain in our memories forever as a whole tragedy, it has become a symbol of the invincible will and the spirit of martyrdom for the sake of the national independence and freedom. January 20 was the first struggle and first spiritual victory leading to reinstatement of independence, national, spiritual and religious values. Our people, who were subjected to the punitive actions of the armed-to-the-teeth Soviet army, did not kneel, nor lose their will of freedom, but on the contrary, raised high the voice of truth. At the time, when the destiny, even the existence of Azerbaijan as a state, was uncertain, this voice was firstly raised from Moscow by Heydar Aliyev, a courageous son of our people, a wise statesman, when he came to the office of the Permanent Representation of Azerbaijan in Moscow together with his family members, demonstrating his solidarity with the People and stating his strong protest to the murderous operation conducted by the USSR leadership. He wrathfully blamed the organizers of murderous crimes, describing the incident as the crime against law, democracy, and humanity. Meanwhile, the religious leader - Sheikh-ul-Islam addressed from Baku an open letter, full of anger and indictment, to the former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev, stating harshly and principally his approach to the conducted crime. The sharp positions of our political leader and religious chief inspired, mobilized and united the people. More than a million people flocked to the main square of the city being not afraid of persecution, even death, and committed martyrs who had sacrificed themselves in the name of Liberty, to the Holy Motherland earth. Thus, the bloody January 20 tragedy was engraved on the history of the independent Azerbaijani state as the sign of our people's Honor and Heroism.

After the failure of the country's leadership of that time to properly evaluate the socio-political situation and the tragedy of January 20 because its incompetence, the first political and legal assessment was done by the Parliament of Azerbaijan only when the national leader Heydar Aliyev returned to power. In turn, the Caucasus Muslims' Board pushed all efforts from the first day of the bloodshed to warn the world community and major international organizations

about January 20 tragedy as the extension of the Garabagh conflict, to give support to our just cause, to ensure the assessment of the conducted crime as an act of cruel offence against humanity. For this purpose, the Board has issued the Appeal to the World's parliaments, religious leaders and heads of state, which has caused a great resonance in the international arena.

The People of Azerbaijan have a full moral right to bring a legal action against their murderers, namely, M. Gorbachev, who personally signed the order of massacre in Baku, together with his stooges, to expose to the world community on the grounds of the international law the cruelty, hypocrisy, brutality and real intentions of the offenders. The mercilessness of Armenian butchers who ushered in Baku together with the Soviet army to conduct massive terror of the January 20 crime against the People of Azerbaijan, must be especially marked. Unfortunately, the existing biased and the double-standard nature of approaches the problems in the world, as well as preference of some countries and international organizations to keep silent, cause massacres like Khojaly genocide.

Today, every Azerbaijani obliged to the martyrs. Citizens of different religious and ethnic identity have been martyred for the sake of Azerbaijan's independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The greatest rewards for the spirits of martyrs are everlasting of our independence, Victory in Garabagh, growing power of our statehood, prosperity of our Homeland and happiness of our People. We, the clergy, are praying for a peaceful settlement of the conflict and a peaceful just solution. At the same time, our victories in Djojuq Marjanli, Lalatapa in Garabagh and Gyunnit in Nakhehivan make us sure that our Nation is capable to reach its noblest goals under the bless of Allah, and the leadership of our esteemed President, Supreme Commander Ilham Aliyev. With the help of the God, our home lands will be liberated from occupation and festive prayers will be made for victory all over Azerbaijan.

The Caucasus Muslims' Board expresses its deep condolences to all the families of martyrs of the January 20, as well as all the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the name the integrity of our Homeland and national independence. Martyrdom is the highest peak of faith, patriotism, belief and action, because the martyrs are those who stood the test of the Almighty with honor, fortitude and selflessly.

Being the religious Centre, the Caucasus Muslims' Board considers essential to read out this statement in all mosques, and during religious ceremonies conducted on January 20th, to preach about the truth of Garabagh and January 20, and to commemorate the souls of our dear martyrs with the verses of the Holy Koran. May be glad the souls of the martyrs, who have been ordered by the Almighty Creator in the Koran to live immortal in Paradise! May Allah our martyrs rest in peace!

Baku, January 16, 2019.