

STATEMENT
by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
on 20 January - National Mourning Day

20 January 2025

Anniversary of the bloody massacre committed 35 years ago on the night of 19-20 January by the former USSR against civilians in order to suppress the national liberation movement of the Azerbaijani people, is annually commemorated in our country as 20 January - National Mourning Day.

On 20 January – National Mourning Day, which is both a moment of profound sadness and pride in our contemporary history, we honor with the deepest gratitude all our Martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country.

Discrimination policy of the former Soviet authorities against our country and people at a time when fabricated provocations such as the “Sumgayit events” were orchestrated and implemented in order to justify the continuation of unfounded territorial claims of Armenia against Azerbaijan in 1980s, as well as the mass deportation of the Azerbaijanis from the territories of present-day Armenia, led to the rise of the national liberation movement of the Azerbaijani people.

In an attempt to put down the national movement which advocated for the independence and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, on the night of 19-20 January 1990, units and special forces of the Soviet Army, as well as contingents of internal troops brutally massacred civilians in Baku, Sumgayit, Lankaran and Neftchala. As a result of the 20 January military aggression which was one of the most heinous crimes against humanity of the last century committed against innocent people, including children, women and the elderly in violation of all norms of international law, 150 civilians were killed, 744 were seriously wounded, 4 went missing.

Notwithstanding the complexity of the particular period and the precautions taken by the former Soviet authorities to prevent the spread of the 20 January realities, immediately after the tragedy, bringing the brutal massacre to the attention of the international community is associated with the name of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev. Following the restoration of our independence and the return of the National Leader to power in our country, a number of crimes committed against our people, including the 20 January tragedy, were given a political and legal assessment, and in March 1994 a decision “On the tragic events committed in Baku on 20 January 1990” was adopted by the Milli Majlis (Parliament).

Notwithstanding the fact that the 20 January tragedy was orchestrated and implemented in order to crush the resistance of the Azerbaijani people, this brutal massacre marked a turning point in the history of the independence, solidarity and national liberation movement of our people, as well as the beginning of the inevitable collapse of the USSR, which had long been delayed.

Unity and determination of our people, which overcame the most challenging days and the most complex struggles of history, became the basis of the brilliant victory of the Glorious Azerbaijan Army led by the Victorious Commander-in-chief during the 44-day Patriotic War, which resulted in ensuring our territorial integrity, as well as an end to the occupation and conflict as a result of counter-terror measures, which led to the complete restoration of our sovereignty on 19-20 September, 2023.

On the 35th anniversary of the 20 January tragedy, which profoundly shaped the history of our independence, we solemnly commemorate our Martyrs who sacrificed their lives for our country and territorial integrity, and wish good health to our citizens who experienced health losses along that way!

Long Live Azerbaijan!