

PRESS RELEASE

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INTRODUCTION

During 2022, under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev the Republic of Azerbaijan successfully implemented an independent, open, pragmatic foreign policy course based on national interests.

Against the background of increased tension in the system of international relations, and interrelated emerged challenges, our foreign policy is aimed at ensuring the national interests of our state, strengthening the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, as well as creating a favorable external environment for national security and socio-economic development, in accordance with the norms and principles of international law.

Bilateral relations with foreign countries

During 2022, practical measures were taken to further develop bilateral relations with foreign countries. Along with this, the **30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations** of the Republic of Azerbaijan with many states was celebrated. Various events were organized both in Azerbaijan and in the relevant countries in this direction. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized events, and exhibited photos and documents dedicated to the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations with 19 countries and the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations with 1 country. In total, the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with 69 countries, and the 25th anniversary with 2 countries were celebrated.

As in previous years, this year the relations of the Republic of Azerbaijan with its neighbors remained a priority.

Wide-ranging allied relations between Azerbaijan and Türkiye continued successfully. The Shusha Declaration on Allied Relations signed between the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Türkiye in the city of Shusha on June 15, 2021 was ratified by the Parliaments of both countries and entered into force as a law in February of this year. The agreement created a foundation for further development of Azerbaijan-Türkiye brotherly and friendly relations on the basis of alliance. The participation of the President of Türkiye Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the “Teknofest Azerbaijan” festival held in Baku on May 26-29, 2022, and in the opening ceremony of Zangilan International Airport on October 20, 2022, the working visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev on March 10, 2022, to Ankara, his participation in the opening ceremony of Rize-Artvin Airport on May 14, 2022, and of the Islamic Solidarity Games held in Konya on August 9, 2022 should be especially noted. In addition, on November 4, 2022, the 10th meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Türkiye was held in Baku.

Azerbaijan-Russia cooperation continued in 2022. On February 22, 2022, the “Declaration on Allied Interaction between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation” was

signed. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev paid an official (February 21-23, Moscow) and working visits to Russia (October 7, St. Petersburg, October 31, Sochi, December 26, St. Petersburg). On November 17-18, the delegation headed by the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Mikhail Mishustin, visited Azerbaijan. On April 26, 2022, the 20th meeting of the intergovernmental State Commission on economic cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation was held in Baku. Visits were also held at the level of foreign ministers of the two countries.

The agenda of friendship and cooperation with Georgia has developed on a stable basis along with being broad enough. High-level visits took place between the two countries, and sectoral cooperation between relevant government agencies continued. On October 24, 2022, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev paid a working visit to Georgia. On December 15, the 9th meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission on economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Georgia was held in Tbilisi under the chairmanship of Prime Ministers Ali Asadov and Irakli Garibashvili.

Efforts have been made to develop **relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran on a mutual basis**. On October 13, 2022, the meeting of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev with the President of Iran Mr. Sayyid Ebrahim Raisi was held on the sidelines of the VI Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia held in Astana. On March 10-11, 2022, the 15th meeting of the State Commission on cooperation between Azerbaijan and Iran in the economic, trade and humanitarian fields was held in Baku. On July 4, 2022, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan paid an official visit to Iran.

Azerbaijan's relations with the friendly and fraternal states of Central Asia in 2022 have been very rich, especially in terms of intensity and content. This year, the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan visited Azerbaijan, and the President of Azerbaijan visited Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Also, in 2022, the meetings of intergovernmental commissions were held with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. In addition, on February 23, 2022, the 5th meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation between Azerbaijan and Tajikistan was held in Dushanbe.

During the year, our **relations with the USA, China and European countries** were in focus.

The successful development of **relations with South Eastern European countries based on mutual interests** should be especially noted. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev paid visits to Italy, Bulgaria, Albania and Serbia. In turn, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the President of Serbia visited Azerbaijan.

Cooperation relations on the basis of mutual interests in the political, economic and humanitarian fields continued with the states of **Central, North and South America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia**, working visits were paid and political consultations were organized.

In 2022, the work on the **opening of new diplomatic missions** was continued. Relevant orders were signed on the establishment of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Israel (Tel Aviv) and Albania, the Representative Office in Palestine (Ramallah), the Embassy in Kenya and the Permanent Mission to the UN Nairobi office. In 2022, the ambassador of Azerbaijan was appointed to the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Holy See, established in 2021. In addition, Ambassadors were appointed to the Embassies of Azerbaijan established in Cuba in 2020, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2021. In general, the total number of diplomatic missions of the Republic of Azerbaijan abroad has reached 89 (66 embassies, 6 permanent missions, 9 consulates general, 8 embassy and representative offices).

Work was done on **signing of legal documents on a multilateral and bilateral basis**. In 2022, according to the relevant procedures, 1 document was signed between Azerbaijan-Iran-Russia, 6 documents between Azerbaijan-Turkey-Turkmenistan, and 1 document between Azerbaijan-Georgia-Romania-Hungary. In addition, a total of 150 documents were signed with 27 countries.

Cooperation within international organizations

2022 marks the **30th anniversary of the admission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations**. As in previous years, Azerbaijan contributed to the fulfillment of the goals of the UN Charter in establishing international peace, security and development.

On March 18, an international conference on the 30th anniversary of the UN-Azerbaijan partnership was held in Shusha, and the UN flag was raised in Shusha for the first time. Within the event, the issues of the post-conflict period, the restoration of liberated territories, the partnership of Azerbaijan and the UN within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals were discussed at the conference attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Assistant to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan, and UN officials.

During the year, visits of the chairman of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly (GA), the UN Deputy Secretary General and the Director General of the UN Office in Geneva, the executive director of the UN Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) and other UN officials to our country were organized.

The resolution titled “Missing Persons” put forward by Azerbaijan at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, as well as the draft resolution on the “Release of Women and Children Taken Hostage in Armed Conflicts, including those subsequently imprisoned” initiated every two years with the main authorship of Azerbaijan was adopted again by consensus at the 66th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

On April 1, 2022, within the 49th session of the UN Human Rights Council, the resolution “Ensuring equal, affordable, timely and universal access to vaccines against COVID-19” initiated by Azerbaijan and Ecuador was unanimously adopted.

During the year, Azerbaijan’s **chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** continued successfully.

On May 26, 2022, a conference on “African heritage in the evolution of the Non-Aligned Movement” was organized jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Center for the Analysis of International Relations in order to demonstrate the special attention paid by the Azerbaijan chairmanship to the African continent and to strengthen the cooperation of the Movement with the African Union.

Holding of the Baku Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network (NAM) on June 30-July 1, 2022, and the Youth Summit of the National Assembly on July 25-29, 2022, hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan, and as a result, the adoption of the documents regulating the activities of the Youth Organization of the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network and the Non-Aligned Movement for the first time in history, as well as adoption of logos and flags of these institutions were important achievements in the direction of the institutionalization of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As a result of the elections held within the Baku Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network, the Speaker of the Milli Majlis, Sahiba Gafarova, was elected Chair of the PN of the Non-Aligned Movement. The final document of the Youth Summit of the NAM was adopted at the Shusha segment of the event and named the Shusha Accord (Shusha agreement).

On October 22, 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Culture, the State Tourism Agency, and the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in our country organized an International Charity Fair in Baku in connection with the 30th anniversary of Azerbaijan-UN cooperation. The event was also dedicated to the UN Day, celebrated annually on October 24, and the third anniversary of Azerbaijan’s chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement on October 26, 2022.

Throughout the year, special importance was given to cooperation within the framework of **the Organization of Turkic States**. Azerbaijan actively participated in the work of the Organization and put forward a number of initiatives. Important decisions were adopted within the Organization.

The 9th Summit of the Organization was held in Samarkand on November 11, 2022. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev attended the event. The Samarkand Declaration adopted at the Summit, among others, expressed support for the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the basis of mutual recognition and support of each other’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders. The readiness to contribute to Azerbaijan’s post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration efforts was reaffirmed. Along with this, support was expressed for the efforts towards the opening of the Zangezur corridor.

On March 31, 2022, in the city of Bursa of the Republic of Turkey, at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Permanent Council of Ministers of Culture of TURKSOY, the city of Shusha, cultural capital of Azerbaijan, was declared as the 2023 Cultural Capital of the Turkic World.

On May 13-14, 2022 at the 8th Meeting of the UNESCO National Commissions of TURKSOY member countries held in Bursa, decision was made to hold the next, 9th meeting in Shusha in 2023.

Furthermore, based on the decision made at the IX Summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Samarkand on November 11, 2022, academician Shahin Mustafayev was elected the President of the International Turkic Academy headquartered in Kazakhstan.

In 2022, cooperation based on equal rights and mutual interests between **Azerbaijan and the European Union** was continued. Negotiations were held on the draft of a new bilateral agreement, which will form the legal basis of the future cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the European Union. On July 19, the 18th meeting of the Cooperation Council between the European Union and Azerbaijan was held in Brussels, and the meeting was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. On October 6, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan participated in the “European Political Union” Summit of the European Union in Prague and delivered a statement. On December 12, 2022, the Minister of Foreign Affairs participated in the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Eastern Partnership countries of the European Union as part of his working visit to Brussels. At the meeting, the current situation and future directions of the Eastern Partnership, regional security, prospects of relations between the European Union and partner countries were discussed.

Cooperation within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Council of Europe (CoE), Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), League of Arab States (LAS) and other international organizations and platforms continued.

During January-April 2022, Azerbaijan chaired **the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC)** in the field of trust-building and security in the military-political sphere, including issues of arms control and disarmament. During Azerbaijani chairmanship to the FSC, Azerbaijan has contributed to promoting dialogue and understanding within the OSCE on a wide range of topics of the military-political dimension, including mine action, post-conflict restoration work, and the role of states that are not part of the European security architecture.

On March 22-23, 2022, the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation** under the theme “Building Partnerships for Unity, Justice, and Development” was held in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Within the abovementioned session, four resolutions covering political, economic and cultural issues related to the consequences of the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan, were adopted: “Elimination of the consequences of the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan,” “Economic assistance to the Republic of Azerbaijan,” “Destruction of historical and cultural monuments of Islamic culture in the territories of Azerbaijan as a result of the aggression of the Republic of Armenia,” and “Solidarity with the victims of the Khojaly massacre.” Taking into account the latest situation in the region, new provisions were included in these resolutions which annually adopted by the OIC.

On May 20, 2022, an agreement was signed between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and **Islamic World Education, Science and Culture Organization (ICESCO)** on the establishment of the Regional Office of ICESCO in Baku. On December 24, 2022, “Action

Plan on deepening cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” was signed.

In 2022, the **Azerbaijan-NATO partnership** retained its strategic importance, and high-level dialogue and practical cooperation between the parties continued. On February 15, 2022, a telephone conversation was held between the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev and NATO Secretary General Mr. Jens Stoltenberg. On July 19, 2022, Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov met with Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the NATO headquarters. On April 28-29, 2022, Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Javier Colomina visited our country. During the year, efforts to increase national capabilities and defense reforms in the field of contributing to international peace and security continued in cooperation with NATO, and new partnership goals were agreed on this topic.

At the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** Summit held on September 15-16 in Samarkand, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan attended for the first time as an honorary guest at the invitation of the President of Uzbekistan. This is an important event in the development of our country’s cooperation with the SCO, as well as another example of the international community’s assessment of Azerbaijan’s growing role in ensuring international peace, security and development as a reliable partner.

Also, on November 1, 2022, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, attended the 31st Summit of the **Arab League** in Algeria as an honorary guest.

During 2022, activities were continued **to promote the candidacies nominated by the Republic of Azerbaijan for the elective positions of international organizations**. Our country has succeeded in a number of elections.

Decisions have been made on the chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan of the Economic Cooperation Organization and the UN Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) for 2023 (for a period of 1 year).

As a result of the successful election campaigns, Azerbaijani citizens have been elected to a number of leading international organizations, including the UN Human Rights Committee for 2023-2026, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for 2023-2026, OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) for 2022-2025, and International Telecommunication Union Radio Regulations Board for 2023-2026. In addition, our country has been elected a member of the International Telecommunication Union Council for 2023-2026 and Deputy Chairman of the UNESCO Committee on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Time of Armed Conflict.

Cooperation in the economic, energy, transport and humanitarian spheres

For many years, Azerbaijan has put forward initiatives and taken practical steps to develop economic, energy and transport communications of regional and global importance.

This year further enhanced the role of Azerbaijan in **ensuring international energy security and transit transportation**.

On July 18, “**A Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Partnership in the field of energy between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan**” was signed in Baku. The MoU includes the expansion of the traditional energy partnership, as well as potential cooperation on green and renewable energy. By 2027, the MoU aimed at increasing the potential of the Southern Gas Corridor to 20 billion cubic meters, is considered an important step in diversifying the energy supply of the Western Balkan region.

On October 1, **opening ceremony of the Greece-Bulgaria Gas Interconnector** was held in Sofia, the capital of the Republic of Bulgaria, and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan attended the event. On December 16, the agreement between the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) and Romgaz S.A. **on the supply of gas from Azerbaijan to Romania** was signed. According to the agreement, starting from January 2023, it is planned to transport natural gas to Romania through the Greece-Bulgaria Gas Interconnector.

On December 17, the “**Agreement on a strategic partnership in the field of green energy development and transmission between the Governments of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania and Hungary**” was signed in Bucharest. The agreement envisages the use of renewable energy production potential in the Caspian and Black Sea regions, with Azerbaijan as the source, and the diversification of energy supply.

In addition, it was announced by the EU that **within the framework of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership (EaP)** at least 2 billion euros will be allocated to our country over the next five years. A high-level Working Group was established to identify priority projects, and its first meeting took place on December 7 in Baku.

Moreover, relevant activities were carried out for strengthening the transit-transport potential of our country. Efforts were made in the direction of East-West, North-South and South-West international transport corridors, regional transport and infrastructure projects, and appropriate agreements were reached. On March 10-11, 2022, Azerbaijan and Iran signed a “**Memorandum of Understanding on establishing new communication links between the East Zangezur economic region of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic**, passing through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran” in Baku. On September 9, 2022, Azerbaijan, Russia and Iran held the first trilateral meeting at the level of Deputy Prime Ministers on the development of the North-South International Transport Corridor, increasing its sustainability and competitiveness. The signed Baku Declaration also reflected the importance of opening and developing all economic and transport links in the region, including those connecting the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

At the same time, a new practice of diplomacy – **trilateral cooperation formats** such as Azerbaijan-Türkiye-Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan-Türkiye-Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan-Türkiye-Uzbekistan, etc. are being used. In 2022, the Trilateral Summit of the Heads of State of Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Türkiye (December 14, 2022, Awaza National Tourism Zone, Turkmenistan), as well as the trilateral meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Transport of Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan-Türkiye (June 27, 2022, Baku; November 25, 2022, Aktau, Georgian side also participated) and Ministers responsible for foreign affairs, economy and transport of Azerbaijan-Uzbekistan-Türkiye (August 2, 2022, Tashkent) were held.

On December 14, at the **Summit of the Heads of State of Azerbaijan, Türkiye and Turkmenistan in Awaza**, documents in various fields, including energy, trade, customs, transport, education and culture, were adopted. Discussions on strengthening the East-West Trans-Caspian transport corridor were held.

In 2022, the work in the humanitarian field was extensively continued by Azerbaijan. The international community was informed about **the global campaign “Peace for Culture”** put forward by Azerbaijan with the support of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), and the Agreement was signed with the Alliance on the implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the “Peace for Culture” initiative covering the years 2022-2027. Within the framework of the 215th session of the UNESCO Executive Board held on October 5-19, the draft decision "Baku process: promoting intercultural dialogue and social inclusion for sustainable peace and development" submitted by Azerbaijan was adopted unanimously.

During the year, Azerbaijan also continued **humanitarian aid and development support activities** at the international level. The last admission process of educational grant programs for the period of 5 academic years (2018-2022) for the citizens of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement has been successfully completed, 40 students from 36 countries have received full scholarships to study in higher educational institutions of our country. Thus, within 5 years, the number of students received full scholarships from 90 countries within the framework of the mentioned programs reached 200.

This year, aid was provided to schools and special educational centers in Iraq, Brazil, Ethiopia, and Uganda, and humanitarian aid was provided to South Sudan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Suriname, Pakistan, and Ukraine.

Humanitarian aid has been sent to Ukraine since February 27th. The humanitarian aid consisting of medication, medical disposable products, medical equipment, food and baby care products has been supplemented with power transformers and generators, the first part of which has already arrived in Ukraine in December of this year (total amount of 1 million 422 thousand manats or more than 830 thousand USD). In general, the amount of humanitarian aid provided by the Republic of Azerbaijan to Ukraine is close to 30 million manats (17.5 million dollars), and the total volume is about one thousand (1000) tons. In addition, about 90 Ukrainian children suffered from the war and lost their family members were brought to our country for medical and social-psychological rehabilitation.

In addition, relevant financial support was provided to the global activities of organizations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Population Fund, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, the World Health Organization, as well as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. During the year, the “Fight against avoidable blindness” campaign, implemented in African countries together with the Islamic Development Bank and other partners, was continued with the financial support of AIDA (Azerbaijan International Development Agency).

Diplomatic activity in the post-conflict period

Promotion of our interests within the framework of the new realities emerging in the region by ensuring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and international law was a priority.

As a result of the end of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan with the trilateral declaration of the leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia dated November 10, 2020, the establishment of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of mutual recognition and respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and state borders was one of the main directions of the foreign policy in 2022.

During the year, as a result of continuous, consistent and resolute steps, the peace agenda promoted by Azerbaijan was acknowledged by the international community, during this period contacts with the mediation and organization of international partners were advanced in the format of direct bilateral negotiations with Armenia on the basis of the agenda promoted by Azerbaijan.

The normalization agenda is based on three main directions, such as the **preparation of a peace treaty that will determine the basis of bilateral relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the delimitation of the state border, and the restoration of transport and communication links** between the two states.

In this vein, based on the 2021 proposal by Azerbaijan to sign a peace treaty, preparation and submission by Azerbaijan of the basic principles on the peace treaty to Armenia in February of this year, Geneva meeting between the delegations of Azerbaijan and Armenia held on October 2, 2022, which laid the foundation of practical negotiations on the peace treaty constituting the main foundation of future bilateral relations between the two countries, as well as the establishment of border delimitation commissions in both sides and meetings of this commissions on the bilateral basis, could be mentions as major developments.

The leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia met on 6 April, 22 May and 31 August in Brussels with the participation of President of the European Council Charles Michel, on 4 February in a virtual format and on 6 October in Prague with the participation of Charles Michel and French President Emmanuel Macron, and on 31 October with the participation of the President of the Russian Federation in Sochi. In total, 7 meetings were held.

Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia met on 16 July 2022 in Tbilisi, on 2 October in Geneva and on 7 November in Washington - in total 3 meetings were held. Moreover, on 11 and 23 April 2022 Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia had twice direct phone conversations, and on 4 October 2022 with the participation of US State Secretary. Furthermore, Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia met on 12 May 2022 in Dushanbe and on 14 October in Astana with the participation of Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, on 19 September in New York and on 7 November in Washington with the participation of the Secretary of State of the United States.

As the major outcomes of the Brussels meeting held on 31 August, the leaders agreed to prepare the draft peace treaty with a view to advance the peace agenda and to take tangible steps on the border delimitation issues. In line with this agreement on 2 October 2022 Azerbaijan submitted the elements of peace treaty to the other side and 2 meetings (Geneva

and Washington) were held in this direction. The third meeting scheduled to take place in Moscow on 23 December was cancelled due to the absence of Armenian side.

As a result of discussions held during the year, state commissions on border delimitation and demarcation were established in both sides, and the commissions held 3 meetings - on 24 May, 30 August and 3 November accordingly on the provisional border between 2 states, in Moscow, and in Brussels.

On 3 June and 6 December 2022 Trilateral Working Group on opening of regional communications held its 10th and 11th meetings in Moscow.

The matter of special importance was the confirmation of commitment undertaken by the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia in their **meetings held on 6 October in Prague and on 31 October in Sochi** on mutual recognition of sovereignty and territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of all disputes. This, as reflected in the basic principles put forward by Azerbaijan, constitute the foundation of normalization of relations between two states, and acceptance by Armenia of this commitment was an important development of this year in the advancement of post-conflict agenda.

In line with commitments reflected in the Trilateral Statement, Azerbaijan has finalized **new Lachin road** earlier than scheduled, illegal Armenian residents were taken out of Lachin city, Zabukh and Sus villages, and these territories were returned to Azerbaijan.

Moreover, during the year necessary measures have been undertaken to **counter illegal economic activities in the territories of Azerbaijan**, where the Russian Peacekeeping contingent is temporarily deployed. The Government of Azerbaijan has taken steps through dialogue to prevent the illegal exploitation of natural resources in these territories and its grave environmental consequences. On 3 and 7 December 2022 relevant authorities of Azerbaijan met with the command of the Russian Peacekeeping Contingent to identify the provisions for monitoring and assessment by Azerbaijani experts of the environmental consequences of the illegal exploitation of Gizilbulag and Demirli reserves.

After an agreement was reached, the visit of a delegation of Azerbaijani specialists, organized by peacekeepers, was disrupted as a result of pre-planned and organized actions of a group of people. This caused a legitimate protest of the Azerbaijani society, and a group of civil society representatives began a peaceful demonstration on the Lachin road to protest against the illegal exploitation of Azerbaijan's natural resources, the transportation of these resources from Azerbaijan to Armenia and the prevention of the abuse of the Lachin road, which was intended only for humanitarian purposes. In this direction, diplomatic efforts were continued to prevent unfounded and biased claims against Azerbaijan.

In the context of the **restoration of transport links in the region**, in accordance with the Trilateral Statement of November 10, 2020, and ongoing measures within the relevant working group to ensure unhindered travel between the mainland of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, due to the non-constructive position of the Armenian side, it was not possible to achieve serious progress in this area.

In general, despite the partial dynamic of bilateral contacts towards the normalization efforts between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the post-conflict period, the progress achieved in all three directions of normalization fell short of expectations. The main reason for this is Armenia's failure to show the necessary political will for real steps towards the normalization of relations, its contradictory and inconsistent position, its constant attempts to evade the implementation of the agreements and assumed obligations, and especially its political and military provocations to undermine normalization efforts. At the same time, the proposals for the text of the peace agreement show tendencies to drag out the process.

Through **bilateral, regional and multilateral formats**, including meetings within the framework of the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Union, NATO, GUAM, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization of Turkic States and the Economic Cooperation Organization, adopted statements and documents activities were strengthened to raise awareness on the realities that arose after the Patriotic War, and work was continued in the direction of forming the necessary conditions for lasting peace in the region, post-conflict restoration and reconstruction, and the return of IDPs.

Detailed information was provided on the post conflict realities in the region and the steps taken by Azerbaijan for sustainable peace in around 60 meetings of the Minister of Foreign Affairs with his colleagues in the framework of his **2022 visits and international events**, as well as in the meetings with his foreign colleagues and other officials during their visit to Azerbaijan.

Foreign officials, parliamentarians, representatives of think-tanks, as well as journalists **visited the liberated territories**, evaluation missions of international organizations were carried out. Foreign countries contributed to the restoration and reconstruction of these areas with concrete projects.

Work was continued on exposing the crimes committed by Armenia in the territories it held under occupation during 30 years, such as deliberate large scale destruction of civilian infrastructure (urbicide), destruction, falsification and looting of cultural heritage (culturicide), damaging the environment and bio-diversity (ecocide), as well as war crimes against civilian population of Azerbaijan and citizens of Azerbaijan taken as hostages and Prisoners of War, on determining the international legal responsibility of Armenia for these acts, clarifying the fate of persons missing as a result of military aggression, and involving international experts in the exhumation and identification work carried out in mass graves.

During the course of the year, necessary measures were taken on the complaints filed by Azerbaijan against Armenia **in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the European Court of Human Rights**. In December, Azerbaijan submitted a new interstate complaint against Armenia regarding the intentional and purposeful destruction of property, including hundreds of civilian houses and other residential areas during Armenia's withdrawal from the city of Lachin and two neighboring villages in May-August 2022. Azerbaijan is seeking compensation, reparation, restitutio in integrum, costs, expenses and further or other relief for the damage suffered following gross human rights violations.

A detailed document reflecting all the facts related to the 30-year military occupation period to be submitted to the ICJ within the legal responsibility measures against Armenia, has been finalized as well. The document will be submitted to the ICJ at the end of January 2023.

Furthermore, on October 12, 2022, the ICJ rejected the petition filed by Armenia on September 16, 2022 regarding new temporary measures against Azerbaijan. At the beginning of next year, Azerbaijan is planning new legal responsibility measures against Armenia for damage to the environment, as well as illegal exploitation of energy and natural resources.

As a country suffering from the landmine threat, Azerbaijan has continued to raise international awareness on the threat posed by landmines toward peace and security, the violation of human rights and obstruction to socio-economic development caused by them, as well as the large-scale humanitarian demining operations conducted for elimination of the landmine threat faced by Azerbaijan. After the war, the number of landmine victims has reached 276, of which 46 died. Additionally, the challenges arising from transportation of landmines produced in Armenia in 2021 to, and their planting in Azerbaijan, have been brought to the attention of the international community. Bringing into the spotlight the legal and political responsibility of Armenia for the landmine problem faced by Azerbaijan, and attracting international aid to humanitarian demining operations have been set as priority tasks. Azerbaijan was active diplomatically in corresponding formats, including “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.” During this year, a dialogue was also held with international organizations, including the UN, European Union, NATO, and a number of countries on cooperation to eliminate the landmine problem in Azerbaijan.

Action on the protection of rights and freedoms of the citizens of Azerbaijan

As in previous years, in 2022, in accordance with the national legislation and the international agreements Azerbaijan is a supporter of, necessary work was carried out to protect the rights and freedoms of the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan were repatriated from the Republic of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, and evacuated from Ukraine as a result of measures taken by the Government of Azerbaijan.

Resulting from the phased and coordinated measures taken by the Government of Azerbaijan, 68 citizens, including 54 children and 14 women, were **repatriated from Iraq and Syria** in 2022, and a total of 409 citizens, including 380 children and 29 women, were repatriated from the aforementioned countries in the last 3 years. According to the relevant action plan, rehabilitation and reintegration of repatriates was ensured by relevant institutions.

More than 16 thousand people (citizens and their non-citizen family members) were **evacuated from Ukraine** to Azerbaijan with the support of the Government of Azerbaijan.

In order to improve the process of reception of citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including foreigners and stateless persons who live or are in Azerbaijan on a temporary and permanent basis, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and to provide them with quality service, a new reception center for citizens was put into service in the administrative building of the Ministry on July 4, 2022.

Conferences, information support of foreign policy, and analytical work by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Developing of HR potential of the MFA

During the year, the analytical work was continued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, relevant information was presented to state institutions of Azerbaijan.

A conference on the 30th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide was jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and ADA University.

Within the “Year of Shusha” announced by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the consequent “Diplomacy Week” was organized by the Azerbaijan MFA and ADA University.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published a **special edition of “World of Diplomacy” magazine dedicated to the “Year of Shusha” titled “Shusha - Cultural Capital of Azerbaijan: Past and Present.”** The special issue of the magazine includes articles by both foreign and local experts, as well as diplomats of Azerbaijan. The e-version of the magazine is posted on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“Karabakh Khanate: historical and cultural profile” authored by Eldar Nadiradze based on the historical artefacts in the National Museum of Georgia about the Karabakh region and especially the city of Shusha being an integral part of the Azerbaijani identity was published under the patronage of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, editions of the book in English, French and Arabic languages were prepared.

During 2022, **visits (press tours) of around 200 journalists** from different countries were organized to the liberated territories. At the same time, in order to convey the truths of Azerbaijan to the world community, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued its activity on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube platforms. During the current year, about 600 press releases were posted on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As a result of comprehensive discussions with the State Examination Center in order **to improve the staffing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, a competitive process consisting of two main stages (written exam and interview) was organized in a centralized manner. 38 of the 67 candidates who successfully passed all the exam stages out of about 500 total candidates were hired, and other remaining candidates are expected to be accepted into the diplomatic service in the coming months.

Furthermore, 20 new heads of diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan were appointed during 2022.