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## OFFICIAL CHRONICLE



**DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY  
OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN  
H.E. Mr. ILHAM ALIYEV  
(JUNE – DECEMBER 2018)**

## FOREIGN VISITS

## WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

12 June 2018

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
attended inauguration ceremony of TANAP project**

12 June 2018, Eskisehir

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*

My dear brother, President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan,  
Distinguished Presidents,  
Ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I want to say how delighted I am to be on brotherly Turkish soil again. We in Azerbaijan are very pleased with the success achieved under the leadership of President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Thanks to the tireless activity of President Erdogan, Turkey has become a great force on a global scale. Turkey is a country that determines the world's agenda. We in Azerbaijan are very happy about this. Turkey's strength is also ours, and our strength is in unity. We have been demonstrating this unity for many years. It is very difficult to find other countries in the world today that would be so close to each other, that would support each other so much. Turkish-Azerbaijani unity and brotherhood are an important factor for our countries, for our

peoples, for the region, and for Eurasia.

The commissioning of TANAP today is yet another manifestation of the Turkish-Azerbaijani brotherhood. TANAP is another victory for Turkey and Azerbaijan. TANAP is a historic project. Today we are writing the energy history of the 21<sup>st</sup> century together. This is a history of cooperation, a history of stability. Our energy projects bring stability to the region. All countries and companies participating in these projects are benefiting from them. People benefit from them. The implementation of such a giant project as TANAP has been possible thanks to the firm political will of the leaders of Turkey and Azerbaijan.

This is not our first joint project. Prior to this, in 2006, we celebrated the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. In 2007, we they opened the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline together. Last year, we opened the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway together. We participated in all these opening ceremonies together with my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan. And today, on this historic day, we are also together. This shows that any project put forward on our initiative is executed because it is underpinned by our thoughtful policy, firm will and brotherhood.

Numerous discussions have been held in recent years on the supply of large volumes of Azerbaijani gas to the European continent. Many events have been organized. Unfortunately, they were all ineffectual. This is why Turkey and Azerbaijan reached the decision to put forward a new project, which they together called TANAP. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and I signed the TANAP agreement in Istanbul in 2012. During the signing ceremony on that day, we expressed our desire to see today, and Allah has granted us this opportunity. We have done a great job over the years. The implementation of the TANAP project has been very difficult both technically and financially. But we have coped with it very successfully. The commissioning of TANAP today will usher ample opportunities for neighboring and friendly countries. TANAP links seven countries and many companies. TANAP, which is an integral part of the Southern Gas Corridor, is an indispensable infrastructure project addressing energy security issues today and in the future. The official opening ceremony of the Southern Gas Corridor was organized in Baku two weeks ago, on May 29. The Southern Gas Corridor consists of four major projects. The development of the Shah Deniz-2 gas field – the reserves of this field are estimated at 1.2 trillion cubic meters – the South Caucasus Pipeline, TANAP and TAP projects. Three of these four projects have already been implemented and completed. TAP is 72 per cent through. I am confident that the TAP project will also be completed in the next two years. Thus, the largest infrastructure project in Europe, the Southern Gas Corridor, which requires investments of \$40 billion, will be implemented. This historic achievement will allow us the opportunity to supply Azerbaijan's ample gas resources to the markets of Turkey and Europe in a short, safe and diversified manner.

The Southern Gas Corridor is a project of energy security. Energy security is a matter of national security for any country. This is the meaning of the Southern Gas Corridor – energy security and diversification of energy resources. Azerbaijani gas will be supplied to the markets of Turkey and Europe by means of the Southern Gas Corridor and via new routes.

The Southern Gas Corridor is a project of new routes and a new source. It serves the interests of energy diversification in the true sense of the word.

SOCAR, BOTAŞ and BP participated in the implementation of this great work. They are the shareholders of TANAP. I want to express my gratitude to them. I am grateful to all the companies involved in this work for their ability to complete such an uphill task with high quality and in a short time. The Southern Gas Corridor forms a new format of cooperation and interaction in Eurasia. Whereas at the beginning of our work, in the early 2000s, a format of tripartite cooperation of Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey was created, today, as I have already mentioned, seven countries are involved in this project. Three more countries will take part in this project as our future partners. We must try to do even more to supply Azerbaijani gas to the European continent, so that our sphere of coverage becomes even wider.

I want to say again: it is a historic day today. It has become possible only because of our firm political will. Without the Turkey-Azerbaijan unity and brotherhood, this project would have remained on paper. Of course, I want to say again: the fact that Turkey has proved to be a great country for foreign investment has translated in major investment in Turkey. In recent years, investments exceeding \$13 billion have been made in the Turkish economy from the Azerbaijani side alone. This figure will reach \$20 billion in the coming years.

I want to sincerely congratulate you, all our people and friends on this remarkable occasion, and wish TANAP a good journey.

Thank you.

## WORKING VISIT TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

11 – 12 July 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Mohammad Ashraf Ghani
- Meeting with President of the European Council Donald Tusk
- Meeting with Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations Rosemary DiCarlo

List of documents signed during the working visit:

- Partnership Priorities between the EU and Azerbaijan

### **President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended North Atlantic Council meeting on NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan**

12 July 2018, Brussels

#### *Address by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Mr Secretary General, ladies and gentlemen.

The relations of strong partnership between Azerbaijan and NATO play an important role in the issues of regional security and stability. Since 2002, Azerbaijani peacekeepers have been serving in Afghanistan shoulder to shoulder with NATO soldiers. In January 2018, Azerbaijan increased the number of its servicemen in the Resolute Support mission

by 30 per cent, bringing them to 120 people. Azerbaijan has repeatedly provided financial support to the Afghan National Army Trust Fund. We in Azerbaijan have organized exercises for the personnel of the Afghan army. “ASAN xidmət” is used in Afghanistan and includes more than 200 public services.

Azerbaijan also provides transport and logistical support for the “Strong Support” mission. The commissioning of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway in October last year facilitated provision of significant transit support for this mission. Last year, Azerbaijan co-chaired the “Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process”, while last month we hosted a meeting of the International Contact Group.

Azerbaijan, a country suffering from Armenian aggression which has resulted in the occupation of 20 per cent of its internationally recognized territory and a country with a

million citizens subjected to horrific ethnic cleansing, is well aware of the economic and humanitarian consequences of occupation and destruction. Azerbaijan appreciates the continued support of NATO and member-states of this organization for the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country, and a settlement of the conflict with Armenia on the basis of these principles.

Azerbaijan will continue to provide assistance in eliminating security threats facing Afghanistan, achieving peace and development of the country.

**OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE FRENCH REPUBLIC**

19 – 20 July 2018

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with Executive Chairman of the French Institute of International Relations Thierry de Montbrial
- Meeting with President of the French Senate Gerard Larcher
- Meeting with Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Total Patrick Pouyanne
- Meeting with Airbus Vice-President for Eurasia Silvere Delaunay
- Meeting with Chief Executive Officer of SUEZ Jean-Louis Chaussade
- Meeting with Managing Director of Wilmotte & Associes Architectes Borina Andrieu
- Meeting with President of Iveco France, Head of Iveco Global Bus Sylvain Blaise
- Meeting with President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Framework agreement on space cooperation between Azercosmos OJSC and the National Centre for Space Research of the French Republic
- Memorandum of Understanding on Industrial Cooperation in the Field of Civil Aviation between Azərbaycan Hava Yolları (Azerbaijani Airlines) CJSC and Thales
- Agreement between Azərbaycan Hava Yolları, Modern Construction Group and Thales company for the installation of a radar system at Heydar Aliyev International Airport
- Agreement between Azərbaycan Hava Yolları CJSC and Thales company on conducting a full analysis of cybersecurity of Azərbaycan Hava Yolları
- Agreement between Azərbaycan Hava Yolları CJSC and Thales company on carrying out a full analysis of cybersecurity within the framework of air transport management Azeraeronaviqasiya
- Letter of intent between Azərbaycan Hava Yolları CJSC and Thales company on the creation of an integrated briefing system for flight crews

On July 20, 2018 President Ilham Aliyev arrived at the Elysee Palace. A guard of honor was lined up for the Azerbaijani President in front of the palace. French President Emmanuel Macron greeted President Ilham Aliyev.

During the discussion the heads of state hailed the successful development of Azerbaijan-France relations in a number of areas, including politics, economy, energy, environment, transport, security and culture. The activities of the French Lyceum and Azerbaijani-French University in Azerbaijan were praised.

The presidents discussed Azerbaijan-European Union relations.





French companies' interest in expanding their activities in Azerbaijan was underlined during the meeting. President Ilham Aliyev said fruitful meetings have been held with representatives of 11 French companies during this visit, adding that these meetings open up wide opportunities for economic cooperation between the two countries. The President said the Azerbaijani and French companies have signed contracts worth more than two billion

dollars. The realization of these contracts will increase their volume. Energy issues were also discussed, and the successful implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor project was stressed. The heads of state also exchanged views over cooperation in the oil and gas sector, infrastructure, transport, space industry, air transport, metro building and military-technical areas.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was also discussed, and President Ilham Aliyev highlighted Azerbaijan's position on the settlement of the dispute. The head of state expressed his hope that the President of France, which is a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, will personally be actively involved in the conflict settlement.

**WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

12 August 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev
- President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani

List of documents signed during the working visit:

- Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea
- Protocol on Cooperation in the field of combating organized crime in the Caspian Sea
- Agreement between the governments of the Caspian states on trade and economic cooperation
- Agreement between the governments of the Caspian states on cooperation in the field of transport
- Agreement on prevention of incidents in the Caspian Sea and the Protocol on Cooperation and interaction of border agencies

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of Heads of State of Caspian littoral states**

12 August 2018, Aktau

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*

Dear Nursultan Abishevich,  
Dear heads of state,  
Dear participants of the Summit!

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev for the hospitality and for the high level of organization of the Fifth Caspian Summit.

Azerbaijan's friendly and good-neighborly relations with Caspian littoral countries are developing successfully. The bilateral and multilateral cooperation among our countries is an important factor of stability and security in the Caspian Sea.

Azerbaijan has taken an active part in creating a legal framework for cooperation among Caspian littoral countries. The Third Summit of the Heads of State of Caspian Littoral Countries held in Baku in 2010 made an important contribution to the strengthening of close cooperation among our countries. The "Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Security

in the Caspian Sea” was signed during that Summit. It is of great importance from the point of view of security and maintaining stability in the region. For the first time at such a high level, it envisaged conceptual agreement on sovereignty and fishing zones. Participants in that Summit also agreed on the basic principles of cooperation among littoral states in the Caspian Sea. These principles include respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states, the transformation of the Caspian into a place of peace, good-neighborliness and friendship. It should be noted that these principles are also reflected in the “Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea” to be signed today. As a fundamental regulatory document, the Convention defines the overall legal regime of the Caspian Sea.

The determination of the legal status of the Caspian Sea will help the parties to complete the division of its seabed and surface in accordance with the principles and norms of international law. In this context, I would like to emphasize the great importance of the agreements signed among Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia.

Along with this, Azerbaijan has actively participated in coordinating the “Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea” and its protocols, as well as the “Agreement on the Conservation and Rational Use of Aquatic Bioresources of the Caspian Sea”. We highly appreciate the signing in Moscow on 20 July of this year of the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, which represents an important result of the five-way cooperation in this direction. The improvement of the environmental state of the Caspian Sea, the preservation and increase of its biological resources are a priority issue for our country. In recent years, important measures have been taken in Azerbaijan to improve the ecological state of the Caspian. In order to protect the Caspian Sea from pollution, large-scale projects are being implemented to upgrade the existing water treatment plants and build new ones.

The oil and gas projects Azerbaijan has implemented in the years of its independence meet the highest international environmental standards. The State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) has established and certified a management system for oil and gas operations which meets the requirements of the International Standardization Organization (ISO). The projects being implemented in this direction have twice received the highest awards of the World Bank’s Expert Council. In 2015, a state-of-the-art Waste Management Center fitted the most sophisticated equipment was set up for all the companies operating oil and gas operations in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan ranks first among 10 main countries exporting oil to the European Union in terms of the low levels of associated gas emissions during oil production.

Azerbaijan is paying great attention to the development of infrastructure. According to the estimates of the Davos World Economic Forum, Azerbaijan is in 26<sup>th</sup> place in the world for the level of its infrastructure development and in 35<sup>th</sup> on the competitiveness index.

The multibillion investments in the transport sector have turned Azerbaijan into one of the important transport and logistical centers of Eurasia. Azerbaijan plays an important transit

role for Caspian littoral countries, and this role is growing by the year. In October 2017, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was opened in a ceremony in Baku. This project links the railways of Asia and Europe. Last year, a total of 191 containers were transported along this route and about 1,400 containers in the first six months of this year alone. By the end of the year, there are plans to transport a total of about 4,000 containers. We expect a multiple increase in freight traffic along this route in the coming years.

Azerbaijan also plays an important role in creating and developing the North-South international transport corridor. We attach great importance to this project. All work related to its implementation on the territory of Azerbaijan has been completed.

Last year, 1,700 tons were transported through the territory of Azerbaijan along the North-South route, and 175,000 tons of cargo in seven months of this year alone. This is an increase in the volume of cargo transportation of more than 100 times compared to last year.

Azerbaijan has a fleet of more than 260 vessels in the Caspian Sea. Some of these vessels play a key role in ensuring the smooth transit of goods.

In 2013, a shipbuilding plant meeting the most modern technological standards was commissioned in Azerbaijan. This plant can produce all types of vessels, including cargo ships, tankers, warships, ships used in oil and gas operations. So far, dozens of vessels have been built and put into operation, and about 100 more have been repaired. The vessel “Khankendi”, commissioned in 2017 and worth about 400 million US dollars, is one of the world’s 10 such vessels built in accordance with the highest international standards. I believe that Caspian littoral countries can take advantage of the capabilities of this plant.

The construction of the international trade seaport of Alat was completed in Azerbaijan in May of this year. The cargo handling capacity of this port is 15 million tons. In the case of an increase in the volume of transit cargo, the port’s capacity can be raised to 25 million tons in a short time. The construction of the port of Alat is yet another contribution of Azerbaijan to the development of transport and logistical infrastructure in the Caspian.

Azerbaijan plays an active role in strengthening cooperation between the border and customs services of Caspian littoral countries. We work actively and efficiently to fight smuggling, drug trafficking and other illegal activities.

The Border Service of our country closely cooperates with relevant structures of Caspian littoral countries in bilateral and multilateral formats. Joint measures are being taken to prevent and suppress illegal activities at sea.

Azerbaijan is making a significant contribution to the strengthening of regional stability and security. The major threat to regional security is posed by the occupation policy pursued by Armenia against Azerbaijan. As a result of Armenia’s aggression, about 20 per cent of Azerbaijan’s internationally recognized territory has been occupied, more than a million of

our compatriots have become refugees and internally displaced persons. Armenia has carried out ethnic cleansing against our people. Many leading international organizations have adopted decisions and resolutions in connection with the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. These documents require a settlement of the conflict on the basis of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. More than 20 years ago, the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions in connection with the conflict, requiring an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied lands. These resolutions have not lost their force. However, Armenia does not fulfill them and flagrantly violates the norms and principles of international law. Armenia is trying to pursue a policy of illegal settlement on the occupied territories. Armenia has destroyed numerous historical, architectural and religious monuments of the Azerbaijani people on the occupied territories. Nagorno-Karabakh and seven other occupied districts around it are ancestral Azerbaijani lands, and the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be resolved within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan which is recognized by all countries of the world.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that the decisions adopted by this Summit will contribute to the further development of cooperation among Caspian littoral countries and the strengthening of security and stability in the Caspian region.

## Heads of State of Caspian littoral states made press statements at Aktau Summit

12 August 2018, Aktau

### *Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev during the Press Conference*



Dear Nursultan Abishevich,  
Dear heads of state.

First of all, I would like to once again express my gratitude to Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev for the hospitality, for the warm welcome and for the remarkable organization of the Summit.

The signing of the Convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea is a historic document.

At all stages of preparation of this document, Azerbaijan worked constructively and made its contribution alongside other Caspian littoral countries to prepare it for signing. I would like to express my gratitude to colleagues for their hard work, so that we can sign this important document defining the general legal regime of the Caspian Sea.

Even before the signing of the Convention, the Caspian Sea was a sea of security, a sea of stability, and our relations, both bilateral and multilateral, were the guarantor of stability and security in the Caspian. There is a high level of cooperation, trust and interaction among Caspian littoral countries, and this is the main guarantor of security and stability.

Today, security and stability in the Caspian Sea are determined by the Convention we have just signed. Of course, this opens up broad prospects for close cooperation among Caspian littoral countries, solution of issues of economic and transport nature, issues that will contribute to improving the living standards of our peoples.

Azerbaijan is making an active and great contribution to improving the environmental situation in the Caspian. The measures our government is taking are aimed at preventing pollution of the Caspian Sea, especially when carrying out oil and gas operations. During the Summit, I already spoke about this and I want to say again that all the oil and gas operations Azerbaijan has carried out in the period of independence comply with ISO international standards.

Next year, we will celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of oil production in the Caspian Sea, which represents first offshore oil production. Of course, over the years of exploitation of the Caspian's oil and gas resources, the Caspian ecology has been affected to a certain extent. But our country is doing its best today to make the Caspian a zone of environmental

development and stability.

Azerbaijan invests heavily in the transport infrastructure, and the projects we have implemented allow us the opportunity today to view the Caspian as an important transport artery. The East-West corridor within which Azerbaijan provides transit services to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and the North-South corridor through which Azerbaijan transits cargoes between Iran and Russia are projects that strengthen economic cooperation, create new jobs, bring our countries even closer together and contribute to the strengthening of stability and security.

As part of the meeting today, I noted that cargo traffic between Iran and Russia along the North-South corridor has grown more than 100 times this year. All work in this direction on the territory of Azerbaijan has been completed, and we expect an increase in freight traffic. Azerbaijan has also carried out a project linking the railways of Europe and Asia, and we expect a huge increase in freight traffic along this corridor as well. All these are additional opportunities for our countries. This means economic prosperity and the transformation of our countries into an important transit junction of a global scale.

Of course, today's signing ceremony opens up new prospects for us. We aim to continue cooperation. Azerbaijan has very close and trusting relations with all Caspian littoral countries, and these relations are based on respect for mutual interests, equality, respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries. I would like to express my great satisfaction on behalf of all Azerbaijani people with the fact that we have finally signed this important document, which will play a huge role in the successful development of all our countries in the future.

Thank you.

**OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

1 September 2018

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin

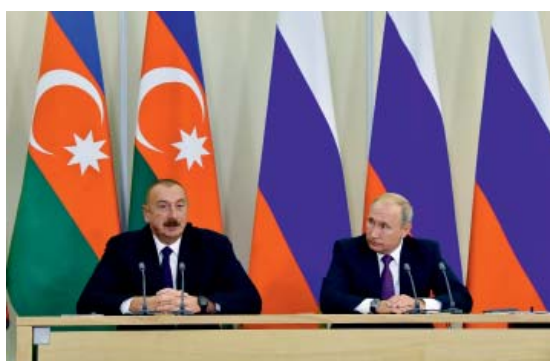
List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Statement of the Presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan
- The Program of cooperation between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the period until 2024
- Action plan for the development of key areas of Russian-Azerbaijani cooperation (5 “road maps”)
- Agreement between the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the development of economic cooperation
- Agreement between the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation and the State Committee of Property Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in the field of registration of rights to real estate and cadastral activities
- Agreement between the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on strengthening cooperation in the field of industry
- Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the customs control of goods transported by power lines and pipeline transport
- Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in the field of tourism
- Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in the field of sports
- Memorandum between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in the field of digital transport systems
- Protocol on cooperation in the field of combating customs offenses related to the movement of goods by air
- Agreement on strategic cooperation between SOCAR, JSC REC and Bank GPB (JSC) within the framework of joint implementation of projects in the field of export support from the Russian Federation by GPB (JSC)
- Agreement on cooperation in the development of national assembly production of commercial vehicles GAZ in Azerbaijan between LLC Automobile Plant GAZ and JSC Azermash
- Agreement on joint study of the oil and gas potential of the Goshadash block and the northern part of the Absheron peninsula in the Azerbaijan section of the Caspian Sea bottom
- Contract between PJSC NK Rosneft and SOCAR Trading S.A.



- Action plan (“road map”) for the implementation of activities under the Memorandum of Understanding between the joint stock company Federal Corporation for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and a public legal entity Agency for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises of the Republic of Azerbaijan

***Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
during the Press Conference***



Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich,  
Ladies and gentlemen!

Vladimir Vladimirovich, first of all I would like to thank you for the invitation to visit Russia, for hospitality and for the warm welcome.

As you have mentioned, our meetings are of a regular nature. We met three times in the last three months. This is the third meeting: in Moscow on the eve of the World Cup in June, in Kazakhstan in August and in Sochi today. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate Russia again on successfully hosting this international event and the Russian team on brilliant performance at the World Cup.

The regular contacts between the heads of state of our countries impart dynamism to our relations, the relations resting on a very sound basis. The relations between Russia and Azerbaijan are those of strategic partners. They cover all spheres of our life, and during my visit today we have discussed many aspects of our bilateral relations and international issues in great detail. Vladimir Vladimirovich said this very thoroughly today.

I would like to note that among the issues we have discussed, an important place is held by the issues of regional security, first of all the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It has been ongoing for a very long time and has led to great suffering for the Azerbaijani people. The internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan have been under Armenian occupation for many years. More than a million Azerbaijanis have become refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of this conflict. The soonest settlement of the conflict will allow our citizens the opportunity to return to their historical lands, and bring peace, stability and cooperation to our region.

Russia as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group dealing with the settlement of the conflict plays an important role in the settlement. Russia is our neighbor, our historical partner and friend, and we expect that Russia’s efforts towards resolving the conflict will be continued.

We have discussed the economic issues in great detail and are pleased to note the growth of

trade and great prospects for the future. What has been discussed and agreed today, namely the roadmaps for various areas of economic cooperation, will enable us to further increase the already dynamic turnover between our countries. This year too, despite the rapid growth last year, the turnover has also grown. Russia for Azerbaijan is the number one partner on imports and is in the first place for Azerbaijani non-oil exports. In other words, this in itself shows the scale and importance of cooperation between our countries.

Very many investment projects, as Vladimir Vladimirovich has said, are being implemented and have great prospects for the future. In general, we expect an increase in the trade and economic turnover, strengthening of integration ties and creation of even better prerequisites for cooperation between our companies.

Of course, transportation projects play an important role in this. Russia and Azerbaijan are neighbors. We are linked through railways, roads, the air communication is very active – both passenger and cargo. We thoroughly discussed further steps to create new transport opportunities for our countries, as well as for our neighbors. Vladimir Vladimirovich has noted the importance of the North-South project. Azerbaijan, for its part, has already carried out all the important infrastructure projects in this direction in its territory. In comparison with last year, 100 times more cargo was transported through the North-South transport corridor this year. And this is only a beginning because this large-scale global project will encompass countries and continents. Thus, the transit opportunities of our countries will increase and thousands of jobs will be created.

Important documents in the field of cooperation in the oil and gas sector have been signed today. This is a traditional sphere of our cooperation. There is very good potential and prospects. Vladimir Vladimirovich has pointed to the active participation of Russian banks in the implementation of many important transport, infrastructure and industrial projects in Azerbaijan.

We welcome that.

We have also discussed further cooperation in the military and technical field. It already has great traditions. The contracts implemented between Russia and Azerbaijan, namely the military products Azerbaijan has purchased from Russia, exceed \$5 billion and tend to grow because Azerbaijan continues to modernize its armed forces, and Russia is the world's most important producer and supplier of military products to international markets.

Cooperation in the humanitarian sphere holds a special place in our discussions. Azerbaijan treats Russian culture, the Russian language and everything that has united our peoples for centuries with special care. There are more than 340 schools in Azerbaijan with teaching provided in the Russian language. There are two branches of leading Russian universities in Azerbaijan. We have discussed further steps to strengthen our cooperation in the humanitarian sphere, in the sphere of education, in the sphere of culture, and the documents that have been signed, including those in the sphere of sports, will bring our countries and peoples closer

together.

In other words, the relations between our countries are those of a full-fledged partnership, friendship and good-neighborliness. Such as they should be between good friends and neighbors.

Vladimir Vladimirovich, I want to express my gratitude once again for the invitation and for the exchange of views, and invite you to visit Azerbaijan at any time convenient for you.

Thank you.

**WORKING VISIT TO THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

3 September 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbai Jeenbekov

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States**

3 September 2018, Cholpon-Ata

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*

Dear Sooronbai Sharipovich,  
Distinguished heads of state and government,  
Dear friends!

First of all, Sooronbai Sharipovich, let me express my deep gratitude to you for the hospitality and for the high-level organization of the summit. I am very pleased to be visiting the brotherly Kyrgyz land. At the same time, I would like to express my gratitude to the Kazakh side, which successfully presides over the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States. Azerbaijan maintains close ties with all Turkic-speaking countries. These ties are becoming stronger and expanding day by day. Our relations cover political, economic, commercial, transport and humanitarian spheres, and we are observing excellent results in all directions. Our countries also support each other in international organizations, and this support is very important. I believe that additional steps will be taken in connection with our activities within the framework of international organizations in the coming years.

Issues of regional security are of particular importance because new risks, threats, hotbeds of conflict and wars are emerging in the present-day world. Azerbaijan has been suffering from Armenian occupation many years. For more than 20 years, Nagorno-Karabakh, which is recognized by the international community as an integral part of Azerbaijan, as well as seven adjacent districts, have been under Armenian occupation. As a result of this occupation, about 20 per cent of our land is occupied by Armenia. More than a million Azerbaijanis have found themselves in the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons on their native land. A policy of ethnic cleansing has been carried out against our people. War crimes and the Khojaly genocide have been perpetrated. More than 10 countries of the world officially recognize the Khojaly carnage as an act of genocide. On just one night, more than 600 innocent people, including more than 100 women and over 60 children, were brutally killed

by the Armenians. More than a thousand people went missing. Nothing is known about their fate. Armenia has destroyed all our historical and religious monuments on the occupied lands. The mosques, graves of our ancestors and material resources have been plundered by Armenia. This is a war crime, and the perpetrators of this crime must be and are being held accountable. It is no coincidence that the criminal regime which ruled Armenia for more than 20 years has collapsed, and the Armenian people today are saying what we have been saying all along. We do hope that the new leaders of Armenia take a constructive position in connection with the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, our lands are soon liberated from occupation, the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan is restored, and peace and cooperation are established in the region.

I must also note that all international organizations recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The UN Security Council, the world's highest body, has adopted four resolutions in connection with the conflict. These resolutions contain explicit provisions regarding immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the territories of Azerbaijan. Of course, the conflict must be resolved on the basis of these principles. Other international organizations, including the OSCE, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, have adopted similar decisions and resolutions. This is the legal framework for resolving the conflict.

The topic of today's summit is sports. I would like to share my thoughts on this. Azerbaijan attaches great importance to sports. The development of sports is a state policy in Azerbaijan. Our country has hosted several prestigious international competitions. Among them I want to highlight the First European Games. Unlike other continental games, European games had never been held before. The Games were held in Baku for the first time three years ago. These Games were joined by more than 5,000 athletes representing all European countries. Azerbaijan showed great results in the Games and finished in second place among teams. Two years later, in 2017, the Fourth Games of Islamic Solidarity were organized in Baku. Azerbaijani athletes finished the Games in first place. The fact that both European and Islamic games were held in one city in a matter of two years was further evidence of Azerbaijan's contribution to interethnic and interreligious multiculturalism. Azerbaijani athletes are showing good results in Olympic Games as well. In the latest Summer Olympic Games, Azerbaijan finished in 14<sup>th</sup> place in terms of the number of medals, and this is a historic achievement for our country.

Sport unites peoples and nations. I am sure that the development of sport will contribute to the overall development of our countries and also further strengthen our cooperation.

As for humanitarian issues, I would like, in particular, to appreciate the activities of TURKSOY and the Fund for Turkic Culture and Heritage. Azerbaijan takes an active part in both organizations.

I would like to draw your attention to economic cooperation. We should deepen economic

cooperation, especially in the current conditions. In particular, it is necessary to take additional steps to increase the turnover between our countries, and I think that investment projects play a special role in that. New mechanisms must be developed to encourage mutual investment.

Azerbaijan invests heavily in fraternal countries, first of all, in Turkey. In recent years, a total of 14 billion dollars have been invested in Turkey's economy and Turkey has invested about as much in Azerbaijan. The volume of our investments in Turkey will reach 20 billion dollars in the coming years. This reflects our friendship and brotherhood, and also demonstrates the large economic potential of Turkey. Under the leadership of my dear brother, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey has become a great force on a global scale, one of the leading countries of G20. We are very pleased that Turkey is overcoming all the ordeals, including economic ones, with dignity. We always stand by each other and the best indicator of that, I repeat, is our mutual investment. There is a very favorable investment climate in Turkey, there are excellent business conditions, and we will continue to invest in this fraternal country.

In general, by investing in fraternal countries, we are also securing our economic interests and creating new opportunities in these countries. Azerbaijan has also done its best to accept investments from fraternal countries. Azerbaijan also has a wonderful investment climate, and mutual investment will further strengthen our unity, especially if we consider that such an immense infrastructure project as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway has been in operation since October last year. This line connects Asia with Europe, so the volume of freight traffic is growing and should continue to grow. This is a new transport corridor, a new transport artery. By implementing this project together with fraternal and neighboring countries, Azerbaijan is redrawing the transport map of Eurasia. Considering the fact that this is a very favorable route from the transport point of view, I am urging all friendly countries to take advantage of this railway, including European countries, Hungary, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Kazakhstan, Turkey and Azerbaijan are already using this railway.

In short, dear friends, I believe that today's Summit is very important and will lead to excellent results. The main result is that our friendship and brotherhood will be strengthened even more.

Thank you.

## OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

6 September 2018

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with President of the Republic of Croatia Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic
- Meeting with Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia Andrej Plenkovic
- Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia Gordan Jandrokovic

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Program on Cultural Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia for 2018, 2019 and 2020
- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Croatia

### *Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev during the Press Conference*



Thank you very much, dear Madam President!  
Dear friends!

First of all, Madam President, I want to express my deep gratitude to you for the invitation to visit Croatia and for the hospitality extended to me and the delegation. As you noted, I feel very much at home in Croatia. I am very pleased to visit your beautiful country again.

Our political dialogue has been very active. As noted by Madam President, we meet quite often. Two years ago, Madam President was on an official visit to Azerbaijan. The visit was very successful and produced very good results. Last year we met on the sidelines of an international conference. And today I am visiting Croatia. This shows that the political dialogue is very active. This shows that Croatia and Azerbaijan are indeed strategic partners. As noted by Madam President, a declaration on that was signed in Zagreb five years ago.

Our relations of strategic partnerships are expanding and intensifying. Many issues were discussed today. Madam President has spoken about that. For my part, let me note that we intend to carry out trade operations with Croatia in an even larger volume. We can't be content with the volume or structure of our trade. I think that the intergovernmental commission will do very serious work in connection with this issue. In the near future, not only can we increase trade but also implement joint investment projects.

Of course, our cooperation in the energy sector is very significant. Azerbaijan is very

actively involved in the implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor. We initiated this giant project. This project unites seven countries, envisages the construction of a 3,500-kilometer gas pipeline from Baku to Europe and the development of the giant Shah Deniz field in Azerbaijan. This project consists of four segments and is being successfully implemented. The official opening of the Southern Gas Corridor took place in May this year. In June, we celebrated the opening of the TANAP project. Thus, I am sure that Azerbaijani gas will be delivered to Europe for the first time in the next two years. In this way, we will make yet another contribution to the energy security of Europe and Azerbaijan can unlock its gas potential to the world and Europe in an even greater volume.

Of course, cooperation with Croatia in this area is very important. The meetings of the Advisory Council of the Southern Gas Corridor have been consistently held in Baku for four years. Croatia is represented at a high level at these meetings. We have also signed a memorandum in connection with this issue. Very important negotiations are under way in connection with the construction of the Ionian-Adriatic gas pipeline.

Azerbaijan has very large gas reserves. Confirmed gas reserves constitute 2.6 trillion cubic meters. This indicates that we will take additional steps to increase gas production and also plan on expanding the geography of our exports.

The European Union-Azerbaijan relations are developing successfully. The “Partnership Priorities” document was signed between the European Union and Azerbaijan in Brussels in July this year. This is a very important step for the signing of a new Agreement. At present, the European Union and Azerbaijan are working on a new Agreement. Things are going well. Croatia has always supported our cooperation with the European Union and made its valuable contributions. Our relations with the European Union cover many areas – political reforms, economic cooperation, energy cooperation, cooperation in the field of transport. Azerbaijan also contributes to this sphere.

In October last year, the official opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was held in Baku. This road not only connects Azerbaijan with Turkey. It is a new road linking Asia with Europe, a new transport artery and the shortest path. This road is already in operation. The volume of cargo being dispatched increases on a daily basis. Azerbaijan has also made a valuable contribution to the transport map of Eurasia. I hope that our Croatian partners can take advantage of this railway as well because it is a wonderful project in the field of transport and economy.

Azerbaijan’s cooperation with NATO is at a high level. I have had numerous official visits to NATO. Quite recently, Azerbaijan decided to increase the number of its military contingent in the “Resolute Support” mission in Afghanistan. Already 120 Azerbaijani military personnel serve in Afghanistan. At the same time, Azerbaijan provided its airspace and transport infrastructure to support the “Resolute Support” mission. This is a very important issue for the successful continuation of the mission.



In a word, both our relations with the Euro-Atlantic structures and the work carried out on a bilateral level demonstrate that Croatia and Azerbaijan are strategic partners in the full sense of the word. As Madam President noted today, an exchange of views took place on further cooperation in many areas. I am sure there will be good results in the fields of pharmaceuticals, agriculture, processing of agricultural products and shipbuilding. Relevant instructions have been given. I am sure that the joint intergovernmental commission will carry out all these instructions in a timely and high-level manner.

Dear Madam President, let me once again thank you for the invitation and for the hospitality. I wish the people of Croatia continued progress and happiness.

Thank you.

## WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

28 September 2018

### President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the CIS Heads of State Council's Session

28 September 2018, Dushanbe



On September 28, an expanded session of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States held in Dushanbe.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the session.

During the meeting, President Emomali Rahmon informed the Council about the activities of the Council during Tajikistan's presidency. He expressed confidence that the decisions adopted at the meeting will contribute to the future activities of the Council. Emomali Rahmon announced the decision of the Council meeting on the transition of the CIS presidency to Turkmenistan in 2019.

Deputy Chairman of the Turkmen Cabinet of Ministers Purli Agamuradov thanked the heads of state for their support to the decision taken by the CIS council on the transition of the presidency to Turkmenistan. He underlined that during the presidency, Turkmenistan would spare no efforts to expand cooperation in the CIS.

CIS Executive Committee Chairman-Executive Secretary Sergei Lebedev briefed the audience on the issues discussed at the Council's meeting in a limited format and noted that the next meeting of the Council would be held in October 2019 in the Turkmen capital, Ashgabat.

Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of Russia, Chairman of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Valentina Matviyeko familiarized the participants with the provisions of the Convention on cooperation in the field of exploration and use of the outer space for peace.

The Russian President's Special Representative for International Cultural Cooperation Mikhail Shvydkoy informed the audience about the document on the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Both documents were unanimously adopted.

Some procedural issues were considered at the meeting.

Then the heads of state and government signed a number of documents discussed at the meeting.

## WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

19 October 2018

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
attended an inauguration ceremony of the STAR Oil Refinery**

19 October 2018, Izmir

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear President of the Republic of Turkey, my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan.  
Dear friends!

It is a wonderful and remarkable day in the history of Turkish-Azerbaijani fraternal relations. We are gathered for the opening of Star Refinery. I remember my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan and I laying the foundation of Star in Aliaga seven years ago. And today we are celebrating the opening of this gigantic project together. This shows again that we are successfully achieving all the goals we set for ourselves. This shows again that the leaders of Turkey and Azerbaijan have a strong political will to implement such gigantic projects. The main reason for the implementation of this project is Turkish-Azerbaijani friendship and fraternity.

I am very glad to be visiting fraternal Turkish land again. I must say that this is already my third visit to Turkey this year. My dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan has visited Azerbaijan twice this year. The number of these visits is in itself an indicator that Turkish-Azerbaijani relations are at the highest level today. And this is natural, because we have lived together for centuries and have always been together. Some moments in history separated us, but that was only temporary. We were together a hundred years ago, before that and we are together today.

I should note that my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan and I attended the grand military parade held in Baku on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic last month. In that military parade, Turkish and Azerbaijani soldiers valiantly marched along the largest square of Baku, Azadlig Square, shoulder to shoulder. 15 September 1918 is a historic date. It was on that day that the city of Baku was liberated from occupation by the Caucasian Islamic Army under the command of Nuri Pasha and the newly-created Azerbaijani National Army.

The establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was a historic event, because a Republic was created for the first time in the Muslim world. But Baku, our ancient historical city, was under occupation. The newly-established government operated from the city of

Ganja. As a result of the magnificent campaign of the Caucasian Islamic Army under the command of Nuri Pasha and its military victory, Baku was freed from occupiers and returned to its master, the Azerbaijani people. A few days later, Baku was declared the capital of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. This is unforgettable history, and the grand ceremony organized in Baku with the participation of the presidents of Turkey and Azerbaijan a hundred years later demonstrated our unity once again. It showed that our unity was indestructible and eternal. We were together a hundred years ago and we are together today.

I should also note that we celebrated the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of our independence in Azerbaijan yesterday. Turkey was the first country to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan. This is a glorious history. Ever since that day, we have always been together. Our political relations have risen to the highest peak. We have done a great job in the economic field. Both Turkey and Azerbaijan are rapidly developing countries from an economic point of view. Taking this opportunity, I want to sincerely congratulate the fraternal Turkish people on all the successes achieved under the leadership of my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Thanks to the leadership of President Erdogan, Turkey has become a great force on a global scale. Turkey enjoys authority all over the world. Turkey is reckoned with in the region and in the world, its position often plays the key role. This makes us very happy, because the strength of Turkey means our own strength. The stronger Turkey, the stronger we are. Our strength is in our unity. Today, Azerbaijan and Turkey are setting an example of fraternity and solidarity on a global scale. I do not know of any other countries in the world that would be as attached to each other as Turkey and Azerbaijan. This is our great treasure. It is on the basis of these friendly and fraternal feelings that we are implementing huge projects.

Azerbaijan has invested \$6.3 billion in the establishment of Star Refinery. At the next stage, an additional \$700 million will be invested. This is our largest investment abroad, and this is natural. At the same time, we have implemented other important projects together. The creation of oil and gas pipelines Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum and TANAP, the Southern Gas Corridor, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway – each of these is a huge project of great importance not only for our countries and peoples but also for the region, for the world, for Eurasia. Turkey and Azerbaijan jointly demonstrate a strong political will, redraw the energy and transport map of Eurasia. We are doing this, and it is our signatures that are under the new maps. We have done it all together. All these projects require major financial investments. It has already been noted here that we have invested heavily in the economies of the fraternal countries. The investments in Aliaga alone amount to about \$10 billion, and this figure will further increase in the future.

In short, the opening of Star Refinery is an example of our unity, solidarity and friendship. I am sure that Turkey and Azerbaijan will continue to go only along the path of success.

Taking this opportunity, I want to wish the brotherly Turkish people continuous progress and prosperity.

Thank you.

**OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS**

19 November 2018

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Declaration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the President of the Republic of Belarus
- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus in the field of social and labor affairs
- Protocol of Intent on Cooperation between the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus in the fields of communication and information and communication technologies
- Comprehensive Plan of Action for 2019-2021 for the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement signed between the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus on October 17, 2006, in the city of Minsk
- Memorandum of Understanding on the development of mutually beneficial cooperation between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Military Industrial Committee of the Republic of Belarus in the field of supply of air defense weapons and equipment
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus in the fields of agriculture and food
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Forensic Examination Committee of the Republic of Belarus in the field of the forensic expertise
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Belarus
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Belarus in the field of migration

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President  
of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko held  
a meeting in an expanded format  
with the participation of delegations**

19 November 2018, Minsk

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear Alexander Grigoryevich,

First of all, I would like to thank you again for the invitation. It is always delightful to visit Belarus. First of all, I would like to congratulate you and all the people of Belarus on your achievements in the socioeconomic development of your country. As someone who visits Belarus on a regular basis, I see how dynamically

and effectively your country is developing. Our relationship is a good demonstration of sincerity and cooperation between our countries. We are actively interacting on all issues, and the decisions made are implemented without fail. You have mentioned the main areas of cooperation between our countries. I would like to note, in turn, that we see very active progress and good results in all these directions. Each of our meetings has given a strong impetus to our relations and led to the implementation of specific projects. We sum up what has been done, outline ways for further interaction and cooperation, and effectively implement the decisions we make.

Our cooperation in the field of international relations is also always very effective and predictable. We always support each other, and I think that our mutual support in international matters is a good demonstration of how sincere our relations are. We are pleased that trade between our countries is increasing. The commodity turnover is on an upward trend even though we significantly increased it both last year and this year. In the sphere of industrial cooperation, as you noted, there are extremely positive results, but we intend to continue cooperation and not to stop at what has been accomplished. There is still a lot we can do to further increase the potential for cooperation in the field of industry.

I think that one of the main directions of our future cooperation will be cooperation in the transport sector. You noted the North-South transport corridor in your remarks. Azerbaijan has completed all work related to the operation of this corridor on its territory. We are now working on further modernization of our transport infrastructure, which is already capable of transporting significant volumes of cargo. Azerbaijan is also an active participant in the East-West transport corridor. I think that the coordination of countries' actions on these two major transport routes will create completely a new environment for cooperation, lead to

the creation of thousands, tens of thousands of jobs, and significantly increase the traffic between our countries. It is no coincidence that issues related to the transport sector were one of the key topics on the agenda of the intergovernmental commission's meeting held yesterday.

Of course, we are closely watching Belarus preparing for the second European Games. This is natural. First of all, because we are friends. Secondly, because the first Games were held in Baku. We are confident that the sports infrastructure put in place, the excellent conditions for guests, as well as the high level of organization of international events Belarus has been demonstrating will help ensure that the Games will be held at a very high level.

As you noted, we are also paying great attention to cooperation in agriculture, education and science. In other words, it is easier to list the areas in which we do not have active cooperation than to mention the ones we have good results in. The key to our relationship is mutual support, mutual respect and a high level of mutual trust. I think that this is the basis on which we are creating, through joint effort, good opportunities for our countries and peoples. We are moving our relations forward. For Azerbaijan, Belarus is a good friend and a reliable partner. And I am sure that my visit today will give a new impetus to our relations.

Thank you once again for your hospitality, and I am confident that good results will lead to even greater interaction between our countries.

Thank you.

*Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
during the Press Conference*



Dear Alexander Grigoryevich.

Dear friends.

I am glad to be back to friendly Belarus. I am grateful to my friend Alexander Lukashenko for the invitation. I must say that this is my fifth official visit to Belarus. Alexander Grigoryevich has paid four official visits to Azerbaijan and I have invited the President of Belarus to pay an official visit to Azerbaijan again. The sheer number of reciprocal visits and their intensity are evidence of a high level of relations between our countries. Alexander Grigoryevich has said that our countries are strategic partners, and we demonstrate this in every area of our cooperation.

The high level of political relations, mutual respect, trust between our countries and personal friendship between the presidents – all this is the foundation on which the powerful building of Belarusian-Azerbaijani friendship is being constructed today.

We actively cooperate in international organizations and support each other on all issues. And this support, I would say, is automatic in nature – even without discussion, without consultation and without agreement. If any question related to Belarus or a candidate from this country being nominated for any governing body is raised in an international organization, Azerbaijan provides unconditional support. And we see the same attitude from Belarus. This is an indicator of the high level of our relations. We also support each other in the organizations either Azerbaijan or Belarus is not involved in, and this is also natural. The same naturally applies to cases when we discuss issues of international politics, international relations, regional issues and issues related to international security. All this is natural between friends.

Today, the level of our relations allows us the opportunity to openly discuss any issues. And as Alexander Grigoryevich has said, we have no closed topics and there are no restrictions in any area of our cooperation. Today we have signed many documents that will determine the nature of our relations in the future. Among them, of course, I would first of all note the Joint Statement of the Presidents. It is an important political document that covers the key areas of cooperation and expresses the political will of our countries.

I am particularly grateful, and I would like to express gratitude both on my own behalf and on behalf of all the people of Azerbaijan, for the position of Belarus on the issue related to the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Joint Statement explicitly states that this conflict must be resolved in accordance with the norms of international law, within the framework of territorial integrity and the inviolability of the borders of Azerbaijan and in accordance with relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. We are grateful to Belarus for such an objective position on an issue that is extremely important both for us and for the entire region.



As Alexander Grigoryevich has said, there are good prospects and results in the trade and economic sphere. Of course, we are delighted with the growth in trade. We analyzed the situation today, members of our governments did a very good job yesterday – the meeting of the intergovernmental commission produced very good results. We were informed that contracts worth tens of millions of dollars had been signed. So this is a good indicator for the future. We analyze what has been done, outline ways to resolve issues and resolve them. The same happened when we agreed with Alexander Grigoryevich to set up an assembly plant on the basis of the Ganja Automobile Plant to assemble “Belarus” tractors. And as Alexander Grigoryevich has said, there are already more than 10,000 tractors, and the level of localization is growing by the year. This creates new jobs in Azerbaijan. It already created a new industry. It has led to an increase in our industrial potential. It created an opportunity for Belarusian manufacturers to share their experience with us and promote their products. And now it is already entering the markets of third countries.

Today we agreed on a similar approach to the production of combine harvesters. As already mentioned, Belarusian automobiles are manufactured in Azerbaijan. So there is full-scale industrial cooperation with a very high degree of efficiency.

I visited the Trading House of Azerbaijan this morning. I was pleased. I can't not say that I was surprised, but I was pleased with the fact that a beautiful part of Azerbaijan has been created in such a wonderful place, in the center of the city. It will demonstrate our achievements to the people of Belarus. I was also told that our products have already entered the Belarusian market and are in good demand. We are lagging behind the Belarusians. In Baku, there are already seven shops selling Belarusian products of highest quality and enjoying tremendous popularity among our citizens. So we intend to promote our products to the Belarusian market and, I think this will strengthen not only our bilateral trade and economic ties, but will also further demonstrate the capabilities of our countries.

We are pleased that Belarus has taken the baton from Baku and the second European Games will be held in Minsk – at the highest level, I am sure. Excellent sports infrastructure has already been created. There are also good conditions for visitors. I think that the organization will be at the highest level because all large-scale international events held in Belarus meet the highest standards.

One of the areas of our cooperation is cooperation in the military-technical sphere. We are very pleased with this cooperation. Both the quality and efficiency of products are at the highest level. Therefore, it is no coincidence that military-technical cooperation between our countries already has a good history, fairly large volumes and a good tendency towards expansion. And it is no coincidence either that the documents signed today include a Memorandum which, in the shortest possible time, will be transformed into a contract for the purchase of another batch of military equipment from Belarus.

On all other directions we have discussed today, there is also a good momentum – in the social sphere, agriculture, migration and emergency situations. Our relations are full-fledged, very friendly and sincere. I am sure that my visit will give them a new impetus. Thank you again for your hospitality.

## OFFICIAL VISIT TO TURKMENISTAN

21 – 22 November 2018

List of meetings held during the official visit:

- Meeting with President of Turkmenistan Gurbangulu Berdimuhamedov

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Declaration of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov
- Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation with Respect to Taxes on Income and Property between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan
- Program of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Science, Education, Culture and Art for 2019-2021
- Agreement on the Establishment of the Azerbaijan–Turkmenistan Joint Commission for Transport, Transit and Logistics between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan
- Memorandum of Understanding between the National Confederation of the Entrepreneurs (Employers’) Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan
- Agreement on Transport and Transit between “Azerbaijan Railways” Closed Joint Stock Company and the Ministry of Railway Transport of Turkmenistan
- Agreement on Organizing the Exchange of Preliminary Information on Goods and Means of Transport Crossing the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan between the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan
- Memorandum of Understanding between ADA University under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan
- Memorandum of Understanding between ADA University under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the International University of Humanities and Development
- Agreement on Visa Facilitation for Actors Conducting International Transportation through the (Additional) Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan
- Agreement on Development of Maritime Merchant Shipping between “Azerbaijan Caspian Shipping” Closed Joint-Stock Company and the State Service of Maritime and River Transportation of Turkmenistan
- Agreement on Automated Exchange of Information between “Baku International Sea Trade Port” Closed Joint-Stock Company and the Turkmenbashi International Seaport
- Agreement on Increasing Transshipment between Baku International Sea Trade Port and the Turkmenbashi International Seaport between “Baku International

Sea Trade Port” CJSC and the State Service of Maritime and River Transportation of Turkmenistan

- Agreement on Development of Shipment through the Ports of the Two Countries between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan
- Agreement on Development of International Road Transport between the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Motor Transport of Turkmenistan
- Program of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Transport for 2019-2022
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan in the Field of Industry
- Program of Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan for 2019-2021
- Agreement on Long-term Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan
- Agreement on Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investments between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of Turkmenistan

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of Turkmenistan Gurbangulu Berdimuhamedov held a meeting in an expanded format with the participation of delegations**

22 November 2018, Ashgabat

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Thank you, dear Gurbanguly Malikgulyyevich.

First of all, I would like to thank you for your hospitality, for the invitation and for the warm welcome. I am glad to be visiting the land of fraternal Turkmenistan again.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to familiarize myself with the achievements of your country, and this is a demonstration of the steady and progressive development of Turkmenistan. I would like to congratulate you personally and all the fraternal people of Turkmenistan on your great successes on the path to creation.

We also attach great importance to this visit. The visit was very well prepared. There are plans to sign many documents which, I am sure, will be implemented on time and create even better conditions for our cooperation.

We attach great importance to cooperation with Turkmenistan. As you have mentioned, our common roots, history and closeness of our peoples are the foundation on which we build our common future. It is not by chance that we actively cooperate in international organizations, support each other and increase the potential for cooperation in the bilateral plane. All this leads to stability and strengthens regional security. Issues related to regional security are of particular importance today. We see that clashes, bloody events and processes that undermine the foundations of states in different parts of the world. Therefore, I think that it is particularly important that both Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan demonstrate a high level of development and stability in this difficult international situation. This shows again that the course our countries are following is accurate.

Bilateral cooperation between our countries develops in many directions. I am sure that we will continue to support each other in international organizations, as has been the case so far. Today, in a one-on-one meeting, we already discussed many important issues of our cooperation and will continue discussions within the framework of delegations. We have identified the main directions of our future cooperation and the priorities. I believe that a lot can still be done in the issue of increasing our turnover. Although it is growing, I think it does not fully reflect the potential of our countries yet. I think members of our delegations will have the opportunity to specifically discuss how we can increase the exports of Turkmen goods to Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani goods to Turkmenistan. Of course, this topic should be one of the priorities for the intergovernmental commission. I agree that there was a certain pause between meetings. I think that it is necessary to promptly hold a meeting on the results of this visit in the near future, in order to develop a program for the implementation of the agreements reached.

As I said, a lot of documents will be signed today. They will determine the development vector, but it is also necessary to have an action plan for the implementation of these issues.

Both Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are countries with large reserves of natural resources. Of course, cooperation in the energy sector between our countries is natural. Azerbaijan provides transit opportunities for Turkmen energy resources. We are pleased that Turkmen oil is transported through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline system, thereby increasing our cooperation.

Of course, one of the key areas of our relations is the transport sector. It is no coincidence that leaders of all transport agencies of Azerbaijan are present in my delegation. They are already working with their Turkmen colleagues. Today we also discussed issues of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with you. In other words, we see very good prospects for multilateral regional cooperation in this area, and this will benefit all countries and peoples. So I am very pleased with our conversations already held. And I think that the results of the visit will also be very positive and serve to bring our countries even closer together.

Thank you again for your hospitality. I wish you good health and continued success, and peace and prosperity to the fraternal people of Turkmenistan.

Thank you.

*Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
at the joint press conference*



Dear Mr. President.  
Dear friends.

I would like to once again express my gratitude to the President of Turkmenistan, my dear friend, for the invitation, for the very warm welcome and for the hospitality. I have been on fraternal Turkmen soil since yesterday. I have had the opportunity to get acquainted with Turkmenistan's socioeconomic development achievements. We rejoice in your success just like in ours. And I would like to take the opportunity and convey fraternal greetings from all the people of Azerbaijan to the fraternal Turkmen people. We are united by history, culture, common roots, traditions and world outlook. This is the powerful foundation which allows us the opportunity to build our relations on the basis of equality, good-neighborliness, friendship and fraternity.

The visit is drawing to a close. It is already possible to say that this visit will have a special place in the history of relations between our countries, the relations that have great potential. Today, during the talks held, the exchange of views between the presidents in a one-on-one format and at the level of delegations, we discussed important issues of our cooperation. We summarized the work done and outlined ways for further interaction. Today, more than 20 documents have been signed, and each of them has a very specific character. This is an indicator of the level of our relations, an indicator of the volume of cooperation and an indicator of our intentions, our brotherly attitude towards each other. Only with a close country can you work in such different areas of life.

In the future, we agreed to provide mutual support to each other in international institutions and international organizations. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan always support each other in all international organizations. This has become a common practice, but it underlines the sincerity of our relationship.

The President of Turkmenistan has already spoken about the main issues on our agenda. On my part, I would like to note that we will work hard to increase the turnover between our countries. We have given relevant instructions to the intergovernmental commission between our countries, so that it could intensify work on increasing exports from Azerbaijan to Turkmenistan and from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan. There is a specific range of goods, and heads of relevant agencies are discussing these issues. I think that if we concentrate on specific areas, we can further increase our trade in a short time.

As President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Malikgulyyevich Berdimuhamedov has said, we have paid great attention to cooperation in the transport sector. On the eve of the visit, our

delegations worked hard, held several rounds of negotiations and agreed the main issues for the operation of the East-West international corridor. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, for their part, have done a tremendous amount of work in previous years to create modern transport infrastructure and logistical facilities. We did not coordinate that, but it so happened that we were doing this work parallel to each other. And this is natural, because this is what is necessary for our countries and peoples. It is no coincidence that the opening of international trade ports in both Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan occurred at the same time this year and in the same month – in May. It was a far-sighted decision to begin to invest in these projects – each country on its own territory. And today we are talking about full integration of our trading ports. A relevant document was signed today. This creates opportunities for our countries to increase trade and transit. We are also creating huge potential for our neighbors. Our further successful development as important transportation hubs also depends on the regional situation. Therefore, our good relations with our neighbors strengthen security and stability in the region, and also turn Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan into important transport and logistical hubs.

The modern infrastructure, the major investments in the transport sector create excellent working conditions. I don't want to cite any figures, but I am sure that we will see a significant increase in cargo traffic between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan in the near future. A special place is now being allocated at the Baku International Trade Seaport in Alat to receive additional cargo from Turkmenistan, and we will certainly see growing transit between our countries along the East-West and West-East route.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was put into operation last year. It is the last link which was not there before. It provides access to world markets. It is yet another access, an additional route which, I am sure, will bring great profits to our countries and also strengthen the entire package of transport agreements, strengthen regional security. The transport sector will lead to the creation of new jobs and economic activity, improve living standards of countries located on the Great Silk Road. This will enhance stability and security.

We have resolved the most important specific issues of bilateral relations today, the issues that create new conditions for regional cooperation. Therefore, I believe that the visit will be very important for our further cooperation and for the strengthening of traditionally fraternal relations between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. It will create an even better situation between countries of our region.

I would like to use this opportunity and wish the fraternal Turkmen people peace, prosperity and further development under the leadership of President Gurbanguly Malikgulyyevich, and wish him continued success, well-being and good health.

Thank you.

## WORKING VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

6 December 2018

### President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the Informal Summit of the CIS Heads of State

6 December 2018, Saint Petersburg



On December 6, 2018 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the informal summit of the CIS heads of state.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev arrived in Russia for a working visit to attend an informal summit of the CIS Heads of State at the invitation of President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.

At Saint Petersburg Pulkovo-1 Airport, President Ilham Aliyev was met by Vice-Governor of Saint Petersburg Nikolay Bondarenko, Chairman of the city's Committee for External Relations Evgeny Grigoriev, who has a ministerial status, and other officials.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev arrived at the Presidential Library to participate in the informal summit of the CIS Heads of State.

President Ilham Aliyev was met by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. The CIS Heads of State posed together for official photos. The informal summit of the CIS Heads of State then was held.

**MEETINGS OF THE PRESIDENT**

- 03.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Secretary-General of the International Civil Defence Organisation Vladimir Kuvshinov
- 06.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the Union Cycliste Internationale David Lappartient
- 08.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Foreign Minister of the Republic of Gambia Ousainou Darboe and including Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure Bai Lamin Jobe
- 08.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (ACRE), Vice-Chairman of International Trade Committee of European Parliament, MEP Jan Zahradil
- 10.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria Nikolay Yankov
- 10.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Peru Maria Milagros Castanon Seoane
- 10.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation Mikhail Bocharnikov
- 22.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation of members of the Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank led by member of the Board Kshatrapati Shivaji
- 23.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Justice of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Tayeb Louh
- 24.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Vyacheslav Volodin
- 24.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received State Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus Stanislav Zas
- 25.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Zubair Mahmood Hayat



- 26.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Turkey Hulusi Akar and the country's National Defense Minister Nurettin Canikli
- 27.06.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Alice Wells
- 05.07.2018 President Ilham Aliyev a delegation led by Minister for Foreign Trade and Development of Finland Anne-Mari Virolainen
- 05.07.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
- 09.07.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research of the Swiss Confederation, Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann
- 13.07.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi
- 30.07.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia Toivo Klaar
- 08.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Bahrain Ebrahim Yusuf Al-Abdullah
- 08.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka Mohammad Sharif Anis
- 08.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Kim Hyun Joon
- 10.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a US Congressional delegation led by Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Devin Nunes and including member of the committee Rick Crawford
- 23.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Iceland Berglind Asgeirsdottir

- 23.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Benin Issiradjou Ibrahim Gomina
- 23.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Ngo Duc Manh
- 29.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia Zurab Pataradze
- 29.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Binali Yildirim
- 30.08.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries Li Xiaolin
- 05.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Taro Kono
- 12.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Secretary General of the OSCE Thomas Greminger
- 12.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic Marta Novakova
- 12.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Paolo Alli
- 13.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Defense of the State of Israel Avigdor Lieberman
- 14.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Total Patrick Pouyanne
- 17.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Editor-in-Chief of Xinhua News Agency of the People's Republic of China He Ping
- 19.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Vice-Chancellor of the Republic of Austria Heinz-Christian Strache
- 20.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Djibouti Mohamed Ali Houmed, Chairman of the State Council of Oman Yahya bin Mahfouz Al Munziri, Speaker of the National Assembly

of the State of Kuwait Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim, Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, Speaker of the National Assembly of Bulgaria Tsveta Karayancheva, Chairman of the Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan Dastanbek Djumabekov, First Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Egyptian Parliament Mahmoud Ahmed El-Sharif, and President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly George Tsereteli

- 20.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Deputy Secretary General of NATO Rose Gottemoeller
- 25.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister for Public Order and Security and Minister of Defense of Bulgaria Krasimir Karakachanov
- 25.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Vice-President of the European Investment Bank Vazil Hudak
- 25.09.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chairman of the Special Olympics Timothy Shriver and including world-renowned sportsmen Bart Conner, Nadia Comaneci and Vladimir Grbic
- 03.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic Milan Ekert
- 04.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See to Azerbaijan Archbishop Paul Fitzpatrick Russell
- 08.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the US-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding Marc Schneier
- 09.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the newly appointed US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs George Kent
- 18.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov
- 18.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by President of the Senate of the Italian Republic Maria Elisabetta Alberti Casellati
- 21.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Vice-President (Operations 1) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Wencai Zhang

- 23.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation Vladimir Kolokoltsev
- 24.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received the U.S. President's National Security Adviser John Bolton
- 25.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev met with UN Assistant Secretary-General Rashid Khalikov
- 25.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Olga Golodets
- 25.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev met with Rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations Anatoly Torkunov
- 25.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri
- 25.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received deputy Director-General of UNESCO Qu Xing
- 25.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Gabriela Barron
- 25.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia Alojz Kovsca
- 25.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the Chamber of Representatives of Uruguay Jorge Gandini
- 30.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation of the Swiss Confederation Mauro Dell' Ambrogio
- 30.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan Mammetkhan Chakiyev
- 30.10.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister Delegate to the Head of Government for the Reform of Administration and Public Service of the Kingdom of Morocco Mohamed Ben Abdelkader
- 01.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs Stephane Visconti of France, Igor Popov of Russia, Andrew Schofer of the US, as well as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk

- 04.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Internal Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
- 04.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine Riad Malki
- 07.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia Toivo Klaar
- 09.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by commander of the U.S. Transportation Command general Stephen Lyons
- 12.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by President of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Craig Reedie
- 14.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus Gennady Akhramovich
- 15.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received president of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Andrew Parsons
- 20.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Turkey, Army General Yasar Guler
- 20.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Chairman of the Russian Union of Journalists Vladimir Solovyev
- 26.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received renowned US religious figures - Rabbi Abraham Cooper and representative of the evangelical community Johnnie Moore
- 27.11.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Head of the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation Ramzan Kadyrov
- 03.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation Konstantin Noskov
- 03.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Vice-President for global innovations at CISCO Guy Diedrich

- 04.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense of the United States Laura Cooper
- 04.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Turkey Mehmet Cahit Turhan
- 04.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Information and Communications Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi
- 05.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Austria Bernd Alexander Bayerl
- 05.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea Kim Tong-op
- 05.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Khairullah Spelenai
- 10.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey Bekir Pakdemirli
- 10.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received President of the World Chess Federation (FIDE) Arkady Dvorkovich
- 11.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by the Islamic Republic of Iran Border Guard Commander Qasem Rezaee
- 12.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Valery Gerasimov
- 13.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov
- 14.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlut Cavusoglu
- 14.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Minister of Intelligence of the Islamic Republic of Iran Sayyid Mahmoud Alavi

- 19.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by acting Governor of the Astrakhan region of the Russian Federation Sergei Morozov
- 24.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications of the Republic of Serbia Rasim Ljajić
- 28.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev received a delegation led by Minister of Interior of the Republic of Turkey Suleyman Soylu
- 29.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Hamad bin Abdullah bin Saud bin Khudair
- 29.12.2018 President Ilham Aliyev accepted credentials of the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federative Republic of Brazil Manuel Adalberto Carlos Montenegro Lopes da Cruz



## MEETINGS AND VISITS OF THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN Mr. ELMAR MAMMADYAROV (JUNE – DECEMBER 2018)

### MEETINGS

- 04.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres
- 05.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Nikolay Yankov, the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 05.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Francis Gurry
- 06.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Nebojša Rodić, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 06.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Maria Milagros Castañón Seoane, the first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Peru to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 08.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the delegation headed by Ousainou Darboe, Foreign Minister of the Republic of the Gambia
- 08.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Azerbaijan Mikhail Bocharnikov
- 21.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Belarus Vladimir Makei
- 27.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Azerbaijan



- 28.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Teimuraz Sharashenidze, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 28.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Azerbaijan, Bard Ivar Svendsen upon the termination of his diplomatic tenure
- 29.06.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary
- 03.07.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Elhadj As Sy, Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- 05.07.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Tedros Adhanom, Director General of World Health Organization
- 11.07.2018 Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan held their first meeting in Brussels with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stefan Visconti of France and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America). The meeting will also be attended by the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk.
- 12.07.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and Minister of Defense Zakir Hasanov met with the United States of America Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense James Mattis on the margins of the NATO Summit in Brussels
- 18.07.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Enzo Moavero Milanese, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy
- 23.07.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy (AUC), Amani Abu-Zeid
- 24.07.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey
- 17.08.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Dato Roslan Bin Tan Sri Abdul Rahman, Ambassador of Malaysia to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon termination of his diplomatic mission

- 28.08.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Zurab Pataradze, the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 29.08.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Carlos Dante Riva, Ambassador of Argentina to the Republic of Azerbaijan upon termination of his diplomatic mission
- 30.08.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with David Zalkaliani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
- 30.08.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Li Xiaolin, Party Secretary and Chairperson of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries
- 05.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the delegation headed by Taro Kono, Foreign Minister of Japan
- 10.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the newly-appointed ambassador of Czech Republic Milan Ekert
- 12.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Thomas Greminger, Secretary-General of the OSCE
- 13.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the Chairman of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Paolo Alli
- 14.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Nikhil Seth, Executive Director of the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
- 17.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Rashid Alimov, Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
- 18.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Børge Brande, President of the World Economic Forum
- 19.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi
- 25.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Nikos Kotzias, Foreign Minister of Greece
- 25.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana

- 25.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Jorge Arreaza, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
- 25.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Darren Allan Henfield, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas
- 25.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Wess Mitchell, US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Alie Kabba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leona
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Osman Saleh Mohammed, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Louis Hilton Straker, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Everly Paul Chet Greene, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Helga Schmid, Secretary General of the European External Action Service
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, United Arab Emirates Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Erlan Abdyldaev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with María Dolores Agüero Lara, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Honduras
- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Gabriela Cuevas Barron, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

- 26.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Michele Coninx, Executive Director of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Gilles Tonelli, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Principality of Monaco
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Ana Birchall, Vice Prime Minister for Romania's Strategic Partnerships' Implementation
- 27.09.2018 Meeting between the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs on the sidelines of the UN GA 73<sup>rd</sup> session in New York
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimen, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Gebran Bassil, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of Togo
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Peter David, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Grenada
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of Belgium
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Carmelo Abela, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta
- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with representatives of American Jewish Committee

- 27.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Salahuddin Rabbani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Linas Linkevicius, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Tilak Marapana, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary General
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Tsogtbaatar Damdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Ayman Al Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Sidiki Kaba, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal
- 28.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman
- 29.09.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Maria Ubach Font, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra
- 26.10.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Rudolf Michalka, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-office for the South Caucasus
- 05.12.2018 Meeting between the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs in Milan

- 06.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Attilio Fontana, the president of the Lombardy Region of Italy
- 07.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Paolo Grimoldi, Head of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
- 07.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Baghdad Amreyev, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States
- 07.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with OSCE Secretary-General Thomas Greminger
- 07.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Wess Mitchell, the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs
- 07.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Toivo Klaar, European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus
- 07.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Harlem Désir, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
- 12.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Ambassador of India Sanjay Rana upon termination of his diplomatic term
- 13.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Brazil to the Republic of Azerbaijan
- 13.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the delegation headed by Tudor Ulianoschi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova
- 13.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with Gabriela Cuevas Barron, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
- 19.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Azerbaijan Gulam Isaczai
- 24.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the newly appointed Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Republic of Azerbaijan Dr. Hamad Abdullah Khudair
- 24.12.2018 Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov received the newly appointed Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Republic of Azerbaijan Manuel Adalberto Carlos Montenegro-Lopes-da-Cruz

## WORKING VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

30 May – 4 June 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with Foreign Minister of Ukraine PavloKlimkin
- Meeting with Secretary General of the United Nations AntónioGuterres

On June 4, 2018 Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres. At the meeting the Minister E. Mammadyarov conveyed sincere greetings of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan H.E.Mr. Ilham Aliyev to António Guterres. Recalling with pleasure his meetings with President Ilham Aliyev, A.Guterres asked Minister Mammadyarov to extend his greetings and best wishes to the head of state. The Secretary General of the United Nations congratulated the minister on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic.

The Secretary-General highly appreciated the cooperation between the United Nations and Azerbaijan, particularly highlighted the support and contribution of Azerbaijan for the Sustainable Development Goals and the promotion of intercultural dialogue, and its initiatives, including the Baku Process.

Minister E. Mammadyarov noted that Azerbaijan highly appreciates support of the UN and its specialized institutions to Azerbaijan since the beginning of its independence, in particular provided humanitarian aid and assistance for the internally displaced persons resulting from the aggression of Armenia.

Highlighting the economic and social reforms in our country, the development of the non-oil sector, the large-scale and trans-regional transport and energy projects implemented with the initiative and direct involvement of Azerbaijan, as well as, East-West, North-South, South-West routes and the Southern Gas Project, the Minister E. Mammadyarov briefed on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals at the national level.

He noted that Azerbaijan supports Secretary General's reform efforts of the UN system and the growing role of the United Nations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and stressed the importance to fulfill commitments enshrined in the UN Charter by all member-states.

Touching upon the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, E. Mammadyarov noted that Armenia used force against Azerbaijan and continue to occupy its territories by violating international law. He stressed that the conflict poses a serious threat to regional peace and comprehensive development of the region. He emphasized the importance of increasing international efforts to ensure the withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and the return of Azerbaijani IDPs to their homelands, stressing that the relevant resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council are the basis for the resolution of the conflict.

The minister E. Mammadyarov also noted that Azerbaijan highly appreciates the UN Secretary-General's statements on a regular basis to support for substantive talks on the settlement of the conflict.

During the meeting, the sides exchanged views on the issues of mutual interest and the UN agenda.

**WORKING VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS**

21 – 22 June 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Belarus Vladimir Makei

**SPEECH BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE 10<sup>TH</sup> INFORMAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE EASTERN  
PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**

22 June 2018, Minsk

Dear Minister Mr. Makei,  
Dear Commissioner Hahn,  
Dear colleagues,

I am happy to be back in Minsk and be a guest to my friend Mr. Makei, to whom I am grateful for a warm hospitality and an excellent organisation of today's meeting. This meeting comes at a very interesting time. Interesting in terms of not only our cooperation agenda with the EU, but also most recent regional developments.

Building on our shared objective to enhance cooperation in the field of connectivity and ICT, Azerbaijan also actively participated yesterday in an informal meeting of the Ministers of Communication. I would like to commend our friends from Belarus for coming up with an interesting topic for that ministerial meeting.

I know that we hold such informal meetings with an objective to have an informal exchange of views and deliberations. However, today we have a very specific thematic agenda. So, I will express my opinion in a structured fashion to cover the theme.

Let me start by Taking forward the Eastern Partnership and delivering on commitments:

2017 proved to be a productive and promising year for advancement of our cooperation agenda with the EU. The visit of the President of Azerbaijan to Brussels in February 2017 played a crucial enabling role in this regard. Official launch of negotiations process on a new bilateral document and high level statements from both sides indicated mutual ambitions about stepping up our efforts to enhance the cooperation.

EaP Brussels Summit proved that cooperation within EaP should be based on realistic considerations of challenging situation in the region and focus on the benefits and potential value-added that EaP could bring. Revised EaP multilateral architecture and "20 Deliverables by 2020" enable us to concentrate on pertinent areas of cooperation with clear cut goals, aspirations and timeframes for their implementation.

As we have also reshaped EaP's multilateral architecture, the ability of the EaP to deliver in a multilateral track assumes ever greater importance. For Azerbaijan multilateral and bilateral tracks of EaP are complementary to each other. Azerbaijan advocates for advancement of a



multilateral track through practical implementation of feasible and tangible projects in areas of shared interest, which could deliver concrete results through concrete actions. Cooperation adapted to the economic potential and specific goals of each partner state would be more efficient in realization of the new ENP principles of differentiation, flexibility, focus and greater ownership.

The success of EaP Foreign Ministers' meeting in October this year will be weighed by tangible results reached in a multilateral track. The upcoming meeting should reflect on best experiences and efforts put forward in realization of multilateral initiatives and projects and should identify key political challenges that hamper further progress.

Unique participatory framework of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) - involving diverse stakeholders from EaP region, as well as EU member states and candidate countries is a best indication that such projects could be crucial in revitalizing multilateral partnership frameworks.

An official ceremony marking the inauguration of the Southern Gas Corridor was held on May 29, 2018 at the Baku Sangachal Terminal. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the ceremony and opening a symbolic valve formally inaugurated the SGC value chain across Azerbaijan and Georgia aimed at delivering first commercial gas to Turkey.

The ground-breaking ceremony for TANAP - another important segment of the Southern Gas Corridor was held in June 12 in Eskişehir, Turkey. The attendance of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Ukraine and Serbia proved once more that SGC is a unique project of energy security with right balance of interests between producers, transit countries and consumers, including potential ones.

Overall progress to the 1st Gas under Shah Deniz Stage 2 project is over 99.0%, Southern Caucasus Pipeline Expansion project - 100.0% (to the 1st Gas), TANAP project – 94.0% and TAP project – 75%. The final phase of construction works is successfully progressing. The construction of the Greek section of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) will be completed this November. All engineering and physical tests will be carried out by mid-2019, and in 2020 the project will be ready for a commercial operation.

We believe that such cooperation frameworks may be deployed in other areas of common interest, particularly in the fields of transport and connectivity. In this regard, a recent extension of the indicative maps of the Trans-European Networks (TEN-T), which was finalized on the sidelines of Brussels Summit, today can provide a solid platform to enhance our transport and trade dialogue. Today, Azerbaijan is an architect of some major transport projects across the wider region, including EU's neighbourhood. Together with our partners, we promote East-West, North-South and South-West corridors. Newly commissioned Baku-Tbilisi-Kars strategic railway connecting Asia with Europe is a starting point and provider of economic boost to the region. Another point is a completion of the first phase of the Baku International Sea Trade Port. Not stopping there, few days ago we adopted the legislation on establishing a Free Economic Zone in Alyat, which will help to transform Azerbaijan in few years into a regional trade-logistics distribution and transportation hub. All our efforts lead to a win-win situation for all our neighbours and partners who are willing to develop friendly and strategic relations with Azerbaijan.

Promotion of the mobility and people-to-people contacts is another important dimension of our interaction with the EU. We do believe that the successful implementation of readmission and visa facilitation agreements should pave the way for launching the dialogue on visa liberalization between the EU and Azerbaijan. It is fully in line with the Joint Declaration of the EaP Brussels Summit where the EU undertook to consider in due course the opening of Visa Liberalization Dialogue with Azerbaijan. We are confident that the visa-free travel will bring important benefits for citizens on both sides, as it will reinforce political, social, cultural and economic ties between EU and Azerbaijan as well as further strengthen people-to-people contacts.

Dear colleagues,

We have to admit that better coordinated efforts and shared commitments are needed to meet remaining goals and deliverables. So far the principle of shared ownership has been mostly defined as the responsibility of partner countries. EaP should remain as a “three-way street” engagement where interested individual EU member states along with the EU and partner countries should take active role in contributing to the EaP objectives. There should be a place for complementarity.

Active engagement in the neighbourhood is primarily about achieving security in a wider geographical area, upholding the fundamental principles of international law and pursuing shared interests. According to the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy, peace and security are indivisible from sustainable and inclusive development, the respect of global norms and rules-based international systems. This EU strategy mentions EU’s responsible engagement to act globally and regionally in order to address the root causes of conflicts. It calls the EU to engage more systematically on the security dimension of the conflicts in full compliance of international law.

Future of EaP strongly depends on maintaining security, peace and stability in the Region suffered from conflicts. Today the sovereignty and territorial integrity of four out of six EaP participating states continue to be undermined due to the existing conflicts.

Brussels Summit Declaration demonstrated general and coherent approach on peaceful resolution of all conflicts in the EaP region, as well as reflected on important principles of international law in line with the EU Global Strategy. We believe it is a minimum of what EU can do. It was also a matter of EU’s consistency and credibility in its foreign policy. It shouldn’t stop just there in words. It should be preserved and streamlined in all documents on all levels and in all frameworks – be they global or regional.

While talking about peace Armenia should also be committed to deoccupation of Azerbaijan’s lands. It will also be better to hear Armenia’s commitment security. Enough is enough. As regards of people to people contacts dialogue between Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan has to be considered.

Dear colleagues,

Now let me turn to Multiannual Finance Framework priorities and the External Investment

Plan and share Azerbaijan's expectations in that sub-field of our cooperation.

Financial cooperation remains a cornerstone of the EU's relations with Azerbaijan. Our country has been a champion of Twinning projects in the region which played an instrumental role in creating closer synergy between policy work and financial assistance. Single Strategic Framework for the EU support to Azerbaijan for the period 2014- 2017 has contributed to the realization of key governmental policies, such as regional and rural development, justice sector reform, education and skills development complemented by support for capacity development and institution building.

We welcome the EU's solid cooperation in the implementation of ambitious reform agenda of the government to diversify its economy and move towards a private sector led growth model as identified in Strategic Roadmap on national economy and basic sectors of economy. We look forward to seeing more projects similar to the "EU4Lankaran" which aims to develop entrepreneurial activities and investment opportunities in rural areas with a view of enabling access of local production to foreign markets.

The future programming of the the EU's financial assistance for Azerbaijan will be guided by Partnership Priorities. We are close to conclude negotiations and hope to sign it soon. The document will focus on far-reaching objectives of the EU-Azerbaijan cooperation which in the long run will allow sides to increase the absorption rate of the EU funds allocated in the new phase of Multiannual Financial Framework. So far, Azerbaijan has largely benefited from specific programs of this Framework such as Connecting Europe Facility through which TANAP received funding for actions covering detailed engineering for the Pipeline Security System. Territorial Cooperation under the European Neighborhood Instrument is strengthening cross-border contacts between local authorities and communities of Azerbaijan and Georgia for the development of joint solutions to common social and economic challenges in the bordering regions.

We regard the External Investment Plan as an ambitious and overarching long-term financial strategy of the EU towards Eastern neighborhood that will go beyond classical development assistance. Azerbaijan also indirectly benefited from EU's Connect Europe Facility (CEF) for regional cross-border projects, which except for Azerbaijan also include EU's other partner countries. Bankable projects will definitely play a critical role in attracting EU funding and Azerbaijan is very well-placed in this regard. We look forward to working with our European partners in order to make best use of facilities under External Investment Plan in this regard.

On the other hand, EU's political or financial engagement with partner countries should not lead to a disruption of partner countries' own regional agenda but instead, support their traditional strategic relations and projects.

In conclusion, let me express our confidence that EU and partner countries' long-term interests demand that our relations continue to be close. There is huge untapped potential in number of areas and we have many reasons to remain strong partners. We cannot afford that the Summit declarations remain only on paper and in a disconnect from the situation on the grounds.

I and my team stand ready to further discuss with you the points which I have mentioned above.

I believe that today's meeting will serve our shared objectives to enhance and streamline main components of our cooperation within EaP.

Thank you.

## WORKING VISIT TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

11 – 12 July 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs
- Meeting with the United States of America Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense James Mattis

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan held their first meeting in Brussels on July 11 with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stefan Visconti of France and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America). The meeting will also be attended by the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk. It lasted for about 4 hours. Prior to this meeting, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

During the meeting, the negotiation process on the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict was comprehensively discussed and the continuation of the existing format of negotiations was noted. They also exchanged views on the next steps to advance the negotiation process and the action plans of the co-chairs.

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and Minister of Defense Zakir Hasanov met with the United States of America Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense James Mattis on the margins of the NATO Summit in Brussels on July 12. Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia Wess Mitchell, Senior National Security Council Director Fiona Hill, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United States Elin Suleymanov and Acting Head of Mission of Azerbaijan to NATO Gaya Mammadov also participated in the meeting.

The sides expressed satisfaction with the level of partnership between Azerbaijan and the United States. Minister Elmar Mammadyarov emphasized the importance of support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan in the Communique of the NATO Summit meeting in Brussels.

During the discussion the sides exchanged views on regional issues and United States expressed gratitude to Azerbaijan for support provided to the NATO-led Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan and fight against terrorism.

Minister Elmar Mammadyarov briefed his counterpart on the meeting with Armenian Foreign Minister in Brussels on July 11 with the participation of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov and Defense Minister Zakir Hasanov invited the respective counterparts from the United States to Azerbaijan and they accepted the invitation.

## JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AND FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, MEVLÜT ÇAVUŞOĞLU

25 July 2018, Baku

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** Ladies and gentlemen! As you may know, my dear friend and brother Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey is paying the official visit to Azerbaijan.

It should be noted that it is a pleasure that our Heads of State and the ministers after the elections make their first visits to Turkey and Azerbaijan, respectively, and we commend it.

Although we had been talking a few weeks ago during the NATO summit in Brussels, today we also hold one-on-one and extended meetings. We discussed ways of how to further revitalize and utilize the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, and have exchanged views on this issue. TANAP has already started operating. We also went through the issues of continuation of cooperation in this regard. We exchanged views on issues of bilateral and multilateral agenda during the meeting. We touched upon issues of cooperation within international organizations. Mevlüt Bey was once the head of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and today the head of the delegation of Azerbaijan to PACE, MP Samad Seyidov was attended the meeting. We conducted extensive discussions on the working mechanisms within this organization.

### **Q&A Session:**

**Question:** *Ruslan Rahimov, Anadolu Agency: Mr. Minister, you talked about the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. At the end of last year this route was launched. What is the current situation in this line? You told about expanding, can you please explain, for example, when transportation of passengers can be carried out?*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** We had very thorough discussions today on the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, including the question of transportation of cargo to Afghanistan. As you may know, Afghanistan is an important country and it has difficulty in connectivity. BTK railway is the shortest route and is a reliable way to connect to Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Through the BTK railway we discussed the transportation of cargo to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Of course, Turkey and Azerbaijan should strengthen their efforts together. There also, must be a passenger transportation, but for this purpose new wagons and locomotives should be purchased. We hope that passengers will also be able to use it.

**Question:** *Sevinj Valehqizi, APA TV: Mr. Minister, Is the meeting with your Armenian counterpart expected? Is the presidents' meeting expected, and if yes when? Thanks.*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** Yes, it is planned. In Brussels, we had discussions about 4 hours. Of course, the Armenian side needs time to learn more about the situation and review the documents. But it is very likely that we will hold a meeting in September. Together with the co-chairs, we came to a conclusion that we may have a meeting within the framework of the meeting of UN General Assembly. There was a proposal on this. The meeting may also take place before this meeting. On behalf of my side I said that the Azerbaijani side supports the continuation of substantive and intensive negotiations. I am ready to hold a meeting in the existing format and framework. However, for Azerbaijan it is important to focus on result-oriented negotiations, rather than the negotiation for the sake of it. Regarding high-level meetings, for example, at the presidential level or at the level of prime ministers, the Armenian side asked for some time to figure out how and to what extent the negotiations will be held.

Thank you for your attention.

### INTERVIEW BY FOREIGN MINISTER ELMAR MAMMADYAROV ON THE OUTCOME OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> SUMMIT MEETING OF THE HEADS OF STATE OF THE CASPIAN LITTORAL STATES TO NEWS AGENCIES

15 August 2018, Baku

**Question:** *What would you say about the outcome of the 5<sup>th</sup> Caspian Summit in Aktau?*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** The signing of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea on August 12, 2018 at the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit Meeting of the Caspian Littoral States in Aktau is a historic milestone development and an important achievement for all five littoral states.

It once again demonstrated that the Caspian states have a firm resolve to reaffirm the atmosphere of sustainable peace and cooperation in the Caspian basin and the surrounding regions. The Convention defines the legal framework of interstate relations and conduct in the Caspian Sea. This document is based on the generally accepted norm and principles of international law, especially such key principles as respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states.

Along with the legal regime and the definitions, the convention envisages civil conduct based on clarity, transparency and predictability in the activities of all Caspian littoral states. These relations, based on mutual trust and cooperation between the Caspian littoral states, are necessary for them, as well as their partners.

In the process of developing the convention, the Caspian states also demonstrated high political culture with the unique regional identity, responsibility and regional ownership. The Caspian states, having not allowing any outside interference, achieved important progress, including the signing of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea through joint efforts.

Working process on the Convention required continued efforts of each littoral state. We would like to hear your opinion on this matter.

It should be recognized that the final stage of the development of the convention has passed

through not an easy discussions.

The two-day meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Caspian littoral states, held in December 2017 in Moscow, was very intense and as a result of it breakthrough was achieved in the finalization of the convention. Very serious discussions were held on a number of provisions of the convention.

But with goodwill and mutual trust, negotiations yield positive results. As a result of all these discussions, the convention was presented to the Heads of States for signing at the summit of the Caspian littoral states in Aktau, and we were able to achieve this breakthrough.

**Question:** *What are the following steps?*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** In accordance with the internal procedures, the convention will be submitted for ratification by littoral states. We do hope that the ratification of the convention will soon be completed. The completion of the ratification process and the practical implementation of the provisions of the convention will open up even broader opportunities for the sustainable development of the region. The signed Convention and the Communique adopted by the Heads of States at the summit meeting in Aktau, assigned new tasks ahead of us. Intensive work, based on goodwill, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of the entire Caspian region and our peoples, will be continued.

## WORKING VISIT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

17 – 19 September 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Rashid Alimov
- Meeting with President of the World Economic Forum Børge Brande
- Meeting with Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Wang Yi

## STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NEW CHAMPIONS HELD BY THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

19 September 2018, Tianjin

Dear Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to greet participants of the panel and express my gratitude to the Government of China and the World Economic Forum for organizing this event. I believe that today's meeting is a good opportunity for exchange of views on Inclusive Digital Development in Eurasia and for setting up recommendations on the topic aimed at further strengthening cooperation in the region.

We live in the era of high technologies. The global trends are Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, the Internet of Things and Machine to Machine (M2M) technologies.

Development of these technologies and 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution will create new economic opportunities for countries and governments to improve the quality and transparency of public services thus enhancing the quality of life and improving the living standards of people.

Investments in this field play crucial role in further sustainable development of each country. Access of the households to high speed internet, cloud computing for the Big Data challenge, well-developed solutions that meet cyber threats can be considered as the main milestones of this process.

We acknowledge that if we wish to create a future built on a shared prosperity, digital technology will be critical. In fact, as technology innovation accelerates, it may be the best path to inclusive growth. Governments have a key role to play in this regard by strengthening the foundations of digital economy. We should develop policies and regulations that enable business entities to leverage digital technologies to compete and innovate.

As far as Azerbaijan is concerned, development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is one of the priority areas in the agenda of the Government. We recognize high technologies as a key driver of sustainable economic growth and take necessary measures for developing this sector. Shifts in the global economy made Information and Communication Technologies one of the most rapidly growing sectors in the country. Thus, currently it is the third important economic sector of the country after energy and transport.

Strategic Roadmap for Development of Telecommunication and Information Technologies in the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved by decree of the President in 2016. It covers various aspects of ICT sector development as well as relevant regulatory issues.

We put an immense emphasis on scientific progress and innovative development while drafting policy frameworks and governance protocols. The country has focused on Digital Trade, Cross-Border Data Flows, Blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technology as few of its main targets.

79% of the country population are internet users, 72% of them use broadband internet. Internet access of households increases year on year and it is 77.2% now. Transition to the digital TV broadcasting has been completed. Besides, “Azerspace-1” telecommunication satellite, “Azersky” Earth observation satellite operate successfully and provide modern satellite services. Azerbaijan has built an eGov portal based on blockchain technology with over 450 services from all government organizations that provided these services 30 million times. Presently 100% of customs declarations, 90% of tax declarations, 100% of labour contracts and 100% of invoices are processed online.

Besides creating an online catalog of national goods, in order to facilitate reaching new foreign markets the Digital Trade Hub (DTH), a public private partnership platform was established. The main purpose of this platform is to provide all necessary services; licenses, permissions, certificates and payment solutions to entrepreneurs and SMEs wishing to export their products. Azerbaijan’s DTH is thriving locally and regionally. After the launch in 2016 it has generated



475 million USD worth of goods ordered to 74 countries in its first year of activity.

Azerbaijan is the second country in the world to offer e-Residency and first to offer m-Residency to non-residents through Digital Trade Hub. E-Residency & m-Residency are Digital and Mobile identity issued by the Government of Azerbaijan to all non-residents with the aim to empower entrepreneurs around the world to set up and run location independent businesses in Azerbaijan and use cross-border e-services of local DTH.

We are planning to build Innovations Center in Baku, which will operate 7/24. This center will be free of charge for young entrepreneurs and StartUps who have innovative ideas. They also have opportunity to get grants and loans from the State Fund for Development of Information Technologies. Government of Azerbaijan supports entrepreneurs to realize their ideas in business.

According to the WEF Global IT Report 2016, Azerbaijan is ranked 1st in Mobile Network Coverage, 8th in Importance of ICTs to government vision of the future and government success in ICT promotion and 12<sup>th</sup> in government procurement of advanced technology products and the use of ICTs by the government to improve the quality of public services to citizens. It's worthy to also mention that Azerbaijan took the third place among the developing countries and first place in the CIS and in the whole Eurasian region in the annual Inclusive Development Index 2018 of the World Economic Forum.

Thanks to its geographical location and economic potential the Eurasian region is in the spotlight today. A region rich with natural resources and hydrocarbon reserves also possesses high scientific and technological potential and human resources.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to build modern and highly technological ICT infrastructures in the region and with this in mind the Government of Azerbaijan initiated Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) project aimed to build a trans-national fiber-optic line between Hong Kong and Frankfurt. This broadband route should be the shortest line connecting East and West in the era of competition where every single second is important. The project supported by the UN General Assembly resolution is expected to give the countries involved such benefits as improved regional and global connectivity, routes diversification, improved disaster resilience, breaching digital divide and contributing to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribution to regional innovation and modernization. We are convinced that realization of TASIM project will also open new economic opportunities for the land-locked counties of Eurasia.

We believe that along with other activities within ICT sector development, infrastructure digitization of transport corridors will also serve as effective enablers of inclusive growth.

Looking back to the history, this region was considered as center of trade routes and played an important role in economic development in a wider region. Everyone is aware of the historical significance of the historic Great Silk Road and it is not a coincidence that since gaining its independence Azerbaijan has supported the initiative and played a leading role in its restoration. Generally, Azerbaijan is known as the initiator of big infrastructure projects in the region such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP), Trans-Adriatic

Pipeline (TAP) and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway are just some examples.

Azerbaijan is considered to be the shortest linkage between China and Europe both in terms of distance and time. According to various estimates, this linkage allows to save 70% of transportation time. Presently, as trade flows increase between Europe and Asia, Azerbaijan is emerging as a transport and logistics hub at the crossroad of Eurasia.

Azerbaijan is very well-placed to play a key role in linking Europe and Asia, namely in realization of “One Belt, One Road” project initiated by China, by means of transit and logistics opportunities, Trans-Caspian transport and trade corridor, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and Alat international trade port. These projects aimed to connect transport networks of China and European Union members should contribute to the inclusive and sustainable development of economic and trade relations within Eurasia as well as people to people contacts thus promoting regional development and prosperity.

Besides, Azerbaijan cooperates with its partners on creation of faster South-North transport corridor. This route provides delivery of cargo via Azerbaijan to the countries of Europe from Iran, Pakistan and India by land.

Maintaining security and stability is a crucial prerequisite in achieving inclusive digital development in Eurasia. But in the current realities ongoing occupation of internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan by Armenia impedes and narrows our possibilities for developing full-fledged regional cooperation and thus achieving sustainable development not only in Azerbaijan, but also in the region as a whole. In this regard, I should stress that this occupation policy also deprives Armenia itself of its opportunities for economic growth and trade in the region. Thus, we still cannot use the full potential of our region to advance to a more inclusive, comprehensive economic cooperation.

As I mentioned before, rapid development of new technologies provide new opportunities to people and to countries in the economic and social areas. But apart from that it also brings new challenges and threats such as cyber-attacks and job losses. While facing these challenges governments have large responsibilities. They should properly assess the situation and take necessary measures to prevent the citizens from these treats.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that taking into account growing importance of ICT and new technologies for inclusive sustainable development and thus for fostering economic performance and raising living standards of people, the Republic of Azerbaijan stands ready to further strengthen and broaden cooperation in this sector within Eurasian region.

Thank you for your attention.

### **WORKING VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

24 - 29 September 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting with Foreign Minister of Greece Nikos Kotzias
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of

- Ghana Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Jorge Arreaza
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas Darren Allan Henfield
- Meeting with the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wess Mitchell
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leona Alie Kabba
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea Osman Saleh Mohammed
- Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah
- Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Louis Hilton Straker
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda Everly Paul Chet Greene
- Meeting with Secretary General of the European External Action Service Helga Schmid
- Meeting with the United Arab Emirates Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic Erlan Abdyldaev
- Meeting with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Honduras María Dolores Agüero Lara
- Meeting with President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Gabriela Cuevas Barron
- Meeting with Executive Director of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) Michele Coninsx
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Principality of Monaco Gilles Tonelli
- Meeting with Vice Prime Minister for Romania's Strategic Partnerships' Implementation Ana Birchall
- Meeting between the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs on the sidelines of the UN GA 73<sup>rd</sup> session in New York
- Meeting with Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon Gebran Bassil
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of Togo Robert Dussey
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Grenada Peter David
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary Péter Szijjártó
- Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of Belgium Didier Reynders
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia Miroslav Lajčák
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta Carmelo Abela
- Meeting with representatives of American Jewish Committee

- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Salahuddin Rabbani
- Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania Linas Linkevicius
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR Saleumxay Kommasith
- Meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Pradeep Kumar Gyawali
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka Tilak Marapana
- Meeting with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia Tsogtbaatar Damdin
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ayman Al Safadi
- Meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal Sidiki Kaba
- Meeting with Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah
- Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra Maria Ubach Font

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE THIRD MEETING OF THE ORGANIZATION  
OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC) CONTACT GROUP ON  
THE AGGRESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AGAINST  
THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

24 September 2018, New York

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Secretary General, Mr. Yousef Ahmed Al-Othaimen for having organized the third meeting of the OIC Contact Group on the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan. Let me also warmly welcome the members of the Group and express my gratitude to each of them for their participation at this meeting.

Dear Colleagues,

Since the eruption of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, OIC, on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, has explicitly determined the actions of Armenia on the territory of Azerbaijan as an aggression and condemned in the strongest possible terms the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories. Taking this opportunity, I would like once again to express my gratitude to the OIC Member States for their solidarity with and support for the just cause of Azerbaijan.

More than quarter of a century has passed since the beginning of the armed conflict. However, in total disregard of the demands of UN Security Council and UN General Assembly resolutions, decisions of OIC and other international organizations and positions of individual States, and in flagrant violation of the generally accepted norms and principles of international law, Armenia continues to unlawfully occupy the territories of Azerbaijan.

Armenia has consistently obstructed the conflict-settlement process and, in the meantime, refuses to conduct result-oriented negotiations, while it regularly resorts to various provocations to escalate the situation on the ground and tries to consolidate the occupation of the seized territories. In flagrant violation of Geneva Conventions of 1948, Armenia continues to exhibit its policy of illegal settlement of refugees and other people of Armenian origin, particularly from Syria in the occupied territories.

Recently the military dictatorship of Armenia was overthrown and the leadership of the country was changed. Preliminary expectations from the new leadership were that it will build up, as proclaimed, its policy with full respect to the democratic values which obviously means respect to the norms and principles of international law.

Unfortunately, the new leadership decided to follow the path of its predecessors and started its functions by making provocative statements, thus inflicting upon serious damage to the ongoing negotiations for the peaceful settlement of the conflict. On September 26, here in New-York I will have a meeting with my Armenian counterpart.

As there are consistent unstable internal political developments in Armenia and there are no external understanding on what is going on in this country we cannot and will not exclude that latest statements and actions of Armenian new prime minister are intended to escalate the situation with more military hostilities on the ground. All consequences of this negative scenario will be completely laid on Armenian side.

Dear colleagues,

We hope that solidarity of the OIC Member States with the just position of Azerbaijan and their unwavering support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity will be translated into more concerted, practical and effective measures in order to bring the aggressor in compliance with the norms and principles of international law, relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and the OIC decisions. In this regard, we consider the OIC Contact Group on the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan as useful platform for discussing, defining and elaborating on practical steps for the implementation of the relevant OIC decisions on the conflict. The practical measures elaborated by us within this group should be presented for consideration and adoption by the OIC Ministerial meeting and OIC wide implementation.

After the thorough review of the relevant OIC decisions on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, we have identified a number of measures that will contribute to the practical implementation of those decisions. The measures that we suggest are to be launched by the OIC Secretary General on the basis of our today's decision. We propose that OIC Secretary General:

1. To distribute in line with the relevant OIC resolutions a Note Verbale containing a reminder for the OIC Member States to instruct their Permanent Representations to international and regional organizations to support efforts of the Government of Azerbaijan towards ending aggression by Armenia;
2. To elaborate proposals on possible contribution by the OIC Member States and the OIC Secretariat in informing international community about the mass killings of Azerbaijanis by the Armenian armed forces in the town of Khojaly of the Republic of Azerbaijan in February 1992;
3. To appeal to the OIC Member States for adoption and enactment of necessary legislative and executive acts and instruments with a view of preventing any supplies of arms and military equipment to Armenia, prohibiting any visits to and activities by natural and legal persons of the Member States in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the other occupied territories of Azerbaijan and preventing any assistance to Armenia, which may facilitate the maintenance of occupation of the Azerbaijani territories;
4. To appeal to Member States to notify as widely as possible the tourism companies, travel agencies, tour operators and their umbrella organizations, operating in their territories about illegality of organizing tourist visits to and the promotion of tourism in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and inadmissibility of propagating illegal separatist regime at international tourism fairs and other tourism events;
5. To appeal to Member States to downgrade their bilateral relations with Armenia with a view to compel the latter to comply with demands contained in the UN Security Council Resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993), 884 (1993) as well as the OIC resolutions and decisions adopted with regard to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict;
6. To launch on behalf of the OIC Member States an international campaign of raising awareness on and protest against barbarian acts of destruction by Armenia of the Azerbaijani historical monuments, including mosques and other sacred shrines, illegal archaeological excavations at historical places in the occupied territories, changing toponyms and constructing other fake narratives;
7. To submit for the next meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs a report on implementation by Member States of the documents and decisions adopted within the OIC on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In conclusion, dear colleagues, allow me once again to express our gratitude to the OIC Member States and the OIC Secretary General for their consistent support to the just cause of Azerbaijan and its efforts to bring the aggression of Armenia to an end.

Thank you

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE 6<sup>TH</sup> GUAM-JAPAN MINISTERIAL  
MEETING ON THE SIDELINES OF THE 73<sup>RD</sup> SESSION  
OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

24 September 2018, New York

Dear Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Mr. Taro Kano,  
Dear Mr. Secretary General,  
Distinguish Colleagues,

On behalf of our Delegation, I would like to greet all of you and thank the Moldovan Chairmanship for facilitating today's event. I do hope that our meeting will be another opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views and sharing our vision about enhancing cooperation among GUAM and Japan.

At the beginning of my intervention I'd like to underline the importance of an enhanced GUAM-Japan interaction, aimed at ensuring peace, security, stability, and prosperity on both regional and inter-regional levels. Therefore, I am glad to recall my fruitful meeting with my Japanese colleague Mr. Kano in Baku during his recent trip to Azerbaijan. We have strong relations, but we should not stop there. We should do more. Both Azerbaijan and the rest of our partners in GUAM. And with such friend and partner as Japan, the distance actually doesn't and should not matter. In this light, I would like to emphasize that the implementation of the "GUAM-Japan Cooperation Program" signed during the 3<sup>rd</sup> GUAM-Japan Ministerial Meeting (3 December 2015, Belgrade), is of particular significance for the strengthening our cooperation as well as elaborating and implementing new projects.

The political dimension of our interaction with Japan features a particular emphasis on Japan's support to our countries on the pertinent issue of safeguarding our sovereignty and territorial integrity and the resolution of conflicts based on well-known norms and principles of international law in all regional and international fora. We count on Japan's consistent position and support in the UN and elsewhere.

Apart from that, we are keen to promote connectivity diplomacy, so that the concept of GUAM Transport Corridor gains a momentum. Establishing safe, reliable, commercially solid transport and infrastructure projects is our common goal. With that purpose in mind, Azerbaijan helps to expand regional and even inter-regional trade through constructing a web of infrastructure projects such as East-West, South-West, and North-South trade corridors. In order to attract considerable trade volumes to our region, we have been actively engaged with many countries. Japanese companies can also benefit from these transport and logistics projects.

We are enhancing our sea trade port infrastructure and also developing a logistics hub of a regional scale through a Free Economic Zone in Alyat, which will be governed by a special long-term liberal investment and fiscal regime, so that it can attract companies from different sectors. We did it back in 1994 with the Contact of Century, which attracted multinational companies to our oil and gas sector. So we will do again, this time by attracting companies to

our logistics hub in and around our trade port's area. It will boost trade across GUAM region. So our invitation is for Japan and our GUAM partners to keep in mind and support this strategic endeavor of Azerbaijan.

In order to ensure the stable development of non-oil sector by investing in SMEs, the Government of Azerbaijan has been successfully cooperating with various IFIs. SMEs are important engines for economic growth of each country and a key contributor of employment. In this regard we appreciate the outcomes of the GUAM-Japan Workshop on Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion, which was held in Japan on January 28 – February 3, 2018, and decision of two sides to organize the Workshop on Investment Promotion on next year in Japan. We invite Japanese investors to explore possibilities for SME sector development in our country. What is good for Azerbaijan is good for the GUAM region. Also, it would be useful to consider the possibilities of holding GUAM-Japan Business Forum, as well as Security Dialogue meetings.

Boosting strong and sustainable tourism growth is one of the priorities for our national economy. In this regard we appreciate efforts of Japanese side towards extension of cultural and humanitarian exchanges with GUAM member states, which contribute to the development of cooperation in the tourism sphere. In this regard we welcome negotiations between the aviation authorities of our countries concerning opening direct air passenger flights.

We need to strengthen our partnership based on priority areas of cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE INFORMAL MEETING OF COUNCIL  
OF MINISTERS OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION  
ORGANIZATION (ECO) MEMBER STATES**

24 September 2018, New York

Dear Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I would like to express my greetings to all participants of the Informal Meeting of Council of Ministers (COM) and express my appreciation to the current Chairman of our Council - Tajikistan and to the ECO Secretariat for the efforts in organizing this event. It is really commendable that we found a time amid our overloaded schedules to come together here in New York. This once again indicates to an importance of our shared perspectives within our Organisation.

Because our meeting is of an informal nature, I would like to make some important remarks rather than a statement.



Firstly, about a general landscape. The recent developments in and around our region prove once again the necessity for developing closer regional cooperation among our nations. The unique role of ECO in this context is undeniable. The Republic of Azerbaijan, as one of the proactive member States of the ECO, has always supported the main goals and objectives of the Organization and made a significant contribution in the form of specific actions in enhancement of regional synergies and various partnership frameworks, in the areas of transport, energy, trade facilitation, etc.

When we speak about economy and trade, the issue of transport and connectivity comes to the forefront. To enhance the competitiveness of the region both as producer, market and transit corridor, development of regional infrastructure should be adequately addressed.

Transit capacity is an essential strategic competitive advantage of the ECO region. Our cooperation in enhancing our connectivity, specifically in road and railway sector is of paramount importance.

Azerbaijan is keen to further leverage its transit and logistics potential by transforming the transportation system and services into one of the key comparative advantages of its economy. We strongly believe in a multiplying effect of this objective and thus, we would like to project it onto a regional scale. With this in mind, Azerbaijanis working to diversify and modernize its transport infrastructure, which will serve the interconnection of the Trans-European and Trans-Asian railway networks. Besides this, the construction of the New International Sea Trade Port and its International Logistic Centre, as well as the adoption of the Law on Free Economic Zone in Alyat, which is a point of convergence of all transport routes in our country, will significantly increase the competitiveness of international trade corridors and transit capacity of the countries of the region. We must feed each other with trade opportunities.

Therefore, Azerbaijan has been contributing to enhancing ECO region's transit potential through promoting East-West, North-South and South-West trade corridors. Azerbaijan and Turkey are two important ends of a strategic Baku-Tbilisi-Kars rail road, which was commissioned last year and bring China closer to Europe by benefiting all ECO member-states.

We are also working with our partners in Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Georgia and Turkey to build a solid logistics between Europe and Central Asia through the Lapis Lazuli transport route, whose strategic objective is underpinned by mutually reinforcing interests of some countries in our region.

We do believe that one of the priorities of the ECO agenda should be taking actions on the interconnection of ECO rail networks and the development of unified railway infrastructure of the region. We do believe that an early completion of Qazvin-Rash-Astara (Iran) – Astara (Azerbaijan) project which is a missing and important link of North-South Transport Corridor, will give new impetus to economic growth, expand transport opportunities for involved countries as well as the whole region.

Distinguished colleagues,

Modern societies cannot be competitive, without an updated ICT infrastructure. ICT is indispensable part of interconnectivity and I am proud to stay that Azerbaijan has also been

actively involved in developing the relevant regional projects. Trans Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) is an outstanding example of this.

Azerbaijan is committed to development of the ICT cooperation in the ECO region and as continuation of its efforts to streamline the regional cooperation in this sector, Azerbaijan organized meeting of the respective ministers in 2017. I am sure that the outcome of ministers' deliberations will contribute to achieving our common goals in field of ICT.

Energy cooperation plays the role of a backbone of regional cooperation processes. It all started when Azerbaijan came up with a new energy strategy and a new vision of energy cooperation. Azerbaijan became an essential partner in ensuring energy security for a wider region. We pioneered diversification of a pipeline infrastructure; we linked Caspian, Black and Mediterranean Seas. Today, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum stand out as symbols of genuine spirit of cooperation. We are working now on a Southern Gas Corridor comprised of a Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and a Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP). We plan to be able to deliver our gas from Shah Deniz field to EU by 2020. Realization of these energy projects will diversify the energy sources, as well as enhance security of energy supply and transportation within the region and beyond.

Dear colleagues,

Maintaining security and stability is a crucial component in building successful society and regional cooperation. Regrettably, since our last meeting stability and security in our region became even more fragile, new conflict hotbeds emerged and prospects of the region's development were seriously compromised.

Unfortunately, Armenia continues its occupation of 20% of the Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories thus undermining the regional security and stability as well as impedes full-fledged regional cooperation. Armenia went even further in its aggression policy now trying to associate other countries with the illegal occupation through attracting businesses, trade and investments in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

It is very important for our cooperation, that all countries are aware of such intentions of Armenia and reject any type of social, economic and cultural involvement in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. I call all ECO Member States to prevent any attempts to engage in trade, economic and investment activities in or with the regime on occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Withdrawal of Armenian military forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and ensuring the return of the refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes will not only contribute to peace and security in the South Caucasus but also enhance full-fledged intra-regional cooperation.

What is our take on this transport and trade issues? What can guide us on those objectives? Well, we have the Islamabad Summit Declaration and, most recently, the Dushanbe Communiqué. All the points, which I have mentioned in my remarks, are there. We don't simply need to reflect on them, we actually should put them into a reality.

One more point, which should not be omitted, our new Secretary General - Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, my warmest congratulations to you on your taking charge in the Secretariat. I believe that what I mentioned in my remarks reflects well in your vision about what our Organisation should strive for. We have heard you have a stellar knowledge about the issues of mineral resources, biodiversity, and development. Be it an issue of transport, trade, energy or anything else – your areas of expertise and your skillset will be very important for bringing us closer to the results and more projects in ECO.

Let me please assure you that Azerbaijan has always delegated professionals to work in the Secretariat, and we will be doing so again very soon. Azerbaijan has also always paid its membership fees on time and views that a financial order and discipline must be preserved in ECO. We are brothers and strong partners in ECO, and I understand that there may be few exceptions, but a financial discipline is not an issue of bargaining or reallocation of some positions in the Secretariat.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you success during the meeting and thank once again the organizers of this event.

Thank you!

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE MINISTERIAL MEETING  
OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**

26 September 2018, New York

Mr. Chairman,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, we would like to express our deep appreciation to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for holding today's meeting and for its efforts as the current chair of the Movement towards promoting the principles, ideals and purposes of the Movement. Throughout its history the Non-Alignment Movement has played a fundamental role in strengthening international peace and security by promoting adherence to Bandung Principles.

Challenges to peace and security facing the world nowadays call for strengthening of the international legal order and redoubled efforts at all levels to prevent and resolve conflicts. Strict compliance with generally accepted norms and principles of international law guiding inter-State relations, in particular those relating to respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and inviolability of their international borders, is imperative to that end. The established principle of the inadmissibility of the use of force for acquisition of territory and the ensuing obligation of non-recognition of situations resulting from serious violations of international law must be applied and enforced universally and unconditionally.

Azerbaijan's position with regard to the theme under consideration is well known and stems,

among other factors, from its experience of facing armed aggression, ethnic cleansing and unlawful foreign military occupation.

At the XVII Summit of the NAM, held in September 2016 in the Island of Margarita, Venezuela, the Heads of State and Government expressed their regret that, in spite of the UN Security Council resolutions (S/RES/822, S/RES853, S/RES/874, S/RES/884), the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan remains unresolved and continues to endanger international and regional peace and security.

This solidarity has once again demonstrated the Movement's strong devotion to the just cause of standing against aggression, foreign military occupation and ethnic cleansing.

Regretfully, I don't have any good news to share with you today concerning the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. New leadership of Armenia demonstrates reluctance in the peaceful settlement of the conflict by making contradictory and irresponsible statements. Such provocative approach will definitely not serve for the positive developments in the negotiations process and will only worsen already fragile situation on the ground. We call upon international community to send a strong message to Armenia to act in accordance with international law and implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions adopted with regard to the settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

Dear colleagues,

The next Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement will be held on 14-15 June 2019 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Summit will be preceded by the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials on 10-11 June 2019 and Preparatory Ministerial Meeting on 12-13 June 2019. It will be an excellent opportunity for us to evaluate the progress of our work achieved since last Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Isla Margarita, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in September 2016 and Ministerial Meetings held since then.

With Baku Summit Azerbaijan will take over the chairmanship of the Movement. As the next chair we will spare no effort towards further enhancing the role of the Movement as an anti-war and peace-loving force, upholding the UN Charter and the Bandung Principles, as well as promoting, preserving and strengthening multilateralism with the United Nations at its core.

Azerbaijan assumes the chairmanship of the Movement in a critical time for all Member States of NAM, which necessitates our concerted and effective responses to the challenges of contemporary world. Chairmanship of Azerbaijan to the Movement will coincide with the 65th anniversary of Bandung Principles (2020) and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of NAM (2021). Both anniversaries will provide an excellent momentum for us to take stock of the achievements made so far and reflect upon how we, Member States, with shared vision and combined strength should respond to the multifaceted and emerging challenges that we continue to face.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING  
OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE ORGANIZATION  
OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION MEMBER STATES**

28 September 2018, New York

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the OIC Secretary General for organizing this meeting. I also use this opportunity to express our gratitude to the People's Republic of Bangladesh for successful hosting of the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the Council of Foreign Ministers and for the excellent leadership of the OIC Group in New York.

We express our profound satisfaction that after over 4 decades of its establishment, the OIC as the overarching multilateral body of the Muslim world, has continued to raise its profile and visibility at the international level and has become a strategic dialogue partner in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as in countering emerging challenges and threats.

OIC is an important partner of the United Nations in promoting global peace and security and post-conflict reconstruction, fostering a culture of peace and enhancing cooperation in humanitarian, human rights, social, economic and cultural fields.

Azerbaijan fully supports the proposal for an enhanced observer status of OIC in the UN General Assembly, consistent with Dhaka Declaration of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers approved earlier this year. In this regard, we look forward to the earliest finalization of discussions on this matter, with the subsequent adoption of the relevant resolution by the General Assembly.

We are seriously concerned that in recent years, the world has seen number of forced displacements hitting a record high as a result of conflicts and violence. This major increase in displacement around the world must be properly and extensively addressed by international community both to restore the rights of those millions of people that have fled from violence and to prevent further upsurge in number of displaced persons. Massive forceful displacement must be deeply worrying for OIC, as all the leading refugee hosting countries happen to be OIC Member States.

Against this background, we are very much concerned about the continued displacement of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya civilians to neighboring Bangladesh which according to the latest reports reached to a number exceeding 700 thousands. Having experienced hardships of hosting hundreds of thousands of people fleeing from aggression of Armenia, Azerbaijan acknowledges the challenges faced by refugee and IDP hosting countries. We express our hope that the rights of Rohingya Muslims to return to their native places in safety and dignity will be realized soon.

We are pleased to see the growing international support for the State of Palestine. I would like to reaffirm Azerbaijan's full support to the brotherly people of Palestine in their struggle for achieving peace, stability and sustainable development. Azerbaijan consistently stands for the two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.

Mr. Chairman,

On its behalf, Azerbaijan has always tried to make its contribution to the promotion and fostering of multicultural and interfaith dialogue. All ethnic and religious groups live in Azerbaijan in peace and harmony. We have hosted numerous events aimed at creating a better understanding among representatives of various religions, nationalities, and civilizations. Creating a society with no discrimination based on cultural and religious differences is possible and Azerbaijan is a vivid example of this.

The Baku Process, initiated by Azerbaijan in 2008 and implemented under the patronage of its leadership, has significantly contributed to strengthening dialogue, partnership and cooperation between the Muslim world and Europe. This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this initiative and a series of events will be organized on this occasion, including the high-level 6<sup>th</sup> Humanitarian Forum on 25-26 October 2018 in Baku.

Distinguished Colleagues and Dear Brothers,

Unresolved armed conflicts, existing and emerging security challenges and related humanitarian crisis threaten to reverse the development progress attained by us in the implementation of 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development. The ongoing armed aggression by Armenia against Azerbaijan still represents a major threat to international and regional peace and security and to the prospects for development of our region.

On behalf of my Government and people of Azerbaijan I would like to express profound gratitude to our noble Organization and its Member States for full support to the just position of my country with regard to the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against my country.

We welcome the report of the meeting of the OIC Contact Group on the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against Republic of Azerbaijan, which was held here in the UN headquarters on September 24, 2018.

Dear colleagues,

Inspired by its achievements in economic development, successful social policy, rich human capital and traditional values of multiculturalism Azerbaijan decided to put forward the nomination of its capital city Baku for hosting World EXPO 2025. Baku is the only candidate from OIC Member States for hosting EXPO. Availing myself of this opportunity I would like to kindly ask you to extend your support to the candidacy of Azerbaijan.

Thank you.

Assalami alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh!

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 73<sup>RD</sup> SESSION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

28 September 2018, New York

Mr. Vice-President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to congratulate Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés on her assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly as the fourth-ever woman being elected for this highly responsible position and to wish her every success in discharging her important duties. Ms. Espinosa may count on full support of Azerbaijan during her tenure. We are also grateful to H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajcak for his tremendous work in presiding over the Assembly during the seventy-second session.

I express my profound respect and gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations H.E. Mr. António Guterres for his dedicated leadership and efforts aimed at improving the efficiency of the Organization. Taking this opportunity, I would also like to pay tribute to former Secretary General Kofi Annan – “a man of peace”. His legacy will remain as true inspiration for all of us.

Mr. Vice-President,

The theme of this year’s General Debates is very timely and embodies the issues of utmost significance for all of us. We live in a globalized world where interactions between people representing different national societies are only getting more intense and more extensive.

Azerbaijan fully supports the Secretary General’s determination to genuinely contribute to preventing wars and sustaining peace, as well as his efforts towards responding early and effectively to conflicts and crises, assisting Member States in their endeavors to sustain peace and build resilient and prosperous societies and making the United Nations more coherent, integrated, effective and efficient.

As we embark upon a path of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we need to regularly test ourselves to identify the extent to which we are delivering on our commitments. Coordinated efforts and shared responsibilities among states backed by adequate resources are essential to secure sustainable future and ensure that no one is left behind.

Azerbaijan has adapted its national development strategy taking into account the SDGs, and continues to implement large-scale programs on improving good governance, sustainable growth, strengthening the rule of law, ensuring respect for human rights, providing facilitated access to public services, and promoting inclusive societies.

We continue to consistently undertake efforts aimed at promoting the living conditions of our citizens. The level of poverty in the country equals to 5.4 percent, while the unemployment rate is at the level of 5 percent. Davos World Economic Forum ranks Azerbaijan number 35 with respect to competitiveness. Among the developing countries Azerbaijan is number three with

respect to inclusive development index.

Azerbaijan contributes to regional development efforts through promoting connectivity. It plays an important role in bringing together continents, creating a platform for mutually beneficial cooperation. East-West transportation corridor was inaugurated in October 2017. It is a transportation corridor which saves at least two weeks of time for transporting goods from Asia to Europe and vice versa. Other important projects are South-North and South-West corridors, which, as a result of our efforts together with neighboring countries, become reality. Azerbaijan invests largely on these corridors and is an active participant of both initiatives. The first phase of the construction of Baku International Sea Trade Port Complex was put into operation in May 2018. The handling capacity of the port will be 15 million tons of cargo per year with opportunity to increase it up to 25 million tons.

Azerbaijan also initiated transnational broadband project, namely Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM), which aims to build a trans-national fiber-optic line between Hong Kong and Frankfurt. It will be the shortest line connecting East and West in the era of competition where every single second is important.

Today, Azerbaijan offers its own development model to the world, backed by internal stability, civil unity and solidarity in society, and an environment of peace and tolerance among the different peoples and religions living together in a liberal, sustainable and dynamic economy.

Inspired by its achievements in economic development, successful social policy, rich human capital and traditional values of multiculturalism, Azerbaijan decided to nominate its capital – the city of Baku – for hosting the World EXPO 2025. Our theme – “Developing human capital, building a better future” – is of universal concern and has a particular significance for Azerbaijan. It is also fully aligned with the international development agenda, in particular, the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The whole region of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Caspian has never hosted World Expos. In that sense, World EXPO 2025 Baku shall be truly universal in terms of expansion of its traditional geography and vivid example that through historically short time period of 27 years of independence the countries like Azerbaijan can achieve remarkable results for applying to the huge events like World Expo. Availing myself of this opportunity, I kindly ask the Member States of the Bureau of International Exhibitions to vote for Baku at the elections to be held in Paris late in November this year.

Sustainable economic growth has enabled Azerbaijan not only to focus on its national development strategy, but also to actively support the international development efforts. Azerbaijan has rendered international humanitarian and development assistance to a number of countries through the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Particular attention has been paid to addressing the needs of the developing and least developed countries, as well as those recovering from natural disasters.

Mr. Vice-President,



As this year we are celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Human Rights Declaration, we wish to reaffirm our commitment to strengthening democracy and protecting human rights as top priorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Government implements large-scale programs to create necessary conditions for all the citizens of Azerbaijan to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Education is a top priority in our domestic policy, because a well-established educated society is one of the guarantees of successful and sustainable development. The right to health is fully ensured in the country. Every year more than 5 million people – half of the country's population – have their medical check-ups totally financed from the State budget. Azerbaijan has been the first country in the Muslim world granting women the right to vote as early as in 1918. Azerbaijan strives to ensure gender equality and empower women in public and social life. Since we live in a digital age, it is worth noting that currently about 80 percent of the country's population have unimpeded access to internet, which has become the most favored and practical vehicle for information, media communication and free flow of ideas and thoughts.

Combating corruption lies at the heart of SDG implementation in Azerbaijan. Application of innovative approaches and technological innovations has enabled Azerbaijan to register significant progress in curbing corruption at the public sector. Earlier this year, the UN Human Rights Council has unanimously adopted a resolution on “Promoting human rights and SDGs through transparent, accountable and efficient public services delivery” initiated by Azerbaijan which aimed to promote the concept of ASAN public service delivery brand of Azerbaijan. Earlier in May, Azerbaijan has successfully presented its periodic report in the framework of the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. We remain committed to enhanced dialogue and interaction with other UN human rights mechanisms on the basis of mutual respect and understanding.

Azerbaijan is one of the world's recognized centers of multiculturalism. All ethnic and religious groups live in Azerbaijan in peace and harmony. We have hosted numerous international events aimed at strengthening intercultural dialogue. Being a member of both the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Council of Europe, Azerbaijan launched the Baku Process in 2008, the main goal of which is to strengthen dialogue, partnership and cooperation between the Muslim world and Europe.

Implemented under the patronage of Azerbaijani leadership, the Baku Process provides large-scale platform for the exchange of knowledge on interreligious and intercultural dialogue. In his most recent report on the promotion of a culture of peace, interreligious and intercultural dialogue the Secretary General specifically mentioned the important role of the Baku Process in advocating for dialogue among cultures. This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baku Process, and a series of events will be organized on this occasion, including the high-level 6th Humanitarian Forum on 25-26 October 2018 in Baku.

Mr. Vice-President,

From this podium, I am pleased to announce that Azerbaijan is going to take over the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement next year. Throughout its history the Non-Alignment Movement has played a fundamental role in strengthening international peace and

security by promoting adherence to the Bandung Principles.

The chairmanship of Azerbaijan will provide another impetus for advancing the founding principles of the Movement, the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of which will be celebrated in 2020.  
Mr. Vice-President,

Unresolved armed conflicts, existing and emerging security challenges and related humanitarian crises threaten to reverse much of the development progress. The ongoing armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan still represents a major threat to international and regional peace and security. The conflict has resulted in the occupation of one fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan and has made approximately one out of every nine persons in the country an internally displaced or refugee.

Since the very first day of the conflict, combat operations have been conducted exclusively inside the territory of Azerbaijan, almost in the middle of the country, affecting its civilian population and infrastructure.

In its resolutions of 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), the UN Security Council acknowledged the fact that military force was used against Azerbaijan; that such actions are unlawful and in contradiction with the purposes and principles of UN Charter; and that they constitute an obvious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The numerous decisions and documents adopted by other authoritative international organizations have been framed along the same lines. However, the key Security Council demands, including in the first place the withdrawal of the Armenian forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, have not been implemented yet. On the contrary, the policy and practice of Armenia clearly testify to its intention to secure the annexation of Azerbaijani territories that it has captured through military force and in which it has carried out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale.

Initially, after changes in the government of Armenia, there were some expectations that the new leadership will uphold democratic values and the norms and principles of international law, including the relevant resolutions and decisions of international organizations, particularly those adopted by the United Nations Security Council. Unfortunately, so far no progress has been observed in that regard.

Contrary to his earlier statements, the Prime Minister of Armenia now does not shy away even from overtly attempting to regard the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan as part of Armenia. Such an annexationist claim does not only constitute utter disrespect for the norms and principles of international law and the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, but even undermines the peace process mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group and its Co-Chairs. Thus, Armenia at the highest political level demonstrates that its real intentions are not the settlement of the conflict through negotiations, but continuation of the illegal occupation of the Azerbaijani territories.

As there are consistent unstable internal political developments in Armenia, with no external understanding on what is going on in this country, we cannot and will not exclude that the latest statements and actions of the Armenian Prime Minister are aimed at escalating the situation

on the ground even more and provoking armed hostilities along the line of contact and on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. But one thing is clear that full responsibility for the consequences of this negative scenario will lie entirely with the Republic of Armenia. We call upon the international community to send a strong message to and exert pressure on Armenia to ensure its full compliance with international law and to immediately and unconditionally start implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions adopted with regard to the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

Armenia has consistently obstructed the conflict-settlement process and, in the meantime, refuses to conduct result-oriented negotiations, while it regularly resorts to various provocations to escalate the situation on the ground and tries to consolidate the occupation of the seized territories by changing their demographic, cultural and physical character and preventing the hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis from returning to their homes. In flagrant violation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, Armenia continues to exhibit its policy of illegal settlement of Armenians, particularly those from Syria, in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Armenia's new leadership should understand that their promises to the Armenian people to make Armenia economically developed and prosperous State can't be possible without peace, good neighborly relations and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors. The earlier Armenia puts aside its territorial claims and withdraws troops from the territories of Azerbaijan, the sooner peace can come to our region and prospects for Armenia's development will be opened.

They are now talking much about democracy and the Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. But what about the Azerbaijani population of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Azerbaijanis from the seven surrounding districts who were subjected to brutal ethnic cleansing and forced to leave their places of origin, homes and properties? If the new Armenian leadership is calling itself democracy, then they have to act in accordance with the rule of law and democratic values and let those uprooted people return to their homes and withdraw its armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, as it is demanded by the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and other international organizations.

Azerbaijan sincerely believes that there is no alternative to peace, stability and mutually beneficial regional cooperation and is the most interested party in the earliest political settlement of the conflict. At the same time, no settlement of the conflict can be reached which violates the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and is inconsistent with international law. The resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you.

**WORKING VISIT TO THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG**

15 October 2018

**SPEECH BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING**

15 October 2018, Luxembourg

Madame Mogherini,  
Commissioner Hahn,  
Dear colleagues,

It serves me a great pleasure to be today here with you at this ministerial meeting. I hope it will give us an opportunity to exchange views on the state of play in our cooperation and highlight both achievements, as well as some areas where additional efforts could be made to boost our cooperation further. I would also like to express my gratitude to the host of today's meeting – to Mr. Jean Asselborn, as well as to our colleagues from the European External Action Service and the European Commission for the organisation of today's meeting and hospitality.

Almost a year passed since the last EaP Summit in Brussels. That Summit proved that a cooperation within EaP should be based on realistic considerations of challenging situation in the region and focus on the benefits and potential value-added which EaP framework could bring. It led us to reshape the EaP architecture in the light of the past experiences and endorse “20 deliverables for 2020” document with concrete objectives to achieve. We believe that once implemented, those deliverables will have a potential to bring a greater degree of resilience, prosperity, development and connectivity to our region. And the success of this process will depend on tangible results, which could be reached in both bilateral and multilateral tracks of our engagement with partners from the EU.

2018 has proved to be a productive year for advancement of our cooperation agenda with the EU. Adoption of the Azerbaijan - EU Partnership Priorities document is the very recent and important milestone in our bilateral relations. I believe this document will provide a necessary framework for our sectorial cooperation for 2018-2020. But we, when I say we it really means the EU, its member states and Azerbaijan, don't want to stop there; our target is further, beyond 2020. We would like to operate in mid and long-term predictable environment with the EU.

This year we also have moved further with our new Azerbaijan - EU bilateral agreement, which is set to be based on the principles of equal partnership and common interests. We continue our negotiations with a belief that this agreement will reflect the strategic spirit of our partnership.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to briefly touch upon our progress in achieving the goals of the 20 deliverables for 2020. Some of those goals are also in line with Azerbaijan's strategic roadmaps on key sectors. Institutional and structural reforms are being continued in order to ensure a sustainable economic development and socio-economic growth in Azerbaijan. According to the first results of these reforms, the sustainability capacity of the economy has further increased.

EU is still the main trade partner of Azerbaijan, taking a lion's share of our foreign trade turnover (around 50%). EU has invested more than \$15 billion to Azerbaijan economy in the last several years. There are more than 1,500 companies of EU origin which operate in Azerbaijan. A recent survey, done by the German-Azerbaijan Trade Chamber among those companies, shows an increased confidence in Azerbaijan's economy and reforms implemented.

Dear colleagues,

The objectives of strengthening institutions and good governance have been standing high on the agenda of the Government of Azerbaijan and continuous efforts have been taken for their implementation. Here, I would like to mention the recent reforms on fair, transparent and merit-based selection of future civil servants, further enhancement of the authority and power of the Judicial-Legal Council of Azerbaijan, the installation of "Electronic Court" information system in court buildings and etc.

It would be relevant to mention that in a recent report, the Council of Europe's Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) has highlighted Azerbaijan's judge selection process for its transparency and objectivity. I also wish to inform you that the Council of Europe Action for Azerbaijan for 2018-2021 is to be adopted soon and its successful implementation will undoubtedly contribute to a further realization of above-mentioned objectives.

On a trade front, connectivity features as a strategic dimension of cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral tracks of EaP. We continue to solidify our strategic partnership on energy through the implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor. An official ceremony marking the inauguration of the Southern Gas Corridor was held on May 29, 2018 at the Baku Sangachal Terminal. The ground-breaking ceremony for TANAP – a backbone midstream segment of the Southern Gas Corridor was held in June 12 in Turkey. Both landmark events were attended by some political leaders and senior-ranking officials from the EU and a wider Europe, including our friends from EaP. Trans-Adriatic Pipeline is in the final stage of construction. We support the development of a reliable network of interconnectors in the region. Therefore, we seriously think about and actually work on a gradual geographic extension of Southern Gas Corridor. It is not only about TAP project. We are confident that it will ensure a long-term energy supply and reinforce the role of natural gas as a clean and sustainable match with renewables for the energy mix in Europe.

In the field of transport, the extension of the indicative maps of the Trans-European Networks (TEN-T) can provide a solid platform to enhance our transport and trade dialogue. Here, let me emphasize that we need to finalize a long-term investment action plan as soon as possible. I would like to explain why. Today, Azerbaijan is an architect of some major transport projects across the wider region, including EU's neighborhood. Together with our partners, we promote East-West, North-South and South-West corridors. East-West Corridor is closely interlinked with EU-China Connectivity Platform, EU's Strategy on Central Asia and EU's very recent Joint Communication on Connecting Europe and Asia. The South-West Corridor after its completion will boost trade relations between the EU and markets like India and Iran. We are doing the same about constructing a regional web of reliable broadband digital connections. We are the initiator and promoter of Trans-Asian Super Information Highway project called TASIM. All of the efforts of Azerbaijan lead to a win-win situation for our neighbors and partners who are

willing to develop friendly and strategic relations with Azerbaijan. It will boost trade across the wider region, which also will have a multiplying effect across Eastern Partnership countries.

Using this opportunity, I would like to say that Azerbaijan is holding Chairmanship in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC). Transport and connectivity is the priority area of cooperation during this Chairmanship, and we will hold transport and ICT ministerial meetings in the end of October and in early December. BSEC constituency includes 3 EU member states, some candidate countries, associate partners, and other important neighbors of both Azerbaijan and the EU. So, it actually covers EaP geography and even a wider neighborhood. There are regional synergies between BSEC and the EU. Connectivity should be one of those elements of cooperation. Azerbaijan has much to offer in that regard, too. In BSEC, we have interaction with the EU – an ad hoc working group and even COEST – BSEC meetings. In fact, when we end our BSEC Chairmanship in mid-December in Baku at Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting, passing over a title to our friends from Bulgaria, we are already discussing the perspectives of organizing BSEC-EU high-level conference in Brussels. It will be during Bulgaria's Chairmanship in BSEC and during Romania's Presidency in the EU Council. With both countries – be in within EaP, or within Azerbaijan – EU track, or in a different regional format – we have things to discuss. But they concern many of us. They concern EaP as well.

In order to take full advantage of these opportunities, we also have to further promote the mobility and people-to-people contacts among us. Be it students, businessmen, musicians or mere tourists. This is why we attach particular importance to the successful implementation of readmission and visa facilitation agreements, which should pave the way for launching the dialogue on visa liberalization between the EU and Azerbaijan.

Dear colleagues,

Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution is one of the biggest issues for sustainable development of the region. Latest two of my meetings with Armenian counterpart and conversation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the Prime Minister of Armenia and what it was heard behind closed doors give us positive impulse on opportunity for moving forward. After the upcoming elections in Armenia it will be more clear whether Armenia is ready for peace and stability, which firstly means withdrawal of their troops from the Azerbaijan's lands.

Azerbaijan on its side, as it was declared on numerous times, is ready to launch substantive and result-oriented talks.

Distinguished colleagues,

Soon next year we are going to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EaP. We witnessed many things. But some things just don't change. The international order is challenged by turbulences in trade, cyber-attacks and unpredictable policies. EU political actors will probably need to adapt the EU to the changing environment in a lengthy period. We hope that the enthusiasm of the EU's engagement with Eastern neighborhood will not be affected.

I would like to recall that revised ENP has put forward the stabilization as the most urgent challenge in many parts of the European Neighbourhood. True stabilization is unimaginable without settlement of protracted military conflicts which threaten the stability and cooperation in the EaP geography. There's no doubt that the success of EU's engagement in the region and the future of EaP is closely interrelated with achieving security and upholding the fundamental principles of international law. We talk about resiliency. Failure to eliminate consequences of ongoing violation of these principles, as well as misinterpretation and selective application undermines rules-based European order. It undermines the very objective of resilience inside EaP and in general of EaP as such.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There are some achievements in EaP since its inception. However, we have to admit that we need better coordinated efforts to be able to further develop our cooperation within EaP.

Thank you!

## **WORKING VISIT TO THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC**

5 – 7 December 2018

List of meetings held during the working visit:

- Meeting between the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs in Milan
- Meeting with President of the Lombardy Region of Italy Attilio Fontana
- Meeting with Head of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Paolo Grimoldi
- Meeting with Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States Baghdad Amreyev
- Meeting with OSCE Secretary-General Thomas Greminger
- Meeting with the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wess Mitchell
- Meeting with the European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus Toivo Klaar
- Meeting with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Désir

## **STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV AT THE 25<sup>TH</sup> MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE OSCE**

6 December 2018, Milan

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate H.E. Mr. Enzo Moavero Milanese, the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE for excellent organization of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council. I also wish every success to our distinguished colleague H.E. Mr. Miroslav Laycak of Slovakia as the incoming OSCE Chairperson-in-Office.

Dear Colleagues,

Existing conflicts in the OSCE area remain the most serious threat to peace and security. The principle position of Azerbaijan is running in line with the norms and principles of international law, particularly in respect of states' territorial integrity, sovereignty within their internationally recognized borders. Since our last meeting of the Ministerial Council in Vienna, so far we still have seen no concrete progress towards resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. The fundamental principles of inadmissibility of use of force for the acquisition of territory and ensuing obligation of non-recognition of situation resulting from serious violations of international law and refraining from rendering aid or assistance in maintaining this situation, regretfully, are applied selectively by the mediating countries.

In the meantime, we witnessed consistent attempts of Armenia with active support of their Diaspora continued unlawful practice on altering demographic, cultural and physical character of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, infringing upon the human rights of hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced Azerbaijanis, including the right to return to their homes of origin. In flagrant violation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols, Armenia has continued illegal resettlement and other activities in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The unlawful actions by Armenia, including illegal military and civilian build-up in the occupied territories demonstrate its intention and systematic policy aimed at consolidating the occupation and imposing a fait accompli. These steps undermine trust in the peace process, especially in view of the failure to dispatch an assessment fact-finding mission to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan due to refusal of Armenia.

Relevant UN Security Council resolutions, principles of the Helsinki Final Act and decisions and documents of the OSCE form the basis for conflict resolution and for mandate of the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Conference. The UNSC resolutions of 1993 demanded immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and, as a reciprocal step called for opening up communications and transportation links and urged assisting the return of internally displaced persons to their homes. The underlying concept of this approach is based on removing consequences of the conflict, while deferring remaining political issues for follow up negotiations within the Minsk Conference.

Azerbaijan believes that there is no alternative to peace, stability and mutually beneficial regional cooperation and is the most interested party in the earliest political settlement of the conflict. The resolution of the conflict is possible only on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders.

The military occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan does not represent a solution and will never produce a political outcome desired by Armenia.

I am glad to inform you that yesterday we had very important and useful consultations with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs and Armenian acting Foreign Minister. For the first time within a year we managed to agree the Joint Statement by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries and Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan. One of the major points is of course intensified and result-oriented talks, including the talks on the high level. I believe whenever elections will be over in Armenia and new Government will be formed we must make a breakthrough next year and build up a good opportunity for bringing peace, stability and prosperity to the region.

Thank you.



**SPEECH BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ELMAR MAMMADYAROV  
AT THE 39<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)  
MEMBER STATES**

14 December 2018, Baku

Excellencies,  
Secretary General,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to cordially welcome you at the 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States, here in Baku and express my gratitude to you for accepting our invitation to join these deliberations.

The Azerbaijani BSEC Chairmanship with its motto “Boosting Trade through Connectivity” has focused on regional connectivity issues and I am confident that today’s 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs will be another good opportunity to exchange views and to discuss the current state of cooperation within the Organization and perspectives for our further joint efforts.

Our today’s agenda is rather rich with issues starting from increasing effectiveness and efficiency of our Organization, facilitation of trade, promotion of cooperation in the fields of energy, transport, ICT, tourism and agriculture as well as intra Organizational matters.

Dear Colleagues,

Being a landlocked developing country, Azerbaijan from the early years of its independence has strongly been supportive to building of interconnectivity in the region. For the last two decades my country has already initiated and mostly commissioned a number of regional megaprojects in the field of energy (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, Baku-Supsa, Southern Gas Corridor: TANAP, TAP), transport (East-West and North-South international transport corridors, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, the new Baku International Sea Trade in Alat) and ICT (TASIM) which are aimed at strengthening regional economic links.

The Azerbaijani Chairmanship paid a significant attention to the issue of connectivity within our Organization and has organized and facilitated number meetings on different levels including two Ministerial Meetings on Transport (25.10.2018) and ICT (04.12.2018) in Baku for further contributing to development and expansion of trade flows within the BSEC region and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conformity with our Chairmanship priorities, Azerbaijan also made efforts to streamline the ongoing reform process aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness of cooperation within our Organization. In this regard, we do believe that these efforts will be supported by incoming Chairmanships and the relevant Gap Analysis document recently prepared by BSEC PERMIS will guide us on this endeavor.

Excellencies,

Azerbaijan firmly believes in the prosperous future of the Black Sea region and has no doubt that this future can only be built on the basis of the good neighbourhood, mutual respect, humanity and tolerance.

The biggest impediments for the regional cooperation, in particular, in the geography of BSEC are unresolved conflicts. For Azerbaijan and Armenia it is Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The military occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan does not represent a solution and will never produce a political outcome desired by Armenia.

The principle position of Azerbaijan is running in line with the norms and principles of international law, reaffirmed in the BSEC Charter as well, particularly in respect of states' territorial integrity, sovereignty within their internationally recognized borders.

The still ongoing occupation and policies of self-isolation also deprive Armenia of its potential for economic growth and trade in the region. It also undermines our efforts to build a common regional trade in full respect to each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We hope whenever a new Government will be formed in Armenia upon the mandate of the people of this country we must make a breakthrough next year and build up a good opportunity for bringing peace, stability and prosperity to the region.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that Azerbaijan remains committed to the process of improving effectiveness of BSEC and wish our meeting to arrive at interesting and fruitful exchange of opinions to that end.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all Member States for their support to the Azerbaijani Chairmanship, which I believe will give a fresh impetus and guidance to our cooperation in the coming years.

I also would like to express my appreciation to the BSEC PERMIS staff for their support and valuable assistance throughout our Chairmanship. I wish to encourage them to multiply their efforts on the same path and in support of the next BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

Having said that I now pass the torch of BSEC to the Chairmanship of Bulgaria. We sincerely congratulate our Bulgarian colleagues on this occasion and wish them every success in their Chairmanship endeavors. Since we still are in BSEC Troika, we are more pleased to render any kind of assistance required from our side.

Thank you.

**INTERVIEW OF THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
AZERBAIJAN ELMAR MAMMADYAROV TO LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS  
ON THE RESULTS OF 2018 YEAR**

25 December 2018, Baku

**Question:** *What are the results of the ongoing negotiations on the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict for current year? How do you see their prospects, especially against the background of recent encouraging statements? (Azertac, Trend, Report, Interfax-Azerbaijan)*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** First of all, I would like to note that the position of our country regarding the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been repeatedly stated at the highest level within all platforms. The conflict must be resolved on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. Coming to the legal basis of the settlement, it is necessary to recall that this basis consists primarily of the 4 resolutions of the UN Security Council, a body responsible for ensuring peace and security worldwide, adopted in 1993, numerous resolutions and decisions of other international organizations, including the OSCE, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement, GUAM, NATO, the European Parliament and etc, as well as joint documents adopted in bilateral and multilateral formats.

Unfortunately, negotiations held over the years haven't yielded any results. But the recent developments taking place in Armenia, the conversations that took place between the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia on the margins of the CIS summits in Dushanbe and St. Petersburg, as well as my 3 meetings with my Armenian counterpart give grounds for a certain optimism regarding advancing the negotiation process. In a joint statement by the Heads of the delegations of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chair countries and the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia dated December 6, adopted in the framework of the OSCE Ministerial meeting in Milan, the agreement to continue negotiations towards a just and lasting peaceful settlement of the conflict is noted. Hence, the format of negotiations remains unchanged. The document also reflects the call for implementing the understandings reached in Dushanbe at the level of the leaders of the two states and for taking concrete measures to prepare the people of the both countries for peace. Another important issue is that the joint statement reflects the idea of the need to conduct intensive results-oriented negotiations in the near future at the level of leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia in order to promote a just and lasting settlement of the conflict. I would like to point out that this approach is fully supported by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs.

In general, I would like to note that after the elections held in December of this year the current leadership of Armenia should demonstrate the political will to resolve the conflict and, in accordance with good-neighborly philosophy, act in the name of achieving peace, stability and sustainable development in the region.

We hope that in 2019, certain progress will be achieved in terms of withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and the normalization of relations between the two countries. Progress in the conflict resolution, creating conditions for peace, security and stability in the entire region, opens up opportunities primarily for economic growth

in Armenia itself. Our country, in the same way as it ensures the safety of its citizens of different ethnic groups, in accordance with its international obligations is ready to do so with respect to its citizens of the Armenian origin in Nagorno-Karabakh and to grant them the right of high-level self-rule within the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani Community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of our country is ready to return to their homes, and this issue was again stressed in the recently released statement of the Community. If you remember, some time ago there were contacts between the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, but, unfortunately, due to the “efforts” of the previous leadership of Armenia, these contacts were interrupted. You know, it is impossible to take the land and move with it to another place. After the settlement of the conflict, of course, these two communities will have to live together. That is why it is important to promote and restore contacts between the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Question:** *Which important achievements of Azerbaijan can you mention in its relations with international organizations? (Azertac)*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** 2018 is remembered with a number of achievements of our country, which pursues the goal of cooperation and active representation within the international organizations. In this regard, the UN and its specialized organizations, as well as other regional organizations can be mentioned. Thus, at a number of events and meetings held and speeches made in the framework of the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly on 25 September – 1 October of this year the support and understanding to the Azerbaijani position was demonstrated with regard to the issues of concern to Azerbaijan, as well as the current issues of the international agenda. On December 17, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled “Missing persons” initiated by Azerbaijan which draws attention of the international community to respect of the provisions of international law and prevention of the cases of persons reported missing in connection with the armed conflicts, taking all appropriate measures with respect to the search for the missing persons, as well as the cooperation in accordance with their international obligations in the field of determining the fate of missing persons. This important initiative once again stressed the humanist character of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy, its commitment to the international law and its obligations, as well as the resoluteness of achieving the implementation of these rules by the UN Member States.

On April 3-5, the Mid-term Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement member states was held in Baku with participation of the representatives from 117 countries and 16 international organizations. The final document and the Baku Declaration adopted at the end of the event unambiguously supported Azerbaijan’s position on the peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize the resolution on “Annual report on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy of the European Union” adopted by the European Parliament on December 12 of this year. Thus, this resolution reiterated the settlement of the existing conflicts on the basis of the principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders.

Our chairmanship to the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation during July 1 – 31 December was very useful and during that period 4 ministerial meetings and more than 20 thematic working group meetings were held, as well as the gap analysis document was adapted upon our initiative.

I would like to especially emphasize the ever-growing unequivocal support of the international community towards the resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As a result of our continuous efforts, the notion of the support to territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders has become more widely used in our diplomatic lexicon. The support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders in numerous documents and statements accepted as a result of bilateral and multilateral meetings, including the final document of the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Alignment Movement, final statement of the NATO Summit, the abovementioned resolution of the European Parliament, joint trilateral statements and several joint bilateral statements has served to further strengthening of the existing legal basis of the conflict settlement.

This year the membership requests of Azerbaijan to electoral bodies of several international organizations were successful as well. As an example, on June 6 Azerbaijan had been elected a member to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee; a day later in New York to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in November in Dubai became the member of the International Telecommunication Union Council for 2019-2022, as well as the representative of our country became member of the ITU's Radio Regulations Board.

Apparently, in 2018, Azerbaijan continued its efforts of further advancing its interests within different international organizations.

**Question:** *What are the prospects opened by the agreement on the legal status of the Caspian Sea signed this year by the Caspian countries from the point of view of development of new oil and gas fields and the construction of the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline? (Trend)*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** The Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea, signed by the leaders of the “Caspian Five” in August of this year, opened up new, unique opportunities for cooperation among states. The Convention regulates the rights and obligations of the parties regarding the use of the Caspian Sea and its rich natural resources. It defines the delimitation parameters in the Caspian Sea.

The signing of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea was a truly historic event that marked the goodwill of the five littoral states. The main significance of this document for our country is that it defines the sovereign and exclusive rights of coastal states to use the rich natural resources of the sea. Thus, the Convention ensures the consistency and safety of the implementation of various projects in the field of oil and gas industry, as well as the implementation of other economic activities at sea. It creates conditions for freedom and safety of navigation, which plays an important role in terms of development of trade in the Caspian Sea and growth of the economies of our countries.

In general, the implementation of the Convention's provisions will ensure the achievement

of its announced goal - the transformation of the Caspian Sea into a zone of peace, good neighborliness, friendship and cooperation.

Azerbaijan, as a country that has historically been a pioneer in the implementation of large projects in the Caspian Sea, plans to continue and expand cooperation with coastal states here.

Due to a successful energy policy, Azerbaijan has managed to guarantee its economic security, as well as to gain the image of a reliable partner, producer and transit state, contributing to the energy security of Europe. Currently, by the initiative and with the participation of Azerbaijan, the construction of the largest infrastructure and energy projects like, for instance, the Southern Gas Corridor is going on. This project plays a great role in terms of transporting natural gas from the Caspian Sea region to Europe, and we are always ready to provide our capabilities to neighboring, friendly countries wishing to use transit routes through Azerbaijan.

**Question:** *As it is known, from the next year Azerbaijan will chair the Non-Aligned Movement for three years. What will be the promises of this important event to Azerbaijan? (Azertac)*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** As you might know, Azerbaijan joined the Non-Aligned Movement in 2011, aiming to develop the international cooperation. This organization is one of the largest international organizations that unite 120 member countries, 17 observer countries and 10 observer organizations. The Non-Aligned Movement is an organization which has a rich history and has been traced back by many well-known historical state leaders like Josip Broz Tito, Jawaharlal Nehru, Fidel Castro and others. It is praiseworthy that in a very short time our country was not only able to introduce itself within the organization but also to chair the Non-Aligned Movement for the term of 2019-2022.

As you might know, several initiatives of Azerbaijan was supported in the final document of the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement member states which was held in April of this year in Baku and the importance of the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan in accordance with the UN Security Council's four resolutions was reiterated in this document. The Azerbaijani chairmanship to the Non-Aligned Movement will be built on the 3 main priorities which aim to further increasing the reputation of the organization and it includes the promotion of Bandung principles, strengthening of the unity within the Movement and increasing the effectiveness of the Movement.

I am confident that our chairmanship to the Non-Aligned Movement will create additional opportunities for us to present our country's position at international level. The Movement has 120 members which make up two-thirds of the UN member states and which means the ability to influence any decision-making process.

Our chairmanship to the Movement will also create appropriate opportunities for the implementation of various initiatives of our country. In its turn the implementation of these initiatives will serve to further enhancing our country's international reputation.

**Question:** *Would you please comment on signing a new strategic partnership agreement, including facilitation of visa regime between Azerbaijan and the EU in 2019? What dividends*

*will it bring to Azerbaijan? (Interfax-Azerbaijan)*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** Azerbaijan is interested to develop equal and mutually beneficial partnership relations with the European Union. The last year of our partnership was very useful in terms of furthering the agenda of cooperation with the EU. In this regard, I would like to emphasize the document on Azerbaijan-EU Partnership Priorities initialed with the participation of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the European Council Donald Tusk in Brussels on July 11 and adopted in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting held on October 15 in Luxembourg. It is worth mentioning the new comprehensive agreement and ongoing negotiations between the EU and Azerbaijan, which will open an important stage in our bilateral cooperation. The negotiation process is still ongoing and it is natural that will take a while, because we and our EU partners, need a serious, quality agreement. This agreement will serve as a legal basis of bilateral relations and will strengthen our bilateral sectoral co-operation for a long time. We believe that this agreement will be a strategic document based on equal partnership and shared interests. This agreement is important not only for us, but also for EU member states. The visa facilitation agreement is in force already for several years. The logical continuation of the agreement is a complete cancellation of the visa regime with the EU. That means liberalization of the visa regime. But it requires some time.

**Question:** *What are the priorities of Azerbaijan's foreign policy for 2019? (Report)*

**Elmar Mammadyarov:** As in the current year our country will continue its independent, diversified, balanced and active foreign policy based on the national interests of our country and will defend our national interests in the international arena during the upcoming year under the direct leadership of the President Ilham Aliyev.

Today, Azerbaijan is the initiator and participant of large-scale projects promoting regional cooperation and an influential state in the international arena.

Today, the foreign policy achievements of our country, which is regarded as a reliable partner, are of course based on establishing balanced relations with neighboring countries and other countries of the world, as well as implementing equal dialogue and cooperation based on mutual interests.

Of course, our foreign policy priorities in 2019 will include the strengthening of sovereignty and independence of our country, elimination of consequences of military aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and restoration of territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders, as well as, the continuation of large-scale infrastructure projects implemented with the initiative and participation of Azerbaijan, further development of mutually beneficial cooperation with all international actors, including states, associations and international organizations.

## VISITS OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT TO THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN (JUNE – DECEMBER 2018)

### The official visit of the President of the Republic of Turkey to the Republic of Azerbaijan

10 July 2018, Baku

#### *Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev during the Press Conference*



My dear brother, dear Mr. President,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen!

Mr. President, I sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan. Welcome to our country, welcome to your homeland!

First of all, I want to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate you on your convincing victory in the presidential election again and wish you continued success in your future activity.

We are very delighted that you are paying your first official visit after the election to Azerbaijan. Your swearing-in ceremony took place in Turkey yesterday, and today you are on an official visit to Azerbaijan. This shows once again that Turkish-Azerbaijani friendship and brotherhood are unshakable and eternal. Your visit is yet another example of Turkish-Azerbaijani brotherhood and a further demonstration of our unity.

The Turkish people have shown great confidence and support for you again. For many years, you have been doing a great job for the development of Turkey. Under your leadership, Turkey has covered a long and glorious road and evolved into a great force on a global scale. Turkey enjoys authority in international affairs today. Economic reforms are successfully under way. In terms of economic development, Turkey is in one of the leading places in the world. Under your leadership, stability has been fully established in Turkey. We, the people of Azerbaijan, are very pleased with Turkey's successes. An important role in the fact that Turkish-Azerbaijani ties have reached this level is played by our joint efforts. There is personal friendship between us, and this brings our countries even closer together. Turkish-Azerbaijani relations are at the highest level today. We stand by each other on all matters, always support each other and are side by side on all international issues. Turkey always provides Azerbaijan with great support in the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It is Turkey that gives Azerbaijan the biggest support on this issue on a global scale.

As you know, our lands have been occupied by Armenia for many years. As a result of



occupation, our people have been subjected to ethnic cleansing. The soonest settlement of this conflict will mean a restoration of the norms of international law. The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions in connection with the conflict. They explicitly state that the Armenian armed forces must withdraw from Azerbaijani lands immediately and unconditionally. These resolutions must be implemented and the territorial integrity of our country must be restored.

Turkey's position on this issue meets the norms of international law and also rests on Turkish-Azerbaijani brotherhood and friendship. Azerbaijan, in turn, also always supports Turkey on all matters. We will continue to be together in the future.

During our meeting held today, we exchanged views on a number of issues. We have analyzed the work done and discussed plans for the future. Our trade turnover is growing and should grow even more. Mutual investment will be continued. To date, Azerbaijan has invested 13.9 billion dollars in the Turkish economy. Turkish companies have invested more than 12 billion dollars in Azerbaijan. These large figures actually demonstrate the level of our connections because such major investment can be made only in fraternal countries.

As you know, we are implementing energy projects of great importance for our countries, peoples and the world together. Last month, we jointly participated in the inauguration of TANAP in Eskisehir. This is natural and quite logical because we laid the foundation of the TANAP project in Istanbul together in 2012. The TANAP agreement we signed has already been implemented and this historic project has been launched.

The successful implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor project is coming to the end. The completion of the TANAP project is a very big step in this direction. As you know, other major energy projects were jointly implemented in previous years. Turkey and Azerbaijan have redrawn the energy map of Eurasia.

Transport-related projects have strengthened our countries and, at the same time, created a healthy link between continents. So our joint efforts are of great importance not only for our countries, but also for the entire region and Eurasia. Turkish-Azerbaijani unity and friendship have greatly benefited regional stability. I am sure that peace will be established in the region thanks to the joint efforts of Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkey has a very strong military potential. The Turkish army is one of the strongest armies in the world. Our cooperation in the military sphere has been very successful. Seven military exercises will be held between our servicemen this year, three of which have already been conducted. Azerbaijan acquires a lot of military equipment from Turkey. A part of this equipment was demonstrated in the military parade held in Azerbaijan last month.

We have multifaceted relations. They are underpinned on unity and common interests of our peoples and states. We are friendly and fraternal countries. This is further evidenced by the fact that the President of Turkey is paying his first visit after the election to Azerbaijan.

My dear brother, let me welcome you once again. I wish you further success in your activities.

Thank you.

## The official visit of the President of the Italian Republic to the Republic of Azerbaijan

18 – 19 July 2018, Baku

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Memorandum of Understanding between Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction and the Polytechnic University of Milan, Italy
- Memorandum of Understanding between Azerbaijan Railways CJSC and the Italian State Railways
- Technical Agreement in the field of veterinary medicine between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Health of the Italian Republic
- Joint Declaration on cooperation in the field of higher education between the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Education, University and Research of the Italian Republic

### *Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev during the Press Conference*



Dear Mr. President,  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!

Mr. President, first of all, let me sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan again – welcome to Azerbaijan!

This is the first visit of the President of Italy to Azerbaijan. It is a historic visit. The Italian President is visiting Azerbaijan for the first time. I am grateful to you for accepting my invitation. I am sure that the visit will be very successful and Italian-Azerbaijani relations will continue to develop successfully. We have multifaceted ties which cover many areas. Many issues were discussed in the negotiations and meetings today. Issues of regional development and regional security, the relations between the European Union and Azerbaijan, our bilateral political and economic relations – many issues have been discussed, and I can say that our positions coincide on all issues.

Italy currently presides over the OSCE. We hope and are sure that Italy, as a country presiding over the OSCE, will play an active role in the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I have briefed Mr. President on the conflict and outlined Azerbaijan's position on the current state of the talks. We want an early settlement of this conflict on the basis of norms and principles of international law and within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The historical lands of Azerbaijan recognized by the international community – Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts – have been under Armenian occupation

for many years. As a result of this occupation and a policy of ethnic cleansing, 20 per cent of our land has been captured and over a million Azerbaijanis have become IDPs and refugees. War crimes have been committed against our people. The historical and religious monuments on our occupied lands have been destroyed. The OSCE has sent two fact-finding missions to the occupied regions. The reports of these missions indicate that Armenia has destroyed all our historical monuments and infrastructure facilities. There is a legal basis for the settlement of the conflict. Twenty-five years ago, the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions. The resolutions state that the Armenian armed forces must withdraw from the occupied lands immediately and unconditionally. These resolutions are still in force and it is necessary to ensure their implementation. Unfortunately, Armenia has for many years ignored these resolutions, continues its predatory policy and is trying to maintain the status quo. The co-chair countries of the Minsk Group, which deals directly with this issue, have repeatedly stated at the level of presidents that the status quo is unacceptable and must be changed. We support this position and believe that it is necessary to take steps to resolve the conflict as soon as possible. Armenian occupying forces should withdraw from our historical lands.

The “Partnership Priorities” document initialed between the European Union and Azerbaijan a week ago reiterates the European Union’s support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its borders. The Declaration on the results of the NATO Summit adopted on the next day also supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. So it is no secret for anyone that Armenia has illegally seized our historical lands and must vacate them. Only after that can peace and cooperation be established in the region. Only after that can there be large-scale cooperation in the South Caucasus.

We have discussed the relations between the European Union and Azerbaijan today. Italy has a very positive role and position on these issues. I do hope that a new agreement will be signed between the European Union and Azerbaijan in the near future. Work on the agreement is under way. We have signed and adopted declarations on strategic partnership with member-countries of the European Union. Such declarations have been signed with nine countries, including Italy. In 2014, Italy and Azerbaijan adopted a Declaration on Strategic Partnership. This is a very serious political document which essentially demonstrates our relations with each other and establishes a format for further cooperation.

As for bilateral relations, as I have already noted, we are strategic partners. Our political ties are at a very high level, and the official visit of the President of Italy to Azerbaijan is vivid evidence of this. Italy is our top trading partner. Azerbaijan exports large amounts of oil to Italy. There is excellent cooperation in the energy sector. I am confident that this cooperation will deepen further in the future. Azerbaijan is successfully implementing the Southern Gas Corridor project together with partner countries. It is a \$40 billion project, and most of it has already been implemented. The official opening of the Southern Gas Corridor took place in Baku this year. The TANAP project, which forms a significant part of it, was inaugurated in the city of Eskisehir. So work in this direction is progressing fast, which also plays an

important role in the development of relations between the European Union and Azerbaijan.

Italian companies successfully operate in Azerbaijan. They have taken an active part in the construction of the polypropylene plant due to open today. There are many Italian companies operating in Azerbaijan. We have talked about this, and I told President Mattarella that all doors are open to Italian companies in Azerbaijan. We are aware of their high level and the fact that these companies have advanced technologies. They have implemented numerous projects in the construction sector, in the fields of agriculture and heavy industry in Azerbaijan. And they have done that at the highest level. Of course, the meetings held and the Italian-Azerbaijani business forum due with our participation tomorrow will usher new opportunities, because the rapid industrial and economic development of Azerbaijan requires the import of new technologies. Of course, we would certainly like to import these technologies from friendly countries.

President Sergio Mattarella and I have also had an exchange of views on cooperation in the field of culture and education. By the end of our negotiations, we reached the conclusion that we do not have any disagreements on the issues on our agenda. Our opinions coincide on all matters. Azerbaijan is a very reliable partner for Italy, and so is Italy for Azerbaijan. I am confident that our ties will be further strengthened after this visit and we will continue to cooperate fruitfully for many years to come.

Mr. President, I welcome you and your delegation to Azerbaijan once again. You are welcome!

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella attended inauguration of Polypropylene Plant constructed in Sumgayit Chemical Industrial Park under SOCAR Polymer Project**

18 July 2018, Sumgayit

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear President of Italy Mr. Sergio Mattarella,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a significant day in the life of our country today. We are gathered for the opening of a large industrial enterprise in Sumgayit. I sincerely congratulate you and all the Azerbaijani people on this occasion.

This ceremony is also being attended by the President of Italy, Mr. Sergio Mattarella. Mr. President, thank you for that. The participation of the President of Italy in this ceremony multiplies the importance of the enterprise. At the same time, the establishment of this enterprise is a manifestation of Italian-Azerbaijani friendship, because this large industrial enterprise has emerged as a result of international cooperation. Italian company Maire Tecnimont has completed all construction work at a high level and created such a beautiful piece of work.

As a result of the commissioning of the polypropylene plant and of a polyethylene plant before the end of this year, Azerbaijan's export potential will be significantly increased. Both plants will manufacture 300,000 tons of products annually, and 70 per cent of that will be exported to foreign markets. Thus, Azerbaijan will completely eliminate its dependence on imports and our country will have a large volume of non-oil exports.

This is precisely what our goal is in the economic sphere and in the field of industrial production. This plant is the example of a successful economic and industrial policy Azerbaijan has pursued in recent years. The plant equipped with state-of-the-art technology is in operation today. The plant generates hundreds of jobs – more than 500 to be exact. Our dependence on imports is being completely eliminated and excellent export opportunities are emerging. The issue of personnel training has been resolved at a very high level. The plant will provide a huge support for the development of the non-oil sector. I am sure that as a result of the plant's operation, thousands and perhaps even tens of thousands of jobs will be created because finished products will be produced from the raw materials manufactured by this plant. Azerbaijan will also eliminate its dependence on imports of this product. In other words, this large industrial enterprise is an example of our policy, the result of the work done.

The foundation of this plant was laid in 2015. I remember that day quite vividly. A huge industrial enterprise was created in a short time. I can say that an industrial enterprise of such size and level had not been built in the modern history of Azerbaijan yet. True, a lot of construction work has been done in our oil and gas sector – large platforms and drilling rigs have been built, but in the non-oil sector it is the largest industrial enterprise equipped with the latest technologies.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to once again express my gratitude to our Italian partners. I am sure that they will continue to work successfully in Azerbaijan, and the creation of such large industrial enterprises will be continued because there is a great need for that.

Azerbaijan is modernizing and strengthening its industrial potential. Azerbaijan is successfully pursuing a policy of industrialization. In the first six months of this year, our non-oil industry grew by 8.8 per cent. This is the result of the work done. After the commissioning of this plant and of the polyethylene plant at the end of the year, our industrial potential will increase even more.

A wonderful investment climate has been created in Azerbaijan. Investments in the amount of \$250 billion have been made in Azerbaijan in the past 15 years, and we see this in the example of this plant. Financial support was provided by foreign banks. This plant will use the most modern foreign technologies. The construction of the plant was provided by a well-known Italian company.

President Sergio Mattarella's official visit to Azerbaijan started today. This is a historic visit because the President of Italy is visiting Azerbaijan for the first time. The negotiations and the exchange of views held during the visit clearly demonstrate the high level of Italian-Azerbaijani relations. We are strategic partners in the true sense of the word. We are friends. We are linked through numerous projects and common interests. All these issues were discussed today. Tomorrow, President Sergio Mattarella and I will meet with Azerbaijani and Italian businessmen and talk to them. Of course, they can also follow all these events and see that political ties are at a high level. Thus, there are excellent opportunities for business circles. I am sure that both Italian and Azerbaijani companies will benefit from these opportunities and take important steps towards diversifying our trade turnover.

I mentioned during official negotiations today that Italy is our trading partner number one. This, of course, is a very positive fact. However, we want our trade relations to be multifaceted and to cover various spheres, and we will achieve that.

I am also sure that our plans related to further industrial development will be materialized. Numerous industrial enterprises built in line with the highest technologies will be created. Therefore, there will be a wide scope of work in the future, extensive opportunities for the operation of Italian companies in Azerbaijan.

I would like to once again welcome the President of Italy, Mr. Sergio Mattarella, to Azerbaijan. I should emphasize that this enterprise is being established in Sumgayit. Sumgayit is being visited by the President of a leading European state for the first time. This is very important for the history of Sumgayit. Sumgayit is a modern industrial city now. It is the second biggest industrial center of the South Caucasus after Baku. Sumgayit was established in the Soviet times as a city of the chemical industry. It has faced extremely serious environmental problems. I have informed the President about that. The environmental situation and the pollution of air were an issue of concern for the people. All this is over now. The highest environmental standards are observed in the modern and independent Azerbaijan today, and Sumgayit is one of the leading places in our country in terms of environmental activities. This plant will be of great importance for the people of Sumgayit too. Tens of thousands of people will work in the large industrial cluster to be created in Sumgayit. Thus, the city will develop successfully.

We are very delighted that the President of Italy is participating in the opening of this plant. This is a wonderful event indeed. It is a symbol of a true friendship. I salute the President of Italy and all the participants in this ceremony. I wish the plant every success.

Thank you.

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
hosted an official reception in honor of the Italian President Sergio Mattarella**

18 July 2018, Baku

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Ladies and gentlemen.

I want to welcome you to Azerbaijan again.  
Welcome to our country, Mr. President!

I would like to express my gratitude for the high orders of Italy presented to me and Mehriban Aliyeva. I view this as a high assessment of our work towards development of Azerbaijani-Italian relations.

The President of the Republic of Italy is paying an official visit to Azerbaijan for the first time in the history of our bilateral relations. I am sure that this significant event will open a new page in the development of our ties. Today, the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Italy is successfully developing in all directions, including the political sphere. An important role is played by reciprocal visits of various levels. I am pleased to recall my visits to Italy and our meeting with Mr. President. The adoption of the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Italy in 2014 raised our ties to a higher level.

I want to specifically mention our cooperation in the economic sphere. Italy ranks first among Azerbaijan's trading partners. In 2017, the turnover between our countries and the volume of exports from Azerbaijan to Italy increased. For many years, there have been ties in the field of energy. Azerbaijan closely cooperates with the Italian companies operating in this area. The official opening of the Southern Gas Corridor in May of this year will usher new opportunities for Azerbaijani-Italian relations in the energy sector. Large volumes of Azerbaijani oil are transported to Italy. Azerbaijan ranks first in Italy's oil imports – our country's crude oil accounts for 15 per cent in Italy's imports. The polypropylene plant commissioned today is an excellent example of our cooperation in the field of industrial production. Our countries cooperate in other spheres, including the fields of infrastructure, construction, transport and agriculture.

Our countries have rich historical and cultural ties as well. Political and diplomatic relations were established between the Azerbaijani state of Aggoyunlu and the Venetian Republic back in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Embassy of the Venetian Republic functioned in Azerbaijan from 1469 to 1478. At that time, Azerbaijani diplomats held negotiations in the Naples Kingdom. I should also note that Baku and Naples became twin cities in 1972.



Cooperation in the field of culture is also carried out successfully. A monument to brilliant Azerbaijani thinker Nizami Ganjavi was unveiled in Rome in 2012. With support from the Azerbaijani side, work was carried out to restore the Roman Forum. The joint humanitarian projects implemented with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation have further strengthened our ties in the field of culture.

Azerbaijan is one of the countries that actively participated at the Milan Expo in 2015 and was among the first to build a separate pavilion there. Our pavilion was visited by 3.2 million people.

The opening of an exhibition organized by the Heydar Aliyev Center together with the Italian Uffizi Gallery is scheduled for tomorrow. This exhibition will showcase the portraits of a great son of the Azerbaijani people, commander and poet Shah Ismail Khatai, and Shah Tahmasp kept in the Uffizi Gallery. I want to express my gratitude to the Italian side on this occasion.

Azerbaijan today plays an active role in regional cooperation and security. However, the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan, which has been ongoing for more than 20 years, poses great obstacles to peace in the region. As a result of this aggression, 20 per cent of the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan has been occupied, more than a million of our compatriots have become refugees and IDPs, and a policy of ethnic cleansing has been carried out against Azerbaijanis. The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions demanding an unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, Armenia flouts these resolutions. The Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict must be resolved solely on the basis of norms and principles of international law and within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

The “Partnership Priorities” document initialed between Azerbaijan and the European Union several days ago, along with the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of countries, also reflects the commitment to support the inviolability of international borders of states. In the Declaration adopted at the end of the recent NATO Summit in Brussels, the Allies reaffirmed their support for the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the settlement of the conflict on the basis of these principles. We do hope that Italy, as a country presiding over the OSCE, will play an active role in the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella attended an Azerbaijan-Italy Business Forum**

19 July 2018, Baku

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear Mr. President,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen!

Dear Mr. President, let me sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan once again and say “You are welcome!”. Your visit is of tremendous importance. During the discussions in yesterday’s meetings, we became further convinced that Italy and Azerbaijan are very close to each other, are friendly and partner countries. Our partnership is underpinned by joint interests and the same attitude towards international issues. It is no coincidence that Italy and Azerbaijan officially confirmed their strategic partnership a few years ago and adopted a declaration.

Your visit to Azerbaijan once again confirms that our ties of the nature of strategic partnership. A very open and sincere exchange of views on a number of issues was conducted yesterday. We want Italian-Azerbaijani relations to continue to develop as successfully and swiftly. The President’s visit gives a powerful impetus to the development of these ties. Of course, when political ties are at a high level, the business communities immediately see and realize that and begin to take steps. Our political relations – Mr. President and I had an exchange of views on this yesterday – are at the highest level. I can say that they are perfect, cooperation both in a bilateral format and within the framework of international organizations is very positive.

Of course, the business circles should and are using these opportunities. A good example of this is the opening of a polypropylene plant yesterday. It is an excellent enterprise we have created together. I told Mr. President Sergio Mattarella yesterday that this is a modern technological product of Italy in Azerbaijan. Of course, this plant is an example of cooperation between companies. We want this cooperation to deepen and expand in the future, so that new projects are implemented. There are extensive plans related to the industrial and economic development of Azerbaijan. The process of industrialization in Azerbaijan is going very fast. Of course, we need reliable and experienced partners. Italian companies are such partners because they have been linked to Azerbaijan for many years, have an excellent reputation and the highest technological capacity.

Therefore, I believe that further cooperation in the economic sphere should be carried

out in several directions. Italian companies are invited to Azerbaijan both at the level of presidents and at the level of government. I believe that Italian companies will take an active part in future projects related to our industrial development. We would be happy if Italian companies invested more in Azerbaijan. There are good opportunities for this. Foreign and local investments worth about \$250 billion have been made in Azerbaijan. The investment climate is very good and foreign investments are safely protected by law.

Italian companies work as contractors in various spheres in Azerbaijan. We are seeing this now. Such cooperation has been established in the sectors of construction, infrastructure, heavy industry, agriculture and processing. However, I do not believe that it is at the proper level. We must raise this level, and I hope the business communities talk about this today. Therefore, I believe that investment and work as contractors should become the main directions for the coming years.

Of course, Italian companies should know what our plans are. Our plans are published every year. The state investment program is executed every year. We have five-year plans for social and economic development. Since 2004, these programs have been published and implemented. They specify all the work to be done in Azerbaijan. They include infrastructure projects, the construction of social facilities in cities and even settlements and villages – whatever is related to technological development. You simply need to get this information. I believe that the business forum will play a positive role in providing this information.

The overall economic development of Azerbaijan is very positive and successful. As for the turnover, Italy is the first trading partner for Azerbaijan. However, we must admit that this is based on the crude oil factor because Azerbaijan transports most of crude oil in the direction of Italy, so the turnover is measured in large figures. We want our turnover to be diversified. We can export and import more non-oil products to and from Italy. Therefore, we must definitely consider the issues of diversification of trade in the future.

Over the past 15 years, Azerbaijan has developed very successfully from an economic point of view. Over the past 15 years, the economy, i.e. the gross domestic product, has grown 3.2 times. I think this is a record figure on a global scale. I think it is even more important that we have achieved good indicators in addressing social issues. Unemployment in Azerbaijan has sharply dropped and is at the level of 5 per cent. Poverty has declined from about 50 to 5.4 per cent. Our external debt accounts for only 20 per cent of the gross domestic product. The foreign exchange reserves of Azerbaijan are equal to the gross domestic product. In other words, all these indicators are evidence of a positive macroeconomic situation. Leading international institutions of the world also appreciate the activities of Azerbaijan in this field. The Davos World Economic Forum has ranked the economy of Azerbaijan in 35<sup>th</sup> place in the world in terms of competitiveness. I think this is an excellent indicator. According to other calculations of the same Davos forum, for example in terms of infrastructure development, Azerbaijan is ranked in 26<sup>th</sup> place in the world. In recent years, major infrastructure projects have been implemented, and Azerbaijan ranks third among developing countries in terms of inclusive development.

As you know, we have successfully implemented major energy projects. We have connected the seas. We have connected the Caspian Sea with the Black Sea by an oil pipeline. After that, we connected the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean by an oil pipeline. These are historic projects. We have practically redrawn the energy map of Eurasia and continue to do so. At present, we are successfully implementing the Southern Gas Corridor project. I would like to briefly note this as well. The Southern Gas Corridor consists of four projects. The second phase in the development of the giant gas field of Shah Deniz – this project was completed; the South Caucasus gas pipeline, through which Azerbaijani gas is transported in the direction of Georgia; the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline, TANAP, is a gas pipeline laid through the territory of Turkey, and the Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline, TAP. Three of these four projects have already been implemented. In May this year, the official opening of the Southern Gas Corridor took place in Baku and of the TANAP project in Turkey in June. This giant project with a financial volume of over \$40 billion links several countries and many companies. This project is being completed, as three of the four components of it have been successfully implemented. Thus, Azerbaijani gas will secure a place in the space of the European Union in the near future.

Another important area is transport. From a geographical point of view, we do not have access to the world ocean. But despite this, we are creating an international transport and logistical hub in Azerbaijan. A lot of diverse work has been done for this purpose. Six international airports have been created in Azerbaijan over the past 15 years. Repairs are under way on the railways within Azerbaijan. In May this year, the largest trade sea port in the Caspian basin was put into operation. At present, its cargo handling capacity is 15 million tons and will reach 25 million tons in the future.

Over the past 15 years, a total of 15,000 kilometers of roads have been built. We are connected with all the neighboring countries by beautiful roads. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway connecting Azerbaijan and Turkey was commissioned in October last year. Thus, the shortest route from Asia to Europe and back has been opened through the territory of Azerbaijan. Whereas the traditional journey by sea took 30-35 days, the new Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway route can transport goods from Asia to Europe in just two weeks. We can see that freight traffic along this route is increasing every day. It will become a new very reliable transport artery in the future.

In parallel, Azerbaijan is an active participant and member of the North-South transport corridor. We have invested heavily in this sphere. The North-South transport corridor is functioning at present. All the necessary infrastructure is being created on the territory of Azerbaijan. Goods are safely transported through the territory of Azerbaijan now. In the future, as a result of additional investments in neighboring countries, the capacity of this route will be further increased.

All this infrastructure allows us the opportunity to continue investing heavily in Azerbaijan, because all the oil and gas pipelines are in operation for future investments in the oil and gas sector. Their construction continues. Transportation opportunities for investment related to new industrial enterprises are quite extensive. I should also note that Azerbaijan has the

biggest commercial fleet in the Caspian basin. We have an excellent investment climate. More than 200 vessels carry cargo in the Caspian waters today.

Azerbaijan is a very stable country, both politically and economically. Therefore, I believe that Azerbaijan is a beautiful country for investment.

Of course, foreign guests might think that I am just praising our country here. I am not making a secret out of it – I am, and I should do that. After all, every head of state should strive to make his country better known and attract investment. But this praise is only fair. I am telling our guests the truth and hope that they are even more interested in coming to Azerbaijan and working here after my words.

Mr. President, let me thank you once again for visiting Azerbaijan and honoring us. You took part in the opening of a polypropylene plant in Sumgayit yesterday. And today you will say your word to business people together with us.

Thank you.

**The official visit of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan  
to the Republic of Azerbaijan**

10 August 2018, Baku

List of documents signed during the official visit:

- Joint Declaration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Memorandum of Cooperation between the Azerbaijan Export and Investment Promotion Foundation (AZPROMO) and the State Committee on Investments and State Property Management of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation and Tajik Aluminum State Unitary Enterprise
- Memorandum of Cooperation between the Azerbaijan Television and Radio Broadcasting Closed Joint Stock Company and the Committee for Television and Radio-Broadcasting under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Memorandum of Understanding on supply of petroleum coke between SOCAR and TALKO companies
- Agreement between the State Border Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan on the training of servicemen of the border troops of the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan at the Academy of the State Border Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of veterinary service
- Protocol on mutual allocation of annual education quotas between the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in the fields of industry and new technologies
- Agreement on Cooperation between the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Cooperation Program between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2019-2020

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon held a meeting in an expanded format with the participation of delegations**

10 August 2018, Baku

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear Mr. President, distinguished guests!

Let me sincerely welcome Emomali Sharipovich to Azerbaijan once again. I am very delighted to see you again. We have already had the opportunity today to discuss the agenda of bilateral relations in detail, and have touched upon the issues of regional cooperation. We will continue our work within delegations today.

We are very glad to see you in Azerbaijan. I am quite sure that your visit will give a new impetus to the development of friendly and fraternal relations between our countries. We have very active interaction in the international arena. Tajikistan and Azerbaijan traditionally support each other in international organizations we are members of, and this support is very important for our countries.

We will also discuss issues of economic cooperation today. Members of our delegations have already worked quite hard. Several meetings of official representatives of our countries were held in the run-up to the visit in order to prepare material for your visit and make important decisions on economic projects, including transport ones and those related to the development of industry of our countries. We have already talked about this today. Today we will discuss these issues in a wider format.

Of course, cooperation in the humanitarian sphere forms a very important part of our relations, and we rely on traditional ties between our peoples. These ties, of course, form a good basis for our present-day relationship. I think that we will have to work hard in the coming years in order to hold regular cultural events in our countries, so that our peoples are always in close contact. The agenda of our relations is quite extensive. We meet on a regular basis, discuss important issues within the framework of reciprocal visits and as part of international events. And we are glad that our friendly relations are developing successfully today. I wholeheartedly welcome you to Azerbaijan and wish you a pleasant stay in our country.

*Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
during the Press Conference*

Dear Mr. President, distinguished guests and friends!

Emomali Sharipovich, let me sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan once again. The visit of the President of Tajikistan to Azerbaijan is an important event in the bilateral relations of our countries. We often meet in Tajikistan and in Azerbaijan, and our contacts are regular in nature. Also, we always find time within the framework of international events to talk and discuss important issues. But an official visit, of course, is a completely different format, a completely different level of discussion and resolution of issues.

First of all, I would like to note that we are closely following the successful development of Tajikistan under the leadership of President Emomali Sharipovich Rahmon. Tajikistan is successfully resolving issues of socioeconomic development. The international authority of your country is growing. You are putting forward very important global initiatives aimed at sustainable development and resolution of important social issues. There is social and political stability in Tajikistan, which is the main factor for sustainable development. We rejoice in your successes and are sure that Tajikistan will follow the path of development and progress under your wise leadership.

Both in our private conversation and at the level of delegations, we discussed very important issues related to our bilateral agenda and regional issues. I am sure that the visit will have very good results, which will definitely have a positive impact on the socioeconomic interaction between our countries and bring our peoples even closer together. Many important documents have been signed today, creating important legal framework for our relations. These documents focus on the final result. I think that the successful implementation of the agreements we have reached will lead to a significant increase in the turnover and intensify our work in many areas. Of course, among the documents signed I would like to emphasize the Joint Statement of the Presidents of Tajikistan and Azerbaijan we have just signed. This is a fundamental and important political document covering all spheres of interaction between our countries. This document underscores the high level of political relations between our countries. This document reflects the main priorities in the spheres of economic, transport and humanitarian cooperation, as well as of the strengthening of security. The document also touches upon important issues of concern for our countries. Azerbaijan actively supports the initiative Tajikistan has put forward in the UN to declare the next decade, 2018-2028, a decade associated with the “Water for sustainable development” thesis. This is a very important initiative. We support it, as I said. This is reflected in the joint statement that has just been signed.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Tajikistan for its position in connection with the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The statement we have signed says that this conflict must be resolved in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and OSCE decisions, based on the principles of territorial





integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of the borders of Azerbaijan. On behalf of all Azerbaijani people, I would like to express my gratitude for such a fair position. This is both a friendly attitude and a fair position. After all, the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan has been under Armenian occupation for many years. Armenia flouts the decisions and resolutions of leading international organizations such as the UN Security Council, the OSCE,

the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and others. All of them have passed decisions and resolutions in connection with the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, stating that the conflict must be resolved within the framework of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

Today we have also extensively discussed issues of trade, economic and transport cooperation. We have reached some serious agreements in this direction, which will lead to rapid growth in industrial development of our countries. We saw once again how interconnected we are and how actively we can resolve issues related to our cooperation. This concerns issues of cooperation in the field of aluminum supplies, this concerns the Memorandum on the supplies of petroleum coke signed today, and many others. These are not just trade and economic agreements – these are projects that will contribute to the development of relations in the economic sphere for many years and create opportunities for creating hundreds of jobs.

I have informed the President of Tajikistan in detail about the transport projects Azerbaijan has implemented jointly with its partners. These projects are opening up completely different opportunities for exports, including those from Tajikistan and also from other Central Asian countries, through the territory of Azerbaijan. The launch of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, as well as the construction of a large commercial port of Alat, have ushered new opportunities for using this corridor for the exports of goods. Of course, we count on an increase in freight traffic from Tajikistan and agreements on this have been reached. We also expect a significant and multiple increase in the transit of cargo through the territory of Azerbaijan to international markets.

We have discussed issues related to humanitarian cooperation, cooperation in the fields of education and culture, and issues related to the development of agriculture. We have agreed to send special delegations to work out issues of close cooperation. In other words, we have full mutual understanding on all the issues we have discussed, and I am sure that everything we have discussed will be realized because all this is aimed at a specific result. I am sure that the results of the visit of the President of Tajikistan to Azerbaijan will make an important contribution to the further strengthening of fraternal relations between our countries. Dear Mr. President, welcome to Azerbaijan!

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev hosted an official reception in honor of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon**

10 August 2018, Baku

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear Emomali Sharipovich,  
Distinguished guests,  
Dear friends!

I would like to welcome all our dear guests to Azerbaijan once again. It is an important day in the history of relations between our countries. The official visit of the President of Tajikistan to Azerbaijan is an important stage in the development of our relations. The visit

has been very successful. We have held comprehensive talks today, exchanged views on many issues on the agenda of our bilateral relations, and once again confirmed our countries' commitment to strengthening and expanding cooperation and identifying important ways to strengthen trade and economic relations. You all attended the signing ceremony. The list of these documents itself characterizes the level of our relationship. The documents signed today cover many spheres of activity. I am sure that all of them will be fulfilled on time, thereby creating an even more solid foundation for our relations.

The distinguished President of Tajikistan and I signed a joint statement today. It is a very important political document which reflects our will, our interest in interaction, our common approach to issues related to the international situation, as well as Azerbaijan's support for the major initiatives Tajikistan has put forward in the UN as part of its water resources management policy. In this statement, we essentially defined the key ways of developing our relations. I am very glad that such a statement will serve as a basis for our future activities.

We spent a lot of time today to discuss issues related to industrial cooperation. The decisions we have made will produce a very good result and in a short time, I am sure. The result will be aimed at creating new industries, production facilities, industrial cooperation, and hundreds of new jobs. These decisions will create an entirely new system of cooperation between our industrial enterprises and provide even more work for the transport infrastructure of our countries. In other words, I am sure that the results of the visit will be very effective, and we will feel it in specific figures in the near future.

The esteemed President of Tajikistan and I have today exchanged views on the level of trade, which, of course, we can't be pleased with. But the measures we have taken and the documents signed will allow us the opportunity to increase the turnover between our countries several times in a short time.

Today we are reaching important decisions on integration of our transport infrastructure, cooperation in industrial production and access to foreign markets. As you may know, Azerbaijan has recently created a diverse system of transport infrastructure. We have invested heavily and created new transport routes. The shortest route between Asia and Europe today lies through Azerbaijan. Investments have also been made in the construction of highways, new airports and a major trade seaport in the Caspian. We are making all this available for our friends, for our partners in Central Asia, and, of course, we discussed these issues with the President of Tajikistan in detail today.

The visit underscores the commitment of our countries to deepening cooperation and opens up prospects in trade and economic spheres. We have also touched upon the issue of investments, and a mission to study investment issues will be sent to Tajikistan in the near future. We have also discussed issues related to the development of agriculture and tourism. In other words, it is possible to say that not too many areas were out of our attention. All this testifies to the political determination of our states to strengthen cooperation.

We are keenly following the successful development of Tajikistan under the leadership of Emomali Sharipovich Rahmon. Tajikistan today is a country with a stable public and political situation. This is the most important factor of development, especially when we see stability that is disrupted in Central Asia, in our region and in the Middle East, there is bloodshed, new conflicts are flaring up and old conflicts remain unresolved. Of course, the fact that there are peace, civil accord, public and political stability in Tajikistan is the key to the sustainable development of your country. Of course, the main role in this belongs to the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Sharipovich Rahmon, who played a huge role in preventing civil war at the early stages of the establishment of Tajikistan as an independent state, in creating an atmosphere of peace, prosperity and development in your country. Of course, we are seeing the results of that in the socioeconomic development of Tajikistan. We rejoice in your successes and, of course, are sure that the President's course towards socioeconomic development and enhancement of the role and significance of Tajikistan in global and regional affairs will be successfully continued. And we as your friends will observe and rejoice in your successes and, for your part, make effort to ensure that both Azerbaijan and Tajikistan continue to develop successfully and safely.

**The official visit of the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany  
to the Republic of Azerbaijan**

25 August 2018, Baku

***Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev  
during the Press Conference***



Dear Mrs. Chancellor,  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, Mrs. Chancellor, let me sincerely welcome you to Azerbaijan. Welcome to our country! This is the German Chancellor's first visit to Azerbaijan. This is a historic visit. We attach great importance to this visit. I am confident that German-Azerbaijani relations will develop rapidly as a result of this visit and that this visit will give a major impetus to our relations.

We have had a very open and constructive discussion on many issues on our agenda today. I am sure that the negotiations and the exchange of views held will create a good basis for further cooperation.

I have informed Mrs. Chancellor about the issues of regional security, in particular the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As is known, the territories of Azerbaijan recognized by the international community have been under Armenian occupation for many years. As a result of this occupation, more than a million Azerbaijanis have found themselves in the position of refugees and internally displaced persons on their own land. The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions in connection with the conflict. These resolutions state that Armenian armed forces must withdraw from the occupied lands immediately and unconditionally. Unfortunately, Armenia ignores these resolutions and does not fulfill them. The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan must be restored and the conflict must be resolved on the basis of these principles.

We have also exchanged views on other issues today. The turnover between us is growing. We will meet with representatives of business circles of Germany and Azerbaijan today. Companies from Germany are involved in many projects in Azerbaijan, and I am sure that their activities here will further expand after this visit as there are great opportunities for that. Azerbaijan is successfully pursuing the policy of economic diversification. Major investments are made and the investment climate is very positive. Over the past 15 years, Azerbaijan has received investments in the amount of \$250 billion, about half of which is foreign investment.

Of course, energy security issues are the focus of attention. Azerbaijan is playing a role in this sphere and contributes to the energy security of Europe. In particular, the creation of the Southern Gas Corridor is perceived as a historic event. This is a very large-scale project, a project requiring investments of \$40 billion, and it is being successfully implemented. The official opening of the Southern Gas Corridor took place in Baku in May this year.

Mrs. Chancellor and I have also exchanged views on democracy and the protection of human rights, and intend to continue our cooperation in this field. The European Union-Azerbaijan relations were also discussed, and we are very pleased with the way these relations have developed. A document on the priorities of the partnership between the European Union and Azerbaijan was signed this year, and work on the comprehensive agreement has been very constructive. I do hope that the negotiations are successfully concluded in the near future and a new period of cooperation between the European Union and Azerbaijan starts.

In short, these and other issues, including those related to the regional situation, have been discussed today. This shows that the relationship between us is quite sincere and friendly, and this visit will play a major role in strengthening these relations.

Dear Mrs. Chancellor, once again welcome!

#### **Q&A Session:**

Then President Ilham Aliyev and Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel answered questions from journalists.

**Mihaela Küfner (Deutsche Welle):** *President Aliyev, you have talked about development in the relationship. Opposition leader Ilgar Mammadov was recently released from custody. Many investigative journalists, including Afgan Mukhtarli, still remain in prison. This is why the Council of Europe criticizes you. Given the close economic cooperation with Germany and the European Union, as you have just mentioned yourself, and based on the commitments you have assumed as Afghanistan in the Council of Europe, will you begin to take further steps towards human rights standards? Did the German Chancellor speak to you about these specific cases during the conversation?*

*Mrs. Federal Chancellor, you also represent European values here. This is currently the topic of heated discussions in Brussels. What standards do you use in treating the partner country of Azerbaijan in this context? You mentioned that Germany would intensify its efforts in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Could you please spell out how this will be happening? Of course, I do not mean the conflict, but his settlement.*

**President Ilham Aliyev:** First of all, I should note that Azerbaijan is a country committed to democratic values. There are all democratic institutions in Azerbaijan, all freedoms are guaranteed, including the freedoms of speech and of the media. There are hundreds of print media in Azerbaijan, including many opposition publications. In other words, no-

one is persecuted in Azerbaijan, no-one is punished for criticism and for different views. The freedom of assembly is also guaranteed in Azerbaijan, and any political force can take advantage of these opportunities.

As you know, the presidential election took place in Azerbaijan this year. Both in the run-up to and after the election, the opposition held numerous actions and rallies – freely and without any obstacles. It is a different question that no more than a thousand people showed up for these rallies. This is probably a sign of the level of respect the opposition enjoys, but there are no restrictions.

Azerbaijan is committed to democratic values and human rights. The Council of Europe criticizes not only Azerbaijan but also many countries. We take this criticism normally. If the criticism is justified, of course, we draw the right conclusions. If we believe that this criticism is unfounded, biased and based on double standards, then, of course, we openly express our opinion. I mentioned in my opening remarks that issues related to human rights and democratic development were openly and constructively discussed with Mrs. Chancellor, and these issues will be discussed in the future.

Our agenda is quite extensive, and all the issues being discussed are of equal importance – energy, transport, trade, regional security, including democratic development. Issues of democracy cover a large portion of the new agreement being negotiated between the European Union and Azerbaijan today. This is our conscious choice, no-one coerced us into making this choice. Azerbaijan will continue to develop successfully as a modern and democratic country. Our political and economic reforms will complement each other and take Azerbaijan to a higher level.

**Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel:** There is no gradation in democratic values for us. We have a clear understanding of what democratic values are. This discussion is under way both in bilateral frames and within the Council of Europe. I would also like Azerbaijan to conduct a dialogue on the issue of organizing elections. We discussed these issues in detail today. Our standards are always the same and they are evaluated from the standpoint of prospects.

We will continue our work in the Minsk Group in connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. This time I visited both countries and have therefore developed a clear idea of how urgent a resolution of the issue is and how it should be resolved. We will step up our efforts. All parties must get involved in order to find a solution, and we will contribute to this.

**Elshan Rustamov (1News):** *Armenia has been keeping Azerbaijani lands under occupation for many years and has committed crimes against our people. As a result of the horrific act of genocide perpetrated by the Armenians in the Azerbaijani city of Khojaly, more than 600 civilians, including over 60 children, were brutally killed. As a result of Armenia's aggression, about 20 per cent of Azerbaijani territory is occupied. More than a million of our compatriots have found themselves in the position of refugees and internally displaced persons. Their property and homes have been looted. The fundamental human rights of these*

*people have been flagrantly violated. The UN Security Council has adopted four resolutions demanding an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from Azerbaijani territories. However, Armenia flouts and does not fulfill them. Why haven't any sanctions been imposed on Armenia yet?*

**Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel:** As I said earlier, we are working on a solution. I am very glad that there is at least some calm now. In other words, people do not suffer there at present, and Germany will certainly continue its efforts on the basis of the decisions of the UN Security Council and will try to find a way to resolve the issue in order to improve the situation for the people in the affected regions.

**Christian Wilp (RTL/n-tv):** *My question is for both Mr. President and Mrs. Chancellor to answer. Mr. President, you spoke about a gas pipeline that will extend from Azerbaijan to Europe – the Southern Gas Corridor. Are you in favor of increasing the capacity of this pipeline and extending it to Turkmenistan via the Caspian Sea? Mrs. Chancellor, what do you read into this issue? I would like to address another question to Mrs. Chancellor related to the current situation. Italy was threatening that if the refugees arriving in Italy were not spread across the European Union, it would reduce payments to the European Union. What do you think about that? Where will this lead to? And since we are talking about the topic of refugees in connection with the year of commitments in Germany, what do you think about the refugees in the country?*

**President Ilham Aliyev:** All work related to the Southern Gas Corridor in Azerbaijan is progressing on schedule. The Southern Gas Corridor is a giant international project consisting of four components – the development of the Shah Deniz-2 gas condensate field, the South Caucasus pipeline transporting Azerbaijani gas through Georgia, the TANAP pipeline transporting Azerbaijani gas to Turkey, and the fourth component TAP, or the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline. Three of the four components have already been implemented. The opening of TANAP took place in June this year. The remaining part is under construction. I do hope that there are no problems there either, and Azerbaijani gas will be delivered to European markets via a 3,500-km pipeline on time, i.e. in 2020. Thus, a very valuable contribution will be made to the energy map of Eurasia. Azerbaijan will therefore resolve all the issues related to energy security. After all, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline built in previous years delivers Azerbaijani oil to the Mediterranean Sea. The Baku-Supsa pipeline leading to the Black Sea was built on our initiative. The Baku-Erzurum gas pipeline has been built, and we will meet all our objectives by this fourth project.

As for Azerbaijan's transit capacity and our attitude, of course, every country wants more cargo to pass through its territory. At present, we are delivering oil from Turkmenistan to world markets via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and also transporting dry cargo from Central Asia through the territory of Azerbaijan via the recently commissioned Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. Of course, the construction of the Trans-Caspian pipeline should be of more interest to the owner of gas and transit countries should not show initiative here. Just as we have done as the owner of gas – we started the construction of a 3,500 km pipeline and



allocated large financial resources. Therefore, if there is a decision in the eastern part of the Caspian Sea to deliver gas to world markets via the territory of Azerbaijan, we can certainly consider this with great interest and make a decision then. But this decision should not come from us, but from the opposite side.

**Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel:** As you know, discussions are currently under way in

Brussels on the distribution of refugees in Europe. All countries are expressing their views. We have time until the end of August, and I do hope that we can succeed during this time. These negotiations are not so easy. Regarding your second question, let me say that we are continuing the negotiations, are ready to get acquainted with all the positions and after that a decision will be made on the principal issues.

**Sevil Mikayilova (Trend news agency):** *Azerbaijan accounts for about 70 per cent of Germany's trade with South Caucasus countries. At present, Azerbaijan is carrying out very serious reforms in the economic sphere. Special attention is being paid to economic diversification. Industry and non-oil industry, agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, and the ICT sectors are developing fast. President Ilham Aliyev and you will meet with business people from Germany today. What type of work do you think German business people would like to do in the areas I have mentioned, and what are their plans?*

**Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel:** I have come here with a business delegation. Companies have different proposals. I can note that there are projects in construction and infrastructure spheres, as well as in the field of building materials. We can work together in the agricultural sector, in the field of technologies for agricultural machinery, as well as digital and educational fields. In addition, a German company is involved in the preparation of documents related to security – passports, identity cards and banknotes. There is very broad choice here. We can participate in all the areas Azerbaijan is interested in. As I have already mentioned, there are already 150 of our enterprises operating in Azerbaijan. We invite other German companies to come here.



**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Chancellor  
of the Federal Republic of Germany Angela Merkel met with  
businessmen at the Heydar Aliyev Center**

25 August 2018, Baku

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear Mrs. Chancellor, dear guests!

I would like to welcome you to Azerbaijan once again. We have held an extensive exchange of views today. Many issues have been discussed, including cooperation in trade and economic spheres. We are continuing our meetings with the participation of business people. I should note that companies from Germany have been operating in Azerbaijan for many years.

They have worked in many fields and implemented various projects. Using public funds alone, German companies have implemented projects worth more than \$1 billion, and I am confident that this figure will increase even more in the future.

Companies from Germany are known very well in Azerbaijan. Their quality and technologies are of great benefit to our country. Azerbaijan is experiencing a period of modernization, and economic diversification is our top priority. In general, I can say that the Azerbaijani economy is developing very fast. Over the past 15 years, the Azerbaijani economy has grown more than three times. The macroeconomic situation in our country is stable, the external debt accounts for only 20 per cent of the gross domestic product, while unemployment is at 5 per cent. Over the past 15 years, Azerbaijan has received investment in the amount of \$250 billion. The Davos World Economic Forum ranks the Azerbaijani economy in 35<sup>th</sup> place globally in terms of competitiveness, and this shows that Azerbaijan is successfully pursuing a policy of economic diversification. Of course, we have major oil and gas resources. We are exporting them, but the main goal is to develop the non-oil sector, and companies from Germany can help us in this sphere, of course.

At present, our priorities are to develop agriculture, tourism, the information and communication sector, infrastructure projects, including the modernization of railways, construction and other sectors. I am sure that as a result of the conversations that will take place today, new contracts will be signed and a new format of cooperation will be created.

So let me welcome you to Azerbaijan once again and express my confidence that the final part of your visit will also be successful.

## The working visit of the Prime Minister of Georgia to the Republic of Azerbaijan

30 August 2018, Baku



On August 30, 2018 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze.

The Azerbaijani President and the Georgian Prime Minister made speeches at the meeting. Welcoming the Prime Minister of Georgia to Azerbaijan, President Ilham Aliyev congratulated Mamuka Bakhtadze on being appointed as Prime Minister and wished him

every success in this high role. The head of state stressed that the visit by Mamuka Bakhtadze to Azerbaijan soon after his appointment as head of the Georgian Government shows again that Azerbaijani-Georgian relations are at a very high level.

**President Ilham Aliyev said:** Our peoples have lived in the atmosphere of friendship and good-neighborliness for centuries. Today, the ties between the two independent states rest on a solid foundation. Georgia and Azerbaijan have jointly implemented many important projects. Together we have redrawn the energy map of the world. The projects we are implementing in the transport sector together are of great importance for the Eurasian continent. The Georgian, Azerbaijani and Turkish sides are heavily involved in the implementation of these projects. I believe that at this point in time we must make additional effort to increase the turnover. I know that there is an excellent investment climate in Georgia. We are very pleased that Azerbaijan has for many years been the leading foreign investor in Georgia. We will discuss many issues today, including those related to regional cooperation. Let me cordially welcome you again and wish you a pleasant and successful visit.

Expressing his satisfaction with the visit to Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze recalled that he had repeatedly visited Baku as chairman of the “Georgian Railways” joint stock company. He noted that the rapid development processes taking place in our capital had made a great impression on him and described it as an indicator of great economic progress in Azerbaijan.

Stating that the relations between the two countries were developing fast, Mamuka Bakhtadze said: Georgia and Azerbaijan are strategic partners, and this is a very great achievement. Relations between peoples are very important for us. Good-neighborly, friendly and fraternal ties are also important. Our ancestors have laid an excellent foundation for our ties, and these ties are already developing fast on this basis. The regional projects we implemented together are indeed very beneficial for international cooperation and for the region. We have achieved a lot within the framework of regional cooperation in transport, energy and other spheres. Of course, our potential is great, and I do hope that as a result of

our bilateral ties and the implementation of bilateral projects, we will be able to develop this potential even more. The turnover between our countries is growing. This year it can reach a billion dollars, but this does not mean full use of it and there is potential for even more. I am sure that as a result of our bilateral cooperation in the next two years, we will be able to increase our turnover by 50-60 per cent. It is gratifying that we have effective cooperation in other spheres too, including culture, art and sports. I am glad that Azerbaijani tourists and investors feel very comfortable in Georgia. I am confident that by joint efforts we will be able to achieve even greater goals.

Thank you for the warm welcome.

**The official visit of the President of the Republic of Turkey  
to the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Republic  
of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan attended the parade dedicated to 100<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of Liberation of Baku**

15 September 2018, Baku

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Distinguished President of the Republic of Turkey, my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Dear guests. Dear servicemen. Ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I want to express my deep gratitude to my dear brother, President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for accepting my invitation to come to Azerbaijan. We are next to each other on this holiday. We were next to each other a hundred years ago too, and we are together today. A hundred years ago, the newly-established Azerbaijani National Army under the command of Nuru Pasha, together with volunteers, liberated Baku from the invaders. I want to sincerely congratulate all the people of Azerbaijan and Turkey on this historic event. Let me take this opportunity to send my deep respect and reverence to all our Turkish brothers and sisters from Azadlig Square, one of the symbols of Azerbaijan.

In May of this year, we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic. Its establishment was a historic event. A democratic republic was created for the first time in the Muslim world. We are proud of the fact that the Azerbaijani people created this republic. However, the newly-independent Azerbaijan was faced great difficulties. The government of Azerbaijan could not fully control its territory. Baku and a number of other cities were under occupation. The government of Azerbaijan was based and operated from Ganja. The arrival of the Caucasian Islamic Army under the command of Nuru Pasha in Azerbaijan, its coming from Ganja to Baku, the liberation of several cities and of the city of Baku following fierce battles on 15 September were indeed historic events. The grateful Azerbaijani people will never forget this. The bright memory of martyrs will always live in our hearts.

Today, together with my dear brother, President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, we visited the graves of our martyrs. They are next to each other. May Allah rest their souls. Their memories always live in our hearts and the heroism they displayed further strengthens the unity between Turkey and Azerbaijan today.

The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic did not last long. Unfortunately, the Republic fell two years later and Azerbaijan lost its state independence. In 1991, Azerbaijan restored its state independence and Turkey became the first country to recognize us. This was also evidence of brotherhood.

Today, Turkish-Azerbaijani relations are at the highest level. I think there is no other example in the world today for two countries to be so close to each other and support each other. Our unity is manifested in all spheres. This year alone, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and I we have met six times – twice in Azerbaijan, twice in Turkey and twice in international events. Our meetings are of regular nature, and each of them is of great importance. Our political ties are at the highest level. We carry out successful economic cooperation. Our trade turnover is increasing. Investments amounting to billions of dollars are placed from Azerbaijan into Turkey and from Turkey into Azerbaijan. We are successfully implementing joint transport and energy projects that are redrawing the energy and transport map of Eurasia. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum oil and gas pipelines, the commissioning of the TANAP project this year are historic projects. A joint political will has been demonstrated. Joint financial resources have been mobilized, and these giant transnational projects have been successfully implemented. We are re-drawing the transport map of Eurasia. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by my dear brother in Baku in October last year. This railway is a new transport artery. The volume of goods it carries is gradually increasing and will continue to increase. The importance of our countries is growing. We could realize and have realized all these projects only together. If we consider that these projects require major financial resources and a great political will, we have achieved that only by joint effort. Turkey and Azerbaijan today, as two fraternal countries, are seeing the results of these projects. Our unity manifests itself in all spheres. This includes the deepening of cooperation and interaction in the military sphere. Joint military exercises are held several times a year. Soldiers of the Turkish and Azerbaijani armies today stand side by side, and they will march in front of us in Azadlig Square as brothers.

Turkey has covered a long and glorious road in recent years. Under the leadership of my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey has turned into a great force on a world scale. No issue can be resolved in the world without the participation of Turkey. History and the present day of our region vividly confirm this. The political opportunities of Turkey are expanding. Its role in the world is expanding, which is very encouraging for us. The more powerful Turkey, the stronger Azerbaijan. Turkey is a country of great economic power. It is no coincidence that foreign investments amounting to billions of dollars are being made in the Turkish economy. Azerbaijan alone has invested and will invest around \$20 billion in Turkey. Turkey has a powerful army on a global scale. It is one of the strongest armies in the world, which is a source of pride both for Turkey and for us. All these successes have been possible only thanks to the tireless activity of the strong leader and popular support for Recep Tayyip Erdogan. I would like to sincerely congratulate the President of the Republic of Turkey and the entire Turkish people on these successes from Azadlig Square today.

Next month, Azerbaijan will celebrate the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of state

independence. This is a very short period for history. The first two years of our independence were extremely difficult and tragic, as our lands fell under occupation, Azerbaijan was faced with great economic difficulties, political and economic crisis. There was civil war in Azerbaijan. Although the first two years were extremely difficult, Azerbaijan achieved great successes in the subsequent period. Azerbaijan has become an important country in the region, our role in the world is growing, our international positions are strengthening and the world community supports our policy. A good example of this is the fact that 155 countries of the world elected Azerbaijan a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council a few years ago. This is a manifestation of the world's support for Azerbaijan. The reforms carried out in the economic sphere ushered great opportunities for Azerbaijan. We managed to achieve impressive results. Suffice it to say that the economy of Azerbaijan has increased 3.2 times in the past 15 years. The country's economy has received investments in the amount of \$250 billion. Great progress has been made in addressing social problems. Unemployment in Azerbaijan is at the level of 5 per cent today. Azerbaijan has implemented major projects jointly with friendly countries, primarily with Turkey. So all this allows us the opportunity to say with full confidence that there is a bright future in store for Azerbaijan.

Our country has achieved tremendous success in the field of army building as well. According to international ratings, the Azerbaijani army today is among 50 strongest armies on a global scale. Our military potential is growing. We need a strong army because our lands are under occupation.

Nagorno-Karabakh is ancestral Azerbaijani land. The Azerbaijani people have lived and worked on this land for centuries. Our contemptible neighbors took advantage of the unstable situation in Azerbaijan in the early 1990s and occupied part of our lands. All our historical and religious monuments on the occupied territories have been mercilessly destroyed. Genocide has been committed against our people and this occupation still continues. Therefore, a strong army is the main prerequisite for the existence of Azerbaijan in the future as an independent country and for the restoration of its territorial integrity. The Azerbaijani army showed its strength and ability on the battlefield. The Azerbaijani flags that have been in combat will be brought to Azadlig Square today. These flags were raised by Azerbaijani fighters in Agdara, Fizuli and Jabrayil Districts liberated from occupation in 2016. These flags were raised on the lands liberated from occupation as a result of a successful operation on the Nakhchivan section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in May this year. The day will come when the national flag of Azerbaijan will be raised on all the lands that are currently under occupation.

Dear friends, it is a historic day in the full sense of the word today. It is a day of Turkish-Azerbaijani unity and Turkish-Azerbaijani brotherhood. We, representatives of this generation, are perpetuating and will perpetuate this day. The whole world sees today that Turkey and Azerbaijan are together. The whole world sees that our indestructible friendship and brotherhood are eternal.

A hundred years ago, as a result of a joint operation of the Caucasian Islamic Army of Nuru Pasha and the Azerbaijani National Army, Baku was liberated from occupation. Our

ancestors showed true heroism and selflessness in the fierce fight that lasted more than a day. I must also note that two days after this historic victory, the Azerbaijani government moved from Ganja to Baku, and Baku was declared the capital of the Azerbaijani state. Our ancient city, the ancient city of the Azerbaijani people Baku was returned to its true owners. The heroism, friendship and brotherhood of Nuru Pasha, of the Caucasian Islamic army and of all our brothers are unforgettable and will always live in our hearts. After the historic victory, our heroic fighters took to the streets of Baku in a victorious procession. Thousands of Baku residents applauded, kissed and hugged them. It was a celebration of unity.

Today, thousands of Baku residents look forward to this parade in the streets of the capital, a grandiose march of Turkish and Azerbaijani soldiers. Baku today is decorated with Turkish and Azerbaijani flags. There are Turkish and Azerbaijani flags in the streets, on buildings, on warships and in the sky. This magnificent ceremony is being seen not only by the residents of Baku, but also by the whole world today. Millions of people in Turkey and Azerbaijan, millions of our compatriots abroad are seeing it and feel legitimately proud.

Dear friends, brothers and sisters, I want to once again congratulate you all on the historic day – the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Baku from occupation. I would like to wish the people of Turkey and Azerbaijan continuous development and progress. I want to say that the Turkish-Azerbaijani friendship is indestructible and eternal.

### The working visit of the President of Mongolia to the Republic of Azerbaijan

24 September 2018, Baku



On September 24, 2018 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with President of Mongolia Khaltmaagiin Battulga.

The head of state welcomed the Mongolian President. They then posed for official photos.



**The working visit of the President of the Russian Federation  
to the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and  
President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin held a one-on-one meeting**

27 September 2018, Baku

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich! Please allow me to welcome you to Azerbaijan once again. You are welcome! We are always very glad to see you.

Today's visit is quite special. We are participating in the work of the inter-regional Russian-Azerbaijani forum for the first time. It brings together a record number of participants – about 1,000 people, which is evidence of a

great interest in this event.

We met in Sochi earlier this month and are meeting in Baku today, and this is a clear indicator of the level of our relations. We actively cooperate in the political sphere, in economic, transport, energy and humanitarian spheres, and we are seeing great progress in all areas.

We have just said this to the participants of the forum, thereby giving them another impetus to work even harder and advance our cooperation further.

Russia for us is a very important and valuable partner, a friend, a neighbor with which we have the highest level of relations. I think that in the coming years we will only follow the path of building up our cooperation, creating even better conditions for the businesses of our countries and strengthening cooperation in all areas.

Welcome again and thank you very much for this visit!

**President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Azerbaijan-Russia Interregional Forum**

27 September 2018, Baku

*Speech by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev*



Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich.

Dear guests.

Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to welcome the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, as well as the delegating accompanying him to Azerbaijan. You are welcome! We are always very glad to see you.

Today's participation of the Presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan in the Interregional Forum is evidence of the great importance we attach to this forum. This is the ninth forum, and there will be an anniversary next year.

We are pleased that the first forum was held in Azerbaijan in 2010, giving an impetus to active inter-regional cooperation. And the fact that this hall, which seats 1,000 people, is full today shows that there is a great interest in this forum.

Vladimir Vladimirovich and I meet quite regularly. Not so long ago, in early September, I paid an official visit to the Russian Federation. We had very fruitful negotiations and a very thorough exchange of views on all the issues on our agenda.

And the fact that less than a month later the President of Russia is visiting Azerbaijan attests to the level of relations exist between us. A total of 16 documents were signed during my visit, covering many areas of activity. They will predetermine the development of our relations for many years to come.

I should also note that this is President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin's fourth visit to Azerbaijan in the last five years. I also regularly visit Russia, which is also a clear testament to our partnership, to the friendly and good-neighborly relations between our countries. As for trade and economic relations, we see dynamic growth, and it is very impressive. There is a progressive trend: the turnover increased both last year and this year.

Russia is number one partner on imports and number one partner on exports of non-oil products for Azerbaijan. We are also implementing projects related to mutual investments, and we see positive dynamics there too. There are very strong ties in the energy and oil and gas industry. During my official visit to the Russian Federation, we signed an important

document - an agreement between Rosneft and SOCAR on cooperation in the oil sector. LUKOIL has been successfully operating in Azerbaijan for more than 20 years and is an important investor for us.

In the power engineering sector, our energy systems operate in a parallel mode. During my September visit, we discussed issues related to the construction of the second phase of the high-voltage power line, which would allow us the opportunity to enhance energy exchange and also to expand cooperation with third countries in this area.

We cooperate very actively in the transport sector. The North-South project we are implementing together is already yielding results. This year, compared to last year, we see a more than 100-fold increase in the transportation of goods along this corridor, and this is only the beginning. We expect this corridor to become one of the most important transport arteries of Eurasia which will bring between our countries even closer together and increase our transit potential.

I would also like to note that the Azerbaijan national airline alone performs more than 50 flights to various cities of Russia every week. If we add Russian air carriers, we will also see how extensively our people communicate with each other and how busy our ties are. In the tourism sector, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of Russian people visiting Azerbaijan. In less than nine months, about 700,000 Russians have visited Azerbaijan. I am sure that this figure will also grow in the future.

There are very good prospects and cooperation in the banking sector. Such a large Russian bank as VTB operates in Azerbaijan. In fact, Azerbaijan is the biggest foreign shareholder of this bank. Gazprombank has relatively recently financed a large industrial project worth more than \$400 million in Azerbaijan. So these are all important elements of our cooperation.

A relatively new area of cooperation is the automotive industry. KamAZ and Ural trucks are already produced in Azerbaijan. Hundreds of these trucks have already been produced. Agreement has also been reached on the production of GAZ vehicles in our country. We are seeing effective dynamics in all areas, and this shows both the spirit and nature of our relations. Of course, our relations are underpinned by historical ties, cultural relations, the closeness of our peoples, and, of course, we are working hard to further develop humanitarian ties.

The next Baku humanitarian forum under the patronage of the presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan will be held in Baku next month. This international forum has already become the most important global platform for the discussion of issues of humanitarian nature, intercultural dialogue and interfaith relations.

There are 341 Russian-language schools in Azerbaijan, two branches of leading Russian universities – Moscow State University and the Sechenov Medical University. We also interact very actively in the cultural sphere. We can talk a lot about Russian-Azerbaijani

relations, but because of the format of today's forum, it is impossible to cover everything. But we aim for a further development of our relations. I also think that the opening of the Azerbaijan pavilion at the Exhibition of Economic Achievements planned for next year will be an important step in furthering our cooperation. This historic building used to be the Azerbaijani pavilion in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and we are restoring it now. So we will be present there and demonstrate our achievements at such an important international exhibition platform. We also have very close relations with Russian regions. About 20 subjects of the Russian Federation have agreements with Azerbaijan. We are opening trade missions in the regions and Russian regions are doing the same in Azerbaijan. In other words, I am sure that inter-regional cooperation will organically complement the entire range of friendly and good-neighborly relations between our countries.

I would like to thank President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin for visiting Azerbaijan today. It is very valuable for us. We view this as a sign of friendship and as a sign of respect for our country. Of course, the fact that we are speaking to you emphasizes the importance of the work you are doing. I wish the forum success and further achievements for the benefit of the prosperity of our countries and peoples. Thank you.

## The visit of the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic to the Republic of Azerbaijan

13 November 2018, Baku



On November 30, 2018 President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic Peter Pellegrini held a one-on-one meeting.

President Ilham Aliyev welcomed Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini.

The head of state congratulated Peter Pellegrini on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Slovakia. President Ilham Aliyev hailed the fact that Peter Pellegrini is paying his first visit to Azerbaijan as the Prime Minister and that this trip is taking place shortly after his appointment to this high office. The head of state noted that Peter Pellegrini's visit to Azerbaijan creates favorable opportunity for developing bilateral relations. President Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan-Slovakia ties are also important in terms of developing Azerbaijan's cooperation with the European Union. The head of state described the signing of the "Partnership Priorities" document between Azerbaijan and the European Union in Brussels this July as a sign of the EU's attaching importance to relations with Azerbaijan.

Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic Peter Pellegrini thanked for the warm words and high hospitality shown to him. Peter Pellegrini said he is pleased to pay his first visit to Azerbaijan as the Prime Minister, adding he previously visited the country as the parliament speaker during the European Games. He said this prestigious international event was excellently organized. Touching upon bilateral relations between the two countries, Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini stressed the significance of an Azerbaijan-Slovakia business forum held in Baku as part of his visit, and noted that it will contribute to the expansion of the economic cooperation.

## ARTICLES

**Trans-Caspian International Transportation Route: a way to steadfast economic development and connectivity in the South Caucasus and Central Asia***Nina MIHOLJCIC \***Introduction*

As part of the broader China's Belt and Road Initiative, the Trans-Caspian International Transportation Route (TITR) is a promising transportation project that could enhance the economies of participating countries, as well as their wider neighborhoods. It also has a tremendous potential to introduce much needed economic and political connectivity between the South Caucasus and Central Asia. For China, TITR is a valuable contributor to a wider network of transportation corridors that facilitates flow of goods between China and Europe<sup>1</sup>. For the transit regions it could be a window to a more robust economic progress and political independence. Economic ties between the South Caucasus and Central Asia are still neglected and mostly focused on energy related projects. Reasons for such poor collaboration are partially due to visible differences between these two regions "in political realities, societal structures and relations with the European Union (EU)"<sup>2</sup> but also because of continuous interference of foreign powers and countries' concentration on protecting and enforcing their own independence. However, a newly developed Trans-Caspian route could strengthen more diversified trade cooperation especially when it comes to Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan bilateral relations thus making an intrinsic commerce link between the regions. Moreover, Azerbaijan is already included in the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway that helps faster realization of the Trans-Caspian Transportation Corridor plan<sup>3</sup>. Due to its important geostrategic position Azerbaijan acts as a window to Europe for landlocked Central Asia and provides necessary linkage to the East-West Eurasian partnership.

Constant balancing between ambitious expansionist foreign policies of different regional hegemony, devastating local conflicts and crises have become a grim reality for most of Central Asian and Southern Caucasus states in the past three decades. Russia still has a dominant role in the region and it could interfere or even weaken further progress of the former Southern Soviet republics. On the other hand, the China-led route could increase Chinese presence, particularly in Central Asia, and provoke hostilities between China and Russia. However, the initiative might become a powerful counterpart to the Russian

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Putz, "Why the Trans-Caspian Transport Route Matters", *The Diplomat*, February 11, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/02/why-the-trans-caspian-transport-route-matters/> (visiting date: January 16, 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Jopp Mathias, Kuhn Tatjana, Schulz Janny, "Preface – Why Focusing on the South Caucasus and Central Asia? ", *L'Europe en Formation*, 2018/1 (N° 385), p. 3, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-l-europe-en-formation-2018-1-page-3.htm> (visiting date: January 15, 2019)

<sup>3</sup> Tristan Kenderdine, "Caucasus Trans-Caspian trade route to open China import markets", *EASTASIAFORUM*, February 23, 2018, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/02/23/caucasus-trans-caspian-trade-route-to-open-china-import-markets/> (visiting date: January 16, 2019)

interfering attitude and manage to create certain balance of interests while at the same time providing necessary economic growth and political independence to the regions.

Currently the route begins in Chinese port of Lianyungang and passes through Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, expanding further to Europe either through Georgian Black Sea Ports or through Turkey by Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway<sup>4</sup>. There is also room for the route's future expansion since participating countries are very interested in accepting new members. Ukraine, Romania and Poland are already active participants of the Trans-Caspian Transport Route Association<sup>5</sup>, while Kazakhstan has recently invited Uzbekistan to join the route<sup>6</sup>. With newly added members TITR can reach European market more efficiently thus strengthening the vital East-West trade axis. Willingness of participating countries to develop further regional collaboration and amplify transportation networks across Eurasia is without question very present and strong. TITR is built to carry huge volumes of goods and cargoes from China to Europe and back. As such it possesses a great potential for boosting regional economic cooperation especially between the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

#### *Increased regional connectivity*

Emerged in 2013 the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is China's new global agenda which promotes economic connectivity and growth across Asia and Europe. This megaproject aims to create a network of "transport corridors to facilitate the access to foreign markets and thus increase the trade turnover between China and Europe with goods transported through Central Asia and adjacent regions"<sup>7</sup>. The Trans-Caspian Transport route is one of BRI's important integrated trade corridors that has turned into intrinsic commerce connection in Eurasia. This 6,500 km long corridor enhances development and growth of Central Asia and Caucasus by increasing regional trade, investment and infrastructure. Another benefit of the transport route is related to the time- and cost-efficient mode of transportation. "The corridor will cut the transportation time of freight and goods from about 60 days by sea to about 14 days by train, and decrease the cost four times compared with air"<sup>8</sup>. Affordability and efficiency make the route attractive and more productive for current as well as for future stakeholders.

China has expressed a very strong interest in Central Asia for two main reasons and they are both related to the region's stability. First, from the Chinese point of view, greater economic cooperation brings more political stability and hence less terrorism in the region. Decreased terrorist activities in Central Asia reduce Chinese fear of possible external support for a

<sup>4</sup> <https://emerging-europe.com/voices/chinas-obor-initiative-opportunities-for-the-south-caucasus/>

<sup>5</sup> Leman Mammadova, "Development issues of Trans-Caspian int'l transport route discussed in Baku", AZERNEWS, January 18, 2019, <https://www.azernews.az/business/144190.html> (visiting date: January 19, 2019)

<sup>6</sup> "Uzbekistan Invited to the Trans-Caspian Transport Route Association", Gazette of Central Asia, September 22, 2018, <http://gca.satrapia.com/+uzbekistan-invited-to-the-trans-caspian-transport-route-association> (visiting date: January 24, 2019)

<sup>7</sup> Yakov Silin, Larisa Kapustina, Italo Trevisan & Andrei Drevalev, "The silk road economic belt: balance of interests", Economic and Political Studies, 6:3, pp. 293-318, September 3, 2018, DOI: 10.1080/20954816.2018.1499072

<sup>8</sup> Fuad Shahbazov, "China to Europe By Way of Azerbaijan's Trans-Caspian Gateway", The Diplomat, February 16, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/china-to-europe-by-way-of-azerbaijans-trans-caspian-gateway/> (visiting date: January 17, 2019)

separatist movement in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR)<sup>9</sup>. Secondly, steady Central Asia means a new reliable market and a more secure route for stimulating trade between China and Europe. On the other hand, Central Asian countries have recognized promising economic benefits from the closer cooperation with Beijing, especially in terms of investments in modern infrastructure and energy exchange<sup>10</sup>. TITR is a significant part of the wider regional development network and, as such, it allows Central Asia to become a stronger player in the region and to access the European Union's market more efficiently.

For China the South Caucasus represents an important transit route. Without the gateway through the Caspian Sea and Azerbaijan landlocked Central Asia would not be able to reach Europe nor to help China in further realization of the ambitious Belt and Road initiative. Additionally, the region has the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway that acts as a flagship project of the Trans-Caspian transport corridor<sup>11</sup>. Opened in 2017, the railway connects Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey with an 826-kilometer long rail line. BTK represents the backbone of transportation politics in Eurasia that enables trade upgrades and future enlargements. Fully integrated into TITR the BKT line magnifies regional transit potential by improving direct railway network transiting through Azerbaijan to Turkey and Europe<sup>12</sup>. The South Caucasus is interested in TITR for almost the same reasons as Central Asia. Better regional connectivity and economic growth are very attractive agendas especially for regions that want a stronger position in geopolitical matters and to avoid or at least reduce Russian interference. Modernization of infrastructure, improved transport connections with Asia and Europe, boosting exports and overall economic progress are major incentives for countries like Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to take an active role in promoting and joining the Trans-Caspian Transportation project.

Involvement in TITR brings technical and logistical support in the form of modern infrastructure and more effective communication channels between regions. Participating countries with Chinese investment could reinvigorate their transportation and structural sectors. For instance, “construction of multifunctional centers will allow them to establish industrial clusters integrated into global logistics and production chains. All means of communications will connect Chinese cities with Almaty, Bishkek, Tashkent, Samarkand, Tehran and other cities of the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB)”<sup>13</sup>. Development of modern infrastructure is a strong stimulus for the South Caucasus and Central Asian states to push for the future enhancement of TITR. China invests a lot abroad and its new global agenda is highlighted by developments “in networks of physical infrastructure such as railways, highways, oil and gas pipelines, power grids, trade in addition to investment facilitation and financial integration”<sup>14</sup>. The South Caucasus and Central Asia require high quality

<sup>9</sup> Daniyar Kosnazarov, “Dragon’s Tender Hug: Prosperity Discourse and China’s Soft Power in Kazakhstan”, *Voices on Central Asia*, November 14, 2018, <http://voicesoncentralasia.org/dragons-tender-hug-prosperity-discourse-and-chinas-soft-power-in-kazakhstan/> (visiting date: January 17, 2019)

<sup>10</sup> Yakov Silin, Larisa Kapustina, Italo Trevisan & Andrei Drevalov, “The silk road economic belt: balance of interests”, pp. 14-16

<sup>11</sup> Fuad Shahbazov, “China to Europe By Way of Azerbaijan’s Trans-Caspian Gateway”

<sup>12</sup> Vahid Aliyev, “TRANS-CASPIAN INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT ROTE (MIDDLE CORRIDOR): ROLE AND CURRENT CONDITION”, May 2018, ppt <https://kig.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Azerbaijan-Middle-Corridor.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Yakov Silin, Larisa Kapustina, Italo Trevisan & Andrei Drevalov, “The silk road economic belt: balance of interests”, p. 14

<sup>14</sup> Maha S. Kamel, “China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Implications for the Middle East”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 31(1), p. 81, June 13, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2018.1480592> (visiting date: January 18, 2019)



infrastructure in order to attract more foreign investment and financing, improve domestic job markets and develop stable and productive economies.

Another attractive characteristic of the transportation corridor, especially for countries such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, is the possible diversification of local industries and exports. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan are hydrocarbon rich countries that have established themselves as predominantly natural resources exporters. Nevertheless, these countries are in pressing need for diversification of their economies. Diversification of exports helps countries achieve sustainable economic growth and development. In addition to essential regional connectivity, TITR might help involved countries modify the structure of their exports by creating less oil dependent economies.

### *Azerbaijan as a vital geostrategic point for TITR*

Situated at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, Azerbaijan has a powerful geostrategic position that allows the country to act as a powerful communication and trade hub in Eurasia. For the future development of the East-West transport cooperation Azerbaijan is a crucial geostrategic point. To landlocked Central Asia it gives a passageway to Europe and it has an already well-established railway network with neighboring Georgia and Turkey. On the other hand, expecting “hundreds of millions in revenues”, TITR is certainly an attractive project especially for nations willing to improve their own markets and regional standings<sup>15</sup>. Azerbaijan has recognized the importance of the valuable transportation route and has played an active role in the project’s realization from the very beginning. Due to huge financial benefits that TITR brings, accompanied by boosted cooperation not only between the South Caucasus and Central Asia but also between two continents, Azerbaijan has to exploit the opportunity of becoming important transit point and expand its influence in the region and beyond.

The main challenges for Azerbaijani economy are to continue recovering from the 2015-2016 economy shock provoked by the severe fall in oil prices and support further non-hydrocarbon economic growth. Azerbaijan might become one of the main beneficiaries of the freight route but it has to continue with domestic economic reforms and it has to use diplomatic channels to enforce regional cooperation and stability. Exports diversifications, growth of railway profits, as well as a boost of regional connectivity are some of TITR’s positive contributions for Azerbaijan’s economy. For instance, Azerbaijan Railways could receive revenues worth \$600-700 million from transit traffic alone by 2020<sup>15</sup>. Azerbaijan’s economy is still excessively based on oil and gas exports. “According to available data, exports have an estimated value of USD17.5 billion, accounting for 40.5% of GDP, with chemical, industrial and fuel being the most important export product (89%)”<sup>17</sup>. Diversification of the

<sup>15</sup> Eva Grey, “Can the Trans-Caspian Route deliver the next freight revolution?”, *Railway Technology*, November 3, 2015, <https://www.railway-technology.com/features/featurecan-the-trans-caspian-route-deliver-the-next-freight-revolution-4684339/> (visiting date: January 21, 2019)

<sup>16</sup> Fuad Shahbazov, “China to Europe By Way of Azerbaijan’s Trans-Caspian Gateway”

<sup>17</sup> “Azerbaijan: Market Profile”, HTDC Research, October 31, 2018, <http://m.hktdc.com/business-news/article/One-Belt-One-Road/Azerbaijan-Market-Profile/obor/en/1/1X3CGF6L/1X0A3IH1.htm> (visiting date: January 21, 2019)

over-dependent energy economy is crucial for future development and sustainable economic growth of the country. TITR with expected large volumes of transported cargoes could bring necessary diversification of Azerbaijani exports. It is estimated that around 300,000-400,000 containers will be transported via the Trans-Caspian international transport route by 2020<sup>18</sup>. China is also looking for new import sources and Caucasus countries might emerge as significant good suppliers for growing Chinese domestic market via TITR.

Agriculture is one of the promising sectors that have the potential to diversify Azerbaijani economy. Increase in export of agricultural products such as grain, vegetables and fruits can boost country's export revenues and at the same time promote export of non-oil products. "Deepening and normalizing non-oil trade with multiple trading blocs could see Azerbaijan become an important agricultural exporter in China's eyes. China is currently Azerbaijan's fourth-largest trading partner and under the BRI that is sure to increase"<sup>19</sup>. Exploring different trading channels and developing diverse industry sectors sends a good message abroad. China remains interested in maintaining strong and productive relations with current and future trade partners. Azerbaijan's motivation to participate in the BRI project implies openness towards deepening of diplomatic and economic ties not only with China but with the wider neighborhood as well.

Azerbaijan is aware that TITR could trigger some negative reactions especially from its northern neighbor. Baku is interested in development of the North-South trade route in order to not distress good diplomatic relations with the Kremlin but also to support wider regional growth. "Azerbaijan is also pushing for the completion of the Rasht–Astarra railway to Iran, which is part of the multilateral North–South Transport Corridor initiative going from Russia through the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf to India"<sup>20</sup>. The country actively promotes economic development domestically as well as regionally; it does not want to provoke Russia, nor to act against Moscow's interests. The need for balance between regional powers and multivector diplomacy define Azerbaijan's foreign policy. However, the Trans-Caspian Transport route offers a way to better connectivity across Eurasia and more trading autonomy especially to the involved post-Soviet republics of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

#### *Possible security fallouts from the project*

Even though the Trans-Caspian route brings many economic benefits, some security related issues could appear from future developments of this prosperous project. The most concerning matter, at least for the states of Central Asia, is the increasing Chinese influence in the region. China has started investing notably in Central Asia ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990s. Initially, Beijing was interested mainly in oil and gas resources. Both the Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline that has emerged as an important oil supplier of Chinese energy market and the Central Asia–China natural gas pipeline that became operational in 2009 are the results of fruitful energy cooperation between China and Central

<sup>18</sup> Rashid Shirinov, "Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Georgia sign MoU on TITR development", AZERNEWS, December 7, 2016, <https://www.azernews.az/business/106200.html> (visiting date: January 21, 2019)

<sup>19</sup> Tristan Kenderdine, "Caucasus Trans-Caspian trade route to open China import markets"

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

Asia. Beijing is becoming new energy influencer slowly replacing Russia's traditionally dominant role in the region. For instance, Turkmenistan's gas exports to Russia dropped dramatically from around 40 bcm in 2008 to zero by 2017, while rising almost eight times to China reaching nearly 30 bcm in 2017<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, Beijing with the Belt and Road initiative has expressed a strong motivation to expand collaboration to more diversified trade and investment sector. From a modest \$1 billion per annum in 1990s, total trade between Central Asia and China climbed to \$30 billion in 2017<sup>22</sup>. China invests plenty in transportation infrastructure and telecommunication services across Central Asia and Caucasus. As one of essential China-supported trade regional projects, TITR represents an important part of the extensive transportation system assimilated into the BRI's framework that allows greater Chinese influence in Eurasia but at the same time helps better regional trade and economic prosperity of participating countries.

Ever since regaining independence in 1990s, the South Caucasus states have been interested in intensifying their relations with other important international actors besides Russia and the West. China's Belt and Road initiative seemed like a perfect opportunity to enhance freight transport network in Caucasus and equally importantly bypass Russia. Azerbaijan and Georgia have received considerable financial investments from the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). AIIB has supported the construction of TANAP gas pipeline by providing 600 million US dollars in loans to Azerbaijan and US\$ 114 million in loans to Georgia for Batumi bypass road project<sup>23</sup>. The Trans-Caspian transport route is one of vital freight corridors that promises diversification of exports, modernization of infrastructure and increased exports revenues for the participating South Caucasus countries but at the same time it might increase Chinese presence and empower China to dictate future trade terms in the region. This project is significant because it provides an alternative route to transport goods from China to Europe and back while avoiding Russia. However, the South Caucasus should not take Chinese economic expansion for granted. Beijing's generous investments might bring wanted regional development but they could entrench Chinese presence or even provoke Russia. The region is yet to see whether or not all these promises regarding economic growth and connectivity will be accomplished in years to come.

Another potential hazard of TIRT is possible increase in competition between China and Russia over Caucasus and Central Asia. Both China and Russia want stable Central Asia and Caucasus, but they reveal competing agendas on how to enforce and maintain such regional stability. While Russia wants to cooperate mainly in the security area, China offers economic development and growth via regional trade and investment projects<sup>24</sup>. If Russia and China continue to decide mutually (especially on decisions that have wider regional consequences) any future controversy might be prevented. Currently Chinese and Russian interests in Caucasus and Central Asia are mainly compatible. For instance, "Russia doesn't

<sup>21</sup> "Central Asia's Economic Evolution From Russia To China", Stratfor Worldwide, April 5, 2018, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/central-asia-china-russia-trade-kyrgyzstan-kazakhstan-turkmenistan-tajikistan-uzbekistan> (visiting date: January 22, 2019)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> <https://emerging-europe.com/voices/chinas-obor-initiative-opportunities-for-the-south-caucasus>

<sup>24</sup> Daniyar Kosnazarov, "Dragon's Tender Hug: Prosperity Discourse and China's Soft Power in Kazakhstan",

need Central Asia's raw materials the way China does, and China doesn't need the region's low-wage labor force the way Russia does". So far China's ambitious Belt and Road initiative does not conflict with Russia's regional interests. Moscow has even shown a great interest in joining the initiative and further deepening of the Sino-Russian economic relations.

### *Concluding remarks*

The Trans-Caspian Transport route is an important trade corridor for the South Caucasus and Central Asia since it has a great potential to reinvigorate local economies, boost regional connectivity, diversify exports sector, and increases exports revenues of participating countries. Much needed collaboration between Caucasus and Central Asia might be significantly increased with the active participation in TITR. Many states of the South Caucasus and Central Asia are attracted by the prosperous Chinese-led freight project because it brings considerable investments in regional infrastructure, railway and communication systems. Increased regional connectivity and economic growth are very promising agendas especially for regions that want stronger position in geopolitical matters and to circumvent or at least diminish Russian meddling.

With the active involvement in the Trans-Caspian Transportation route Azerbaijan has become a powerful trade center in Eurasia. Due to its great geostrategic location this South Caucasus country acts as a strong commerce link between Asia and Europe. First of all, it gives a window to European market for the landlocked Central Asia. Moreover, it is already a part of the solid railway network with neighboring Georgia and Turkey. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is the backbone of transportation politics in Eurasia and a useful addition to the Trans-Caspian transport corridor. On the other hand, TITR is also very beneficial for Azerbaijan's economic development and growth in several ways. The country's economy is heavily hydrocarbon dependent and seeks efficient diversification of exports. Involvement in the Trans-Caspian Transportation corridor offers such diversification of trade exports. Furthermore, Azerbaijan might receive considerable trade revenues from transport tariffs, modernize infrastructure with generous Chinese investments and enhance domestic job market thus improving its overall economy.

The main political rationale behind route's attractiveness is the circumvention of Russia. In addition, TITR introduces a new player to the region – China. Chinese ambitious initiative has managed to reduce traditionally dominant Russian role in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Nevertheless, current balance of interests, as well as continued development of the Trans-Caspian International Transportation Route could be a great opportunity for the Central Asian and South Caucasus countries to enhance trade relations and boost regional economic development and connectivity.

## Assessing foreign fighters from Georgia in the conflicts of Syria and Iraq

Aleksandre KVAKHADZDE\*

### Introduction

Our goal is to examine activities of Georgian foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq and their possible future. This research envisions analysis of the role of Georgian militants in the theater of war and attempts to anticipate the future of Georgian *jihadi* activism. Georgian Islamist militancy can be thought of as the continuation of instability in North Caucasus, which has spread beyond regional borders and intermixed with the Georgian domestic socio-political reality, as well as other contributing global trends such as transnational Islamist mobilization and the emergence of the Islamic State (hereafter mentioned as ISIS).

In November 2017 Chechen warlord Ahmed Chataev, one of the leaders of ISIS Russian-speaking faction, was killed in Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, along with two other militants, while being apprehended by Georgian Special Forces<sup>1</sup>. Chataev's return to Georgia, where he had been a resident until 2012, became first of many negative consequences of Georgian citizens participation in fighting in Syria and Iraq. ISIS military losses have forced foreign fighters to leave the battlefield and return to the countries of their origin. Before civil wars in Syria and Iraq, Georgians' contribution to the global Islamic insurgency was extremely limited. Even though several Georgian-born militants have been reported to participate in the war in Chechnya, they had not had any significant impact either in Chechnya or in Georgia<sup>2</sup>. However, conflicts in Syria and Iraq marked the first time in modern history when Georgians have appeared in the vanguard of the global *jihad*. Despite its relatively small population, Georgia has been well-represented in Syrian civil war by a substantial number of fighters, including several prominent military leaders.

This article is divided into four sections. The first will be dedicated to literature review and definitional parameters related to foreign fighters. The next section will discuss the problem of instability in Caucasus and Islamist activism in Georgia, followed by coverage of the role of Georgian warlords in the Syrian conflict. The final section will provide the analysis of the future trends in Georgian *jihadism*.

### Literature Review and the Concept of Foreign Fighters

Participation of foreign combatants in conflicts has become a subject of interest in both academia and policymaking since the 1960s. In spite of plethora of academic research on international armed conflicts, there is no formally agreed-upon definition of a foreign fighter.

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<sup>1</sup> SUS-i: Chataevma Tavi Aipetka Ori Piri ki Likvidirebulia Spetsrazmis Mier [SSS: Chataev Blew Himself Up and Two Persons Were Killed by Georgian Special Forces], Tabula <http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/127117-sus-i-chataevma-tavi-aifetqa-ori-piri-ki-likvidirebulia-specrazmis-mier> (Accessed 12 January, 2018)

<sup>2</sup> Dyupin, Sergei. "Federali Razoruzhili Ingushetiyu" [Federal Forces Have Disarmed Ingushetia], Kommersant. №. 203, December 5, 2003: 6

One of the widely accepted definitions has been made by Cerwyn Moore and Paul Tumelty who believe that foreign fighters are ‘non-indigenous, non-territorialized combatants who, motivated by religion, kinship and/or ideology rather than pecuniary reward, enter the conflict to participate in hostilities’<sup>3</sup>.

However, none of the definitional frameworks include certain aspects associated with Islamist insurgency, namely:

- a. Families of Mujahedeen migrated and settled in rebel-held territories in proximity to the theatre of conflict without any military or logistical assistance.
- b. Some Islamist residents of rebel-held province do not participate in battle, but are employed in different quasi-governmental structures (e.g., Sharia judges, ‘law-enforcement’)
- c. Rise of religious preachers or the so-called ‘*jihadi* superstars’, residing in insurgent-controlled territories, who have a limited military function but are mainly responsible for propaganda and recruitment.
- d. Militants fighting within borders of the same sovereign state, but outside their ethnic home region (e.g., Ingush or Dagestani fighters in Chechnya)

Academic research on Georgian *jihadi* militants is sparse. Nonetheless, a valuable strain of papers exists on this issue. Michael Cecire makes a comparative analysis between Georgian *jihadist* in Syria and Iraq and Georgian volunteers in Ukraine Donbass conflict and also briefly discusses the problem of the insurgents from the Adjara region<sup>4</sup>. Giorgi Sanikidze and Edward Walker examined contemporary tendencies, including the Islamic radicalization in Georgian Muslim communities<sup>5</sup>. Bennett Clifford examined the issue of recruitment of Georgian foreign fighters<sup>6</sup>. Movement of Chechen and Arab foreign fighters in Pankisi Gorge and activities of Georgian citizens in Syrian conflict have been addressed by Moore and Tumelty<sup>7</sup> and Moore<sup>8</sup> respectively.

### *The Roots of Jihadism in Georgia*

The presence of Salafi community in Georgia and presence of Chechen and foreign *jihadi* militants in Pankisi gorge in early 2000s are the two key factors that encouraged Georgian citizens to engage in the global *Jihad*. These two factors are interrelated.

<sup>3</sup> Moore, Cerwyn, and Paul Tumelty. «Foreign Fighters and The Case Of Chechnya: A Critical Assessment». *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, № 5 (2008): 412

<sup>4</sup> Cecire, Michael. «Same Sides Of Different Coins: Contrasting Militant Activisms Between Georgian Fighters In Syria And Ukraine». *Caucasus Survey* 4, № 3 (2016): 282-295.; Cecire, Michael. «Trends in foreign fighter recruitment and Islamist extremism in Adjara, Georgia». *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, (2017) 93(4). <http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CAD93.pdf> (Accessed January 10, 2018)

<sup>5</sup> Sanikidze, Giorgi. «Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Caucasian Region: ‘Global’ and ‘Local’ Islam in the Pankisi Gorge». In: T. Uyama, ed., *Empire, Islam and Politics in Central Eurasia*, 1st ed. Hokkaido University Press (2007): 263-282; Sanikidze, George, and Edward W. Walker. «Islam And Islamic Practices In Georgia». *Escholarship.Org*, 2004. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7149d486>. (Accessed January 10, 2018)

<sup>6</sup> Clifford, Bennett. «Georgian Foreign Fighter Deaths In Syria And Iraq: What Can They Tell Us About Foreign Fighter Mobilization And Recruitment?». *Caucasus Survey* 6, № 1 (2017): 62-80.

<sup>7</sup> Moore and Tumelty. *Foreign Fighters And* (see note 3 above), 422-423

<sup>8</sup> Moore. «Foreign Bodies: Transnational Activism, The Insurgency In The North Caucasus And “Beyond”», *Terrorism And Political Violence* 27, № 3 (2015): 395-415,

The largest Salafi community currently existing in Georgia is represented by Kists<sup>9</sup> in Pankisi Gorge. A few years after the start of the conflict in Chechnya, many newly converted Salafi Chechen arrived in Pankisi as refugees and attempted to proselytise among the local Kist population<sup>10</sup>. In the early stages, adherents of Salafism were mainly Chechen refugees, as well as Arab *jihadi* activists, who introduced this version of Islam to the local youths. For instance, in the first years of the Pankisi crisis, approximately twenty young Kists were converted to Salafism<sup>11</sup>. The second largest Salafi community in Georgia is represented by Adjaran Georgians in Adjara Autonomous Republic and beyond. The very first adherents of Salafism among this sub-ethnic group, appeared in the 1990s, in the villages of Kvabgha and Zoti of the Chokhatauri district in the Guria province, populated by Adjaran eco-migrants<sup>12</sup>.

The first followers of Salafism were several local men, who had been educated in Islam in Bukhara, Uzbekistan<sup>13</sup>. The second factor that had facilitated *jihadi* activism in Georgia is the Second Chechen War and its effects on neighboring regions. The Chechen resistance which started in late 1994 as a self-determination struggle had gradually transformed into an Islamist movement and obtained the attributes of  *jihad* . Throughout the whole conflict, especially the period between two Chechen wars, Chechnya accommodated many Salafi ideologists and foreign fighters from the Middle East, included veterans of the Afghan-Soviet War, who had introduced Salafi Islam and the ideas of  *jihad*  to Chechen militants. After the Russian military campaign population of Pankisi had almost doubled due to the influx of Chechen refugees. A large number of foreign fighters, including approximately 60 Al-Qaeda personnel, found sanctuary in this region where they mixed with civilian refugees<sup>14</sup>. Presence of a vast number of refugees provided cover for clandestine networks supporting Chechen fighters with logistics and manpower<sup>15</sup>. For a number of reasons Pankisi Gorge became the ideal location for transnational Islamist activities. Firstly, Pankisi Gorge is located close to the porous Georgian-Chechen border. It thereby created an opportunity for Chechen fighters to cross it on foot or horseback, except during winter months<sup>16</sup>. Secondly, absence of language and cultural barriers between the local Kists and newcomer Chechens enabled the establishment of partner relationships between fighters and the local population. Finally, rampant corruption, high level of crime, weak government and lack of law enforcement structures in Georgia, created fertile ground for transnational  *jihadist*  activities. In fact, Georgian government barely controlled the Pankisi gorge. Furthermore, except for the movement of combatants, Pankisi Gorge became a hotbed of organized crime, infamous for drug and weapon trafficking and kidnapping. Indeed, the  *de facto*  control was in the hands of Chechen warlords and local criminal bosses.

The first Arab Islamists who arrived at the Gorge were mostly Arab and Jordanian volunteers,

<sup>9</sup> Kists, ethnic Chechens, inhabitants of Pankisi Gorge

<sup>10</sup> Sanikidze "Islamic Resurgence" (see note 2 above) 275

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 276

<sup>12</sup> Eco-migrants, communities settled in various regions of Georgia owing to the natural disasters in mountainous regions

<sup>13</sup> Zviad Vanadze, Imam of Batumi mosque, Skype conversation with author, 10 August 2017

<sup>14</sup> Moore and Tumelty. Foreign Fighters And (see note 3 above), 422

<sup>15</sup> Moore. Foreign Bodies (see note 8 above), 402

<sup>16</sup> Wittig, Timothy S. «Financing Terrorism Along the Chechnya–Georgia Border, 1999–2002». Global Crime 10, № 3 (2009): 248

representing various charitable organizations. Most well-known among them were Khaled Yusuf Mohammad (*nom de guerre* Muhammad) and Jordanian Abu Hafs Al-Urduni<sup>17</sup>. The arrival of Arab volunteers led to divisions and strife within the Chechen leadership. Noteworthy that the then-leader of Chechens Aslan Maskhadov feared that non-Chechen fighters concentrated in the Gorge, might start operating independently. Such was the case, for instance, with North African volunteers belonging to Al-Qaeda's branch GSPC under the leadership of Abu Doha, who created "Chechen networks" in Europe<sup>18</sup>. Foreign fighters also used Pankisi Gorge for their military exercises. They were receiving financial support from several Middle Eastern charitable organizations directly into the accounts of 'Muslim Protection Organization' based in Tbilisi and 'Foundation for Chechnya'<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, during the Georgian crackdown on the Gorge Saif al-Islam al-Masri, known to be in al-Qaeda's military committee, was captured and, along with another fourteen Arabs, turned over to the U.S. government<sup>20</sup>.

Once full control over the Pankisi gorge was established by Islamic militants, the situation became relatively stable, in comparison to North Caucasus. Ethnic Kists appeared in the late Ichkeria/Emirate Caucasus (hereafter referred to as EC) insurgency only twice. In April 2006 Pankisi-born brothers Usman and Magomed Borchashvili were killed by Russian special forces<sup>21</sup> and in August 2010 Georgian citizen ethnic Kist Roland Machalikashvili was killed in the forests of Achkhei-Martan, the mountainous region of Chechen Republic<sup>22</sup>. However, the most well-known case was the skirmish between Georgian Special Forces and North Caucasian insurgents in late August 2012 in Lopota gorge during which three Kists from Pankisi gorge were killed<sup>23</sup>. Despite the failure to penetrate Russian-Georgian border and join insurgency in North Caucasus, the incident in Lopota demonstrated the existence of EC affiliated groups in Pankisi prior to their exodus to Syria.

### *Georgian Militants in Syria*

Georgians have been fighting as members of various rebel groups in Syria since 2012. Death of Rustam Gelayev, son of a prominent Chechen warlord Ruslan (Hamzat) Gelayev in August 2012 was the first evidence of Georgian fighters' participation in Syrian civil war. Since that date numerous casualties or militant activities of Georgian citizens in Syria have been reported.

We know from previous conflicts that the number of the foreign fighters from any particular country or region is proportional to the prevalence of *jihadi* ideology in that region. According to Clifford, the extent of militant recruitment as a fraction of Georgia's Muslim population

<sup>17</sup> Moore. Foreign Bodies (see note 8 above), 402

<sup>18</sup> Moore and Tumelty. Foreign Fighters And (see note 3 above), 422

<sup>19</sup> Witting Financing Terrorism Along (See note 17 above), 256

<sup>20</sup> Moore and Tumelty. Foreign Fighters And (see note 3 above), 423

<sup>21</sup> boevikov likvidirovali v tayne ot militsii. Komsant, [Militants were killed unknown to the police], <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/665943> (Accessed 10 January, 2018)

<sup>22</sup> V chechne unechtozhen boevik grazhdanin gruzii. [Georgian citizen militant was killed in Chechnya]; <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=385941> (Accessed 10 January, 2018)

<sup>23</sup> Souleimanov, Emil, and Maya Ehrmann. «The Armed Incident in Georgia's Lopota Valley and Its Implications for the Security Situation of the South Caucasus». Connections: The Quarterly Journal 12, № 3 (2013): 118-119



is the second highest in post-Soviet area and one of the highest in the world<sup>24</sup>. There is no officially confirmed statistical data on the number Georgian insurgents participated in the Syrian conflict. Thus the all reported numbers are highly controversial. Georgian officials estimate, that up to 50 Georgian citizens are fighting in Syria<sup>25</sup>, whereas Georgian analyst of Caucasian issues Mamuka Areshidze reports about 120 without acknowledging the primary source of information<sup>26</sup>. Aside from combatants there have been several reported cases of women from Pankisi and from Karajala village located in Telavi municipality.

According to the author's data, which relies solely on open sources, there are 72 reported cases of Georgian foreign fighters in Syria and three of those, who were arrested by Georgian authorities before their departure to the theater of war. This data also includes 17 women<sup>27</sup>. The majority of Georgian *jihadi* activists are ethnic Kists (66 out of 72 names in author's database). The number of reported Adjaran militants is seven. Reported biographic data of Georgian fighters puts their age between 16 and 58 and the average age is 27 years. Additionally, those Georgian militants who joined various *jihadi* groups after 2014 are much younger than those who joined before<sup>28</sup>. The starkest illustration of the decreasing average age among *jihadist* is the travel to ISIS of 16 and 18 year old secondary school pupils Muslim Kushtanashvili and Ramzan Baghakashvili<sup>29</sup>.

Professional backgrounds of Georgian *jihadist* are not very varied. The majority of them are young people from rural areas with secondary school education. However, there are several notable cases of pre-militancy careers such as former oppositional political activist, and even candidate in the local elections 2010 in Chokhatauri municipality (Akhmad Chaghalidze, or Ahmad al-Jurji)<sup>30</sup> or students of Tbilisi-based Komarovi Physics and Mathematics School (Khvicha Gobadze, Abu-Maryam al-Jurji)<sup>31</sup>.

The analysis of dynamics suggests, that Georgian fighters' involvement in Syrian conflict can be subdivided into two periods: before the allegiance to ISIS (2012-2013) and after the allegiance to ISIS (2013-until today). The first period can be understood in the context of North Caucasian participation in this conflict, whereas Syria witnessed a migration of Emirate Caucasus (hereafter mentioned as EC) militants from North Caucasus between 2011 and 2013. The second wave began in 2014 when ISIS had overshadowed EC not only as the most dominant group in Syria, but as a sanctuary for most of Caucasian insurgents<sup>32</sup>. In spite

<sup>24</sup> Clifford, "Georgian Foreign Fighters", (see note 6 above) p. 1

<sup>25</sup> "Levan izoria atskhadabs rom siriasi daakhloebit 50 kartveli ibrdzvis" [Levan Izoria Says, that Approximately 50 Georgian Fights in Syria], *civil.ge*, accessed 11 January, 2018, <http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=29936>

<sup>26</sup> Karchava, Tamta, *pankisshi vahabitebsa da traditsiul mahmadianebs shoris shetakebebi khdeba*. [The cleavages between Wahhabis and traditional Muslims take place in Pankisi], *Rezonansi*, accessed 11 January 2018, [http://www.resonancedaily.com/index.php?id\\_rub=2&id\\_artc=3037](http://www.resonancedaily.com/index.php?id_rub=2&id_artc=3037)

<sup>27</sup> Kvakhadze A. *Women from Georgia in Syrian and Iraqi Conflicts*: Available at: <https://www.gfsis.org/library/view/2679> (Accessed 18 January, 2019)

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 6

<sup>29</sup> Mtvilishvili, Gela. *pankisshi skolidan tsaqvanili bavshvebi e.ts. „islamur sakhelmtsiposhi“* [Photo - eksklusivi]. [School boys in the Islamic State. Photo exclusive], *Kakhetis Sainpormatsio Tsentri*, <http://ick.ge/articles/21412--photo-.html> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>30</sup> *rogor gakhda deputatobis kandidati ISIS-is mebrdzoli*. [How the candidate of deputy became the ISIS militant?], *Guria News*, <http://www.gurianews.com/article/mtavari/mtavari-tema/33390> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>31</sup> *ISIS-is „acharis jamaatis imami“ siriasi mokles*. [The leader of ISIS's Adjarian jamaat was killed in Syria], *Voice of America*, <https://www.amerikiskhama.com/a/khvicha-gabodze-report-from-tbilisi/3163084.html> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>32</sup> *Cecire, "Same Sides Of", 2*

of relatively small share of Georgian insurgents among their Caucasian counterparts, at least five Pankisi born insurgents, namely Tarkhan Batirashvili (*nom de guerre*, Umar al-Shishani), Ruslan Machalikashvili (Saifullah al-Shishani), Feizula Margoshvili (Salahuddin al-Shishani), Zurab Kushtanashvili<sup>33</sup> (Abu-Musa al Shishani) and Murad Margoshvili (Muslim al-Shishani) have been commanding large international *jihadi* groups<sup>34</sup>. The influx of North Caucasian fighters to Syria, including senior *jihadi* figures with links to EC leadership has begun in autumn 2012. The vast majority of them have joined the Katibat al-Muhajirin (The Group of Migrants), which merged with several smaller groups to be transformed into Jaish al-Muhajirin wal-Ansar (The Army of Migrants and Helpers, hereafter mentioned as JMA). The first leader of this group was Tarkhan Batirashvili. Aside from JMA, there were other groups where Georgian militants were represented. For instance, Jund al-Sham led by Muslim al-Shihani, who previously failed to find a way back into North Caucasus<sup>35</sup>.

Notwithstanding their presence in the Middle East, Caucasian fractions in Syria did not cut off their contacts with the insurgents in their historical homeland. For instance, JMA was associated with EC and its leader Doku Umarov, who sent a group of *jihadi* to Syria<sup>36</sup>. Although Umarov was skeptical of Caucasian participation in Syrian conflict, JMA was an addition of EC in Syria<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, former leader of JMA Tarkhan Batirashvili established an important family kinship with one of the key ideologist of EC and Islamist insurgency in North Caucasus Isa Umarov, by marrying his daughter<sup>38</sup>. Tarkhan Batirashvili, the former soldier of Georgian Armed Forces with the combat experience in the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 managed to make JMA an effective armed group. For example, Batirashvili-led JMA played a key role in capturing several strategic objects in North Syria including Handarat Air Defense Base and the Airbase in Menagh<sup>39</sup>.

However, JMA managed to maintain its integrity until fractioning in 2013. The first split took place in November 2013, when Tarkhan Batirashvili had left JMA and joined ISIS<sup>40</sup>. There are two explanations for the split between Caucasian (including Georgian) fighters of JMA. The first is that JMA leadership final allegiance is to Al-Qaeda and not ISIS. An interview with anonymous friend of Batirashvili highlights the popular in Pankisi version of the schism:

“Ginger General” [Batirashvili’s epithet frequently used in Georgian media] several

<sup>33</sup> The real name of Abu-Musa al Shishani was provided by his fellow villager from Omalo (Pankisi Gorge)

<sup>34</sup> Vikhodtsi s kavkaza v riadakh IG (IGIL). [Caucasians in ISIS], Kavkazskii Uzel, [http://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/251513/#cont\\_22](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/251513/#cont_22) (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>35</sup> Youngman, Mark. «Broader, Vaguer, Weaker: The Evolving Ideology of The Caucasus Emirate Leadership». *Terrorism And Political Violence*, 2016: 199-201

<sup>36</sup> Maltsev, Vladislav. «Imarat Kavkaz» perebralsia na turetskuiu granitsu” [Caucasus Emirate moved towards Turkish border], *Novaya Gazeta*, [http://www.ng.ru/world/2015-11-26/2\\_kavkaz.html](http://www.ng.ru/world/2015-11-26/2_kavkaz.html) (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>37</sup> Steinberg, Guido. «A Chechen Al-Qaeda? Caucasian Groups Further Internationalize The Syrian Struggle». *Ssoar.Info*, 2014. <http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/39707>.

<sup>38</sup> Burchuladze, Nino. «Tarkhanma mitkhra, is ghome Data Akhalaia kabinetshi gavatareo» - «zhghali generali» motsamles?! (ekskluzivi). [Tarkhan told me, that he spent this night in Data Akhalaia’s cabinet. Was ‘Ginger General’ poisoned? - Exclusive], *Kviris Palitra*, <https://www.kvirispalitra.ge/versia/29851-qtharkhanma-mithkhra-is-ghame-datha-akhalasias-kabinetshis-gavatareoq-qzhghali-generalis-motsamles-eqskluzivi.html> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>39</sup> Souleimanov, Emil, and Megan, Ouelette. «The Participation of North Caucasian Jihadists in the Syrian Civil War and Its Security Implications». *Rubincenter.Org*, 2014. <http://www.rubincenter.org/2015/02/the-participation-of-north-caucasian-jihadists-in-the-syrian-civil-war-and-its-security-implications/> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>40</sup> Steinberg, “A Chechen” (see note 37 above), 5

times met the leader of Jabahat al-Nusra [hereafter mentioned as JN], Muhammad al-Joulani and offered to merge his group with JN on the condition of material support for Caucasian insurgency by profits from oil sales. [...] Joulani declined Umar al-Shishani's offer [...]. Frustrated 'Ginger General' received another offer from the Islamic State [...]. JMA could have been a serious power for ISIS. Therefore al-Baghdadi was ready for sponsoring Caucasian insurgency. In the end, EC received support from Baghdadi. However, the fighters did not refuse from allegiance to Al-Qaeda, which lead to the clash between Tarkhan Batirashvili and [Isa] Umarov<sup>41</sup>.

Another explanation for the split is the personal disagreement between Umar al-Shishani and the second in command of JMA at the time of the split, Saifullah al-Shishani. In late summer 2013, Umar al-Shishani expelled from JMA a group of Caucasian militants associated with Saifullah al-Shishani, allegedly for misbehavior.

The second split from JMA took place in late 2013 when Ruslan Machalikashvili along with his group quit JMA and joined JN where he formed the Saifullah Group. Together with the Chechen groups of Jund al-Sham, Machalikashvili attacked a prison near Aleppo and was killed on 6 February 2014<sup>42</sup>. Prior to secession Saifullah al-Shishani was trying to maintain independence of the North Caucasian *jihadi* from the Arab-led JN or ISIS and not interfere in their infighting<sup>43</sup>.

Finally, the last cleavage in JMA occurred in summer 2015, when Salahuddin al-Shishani in company with the group of Caucasian militants left JMA and formed another group called Jaish al-Ussrah<sup>44</sup>. The reason of split might have been a competition between Caucasian and local militants. Salahudin al-Shishani has declared his new group as 'Emirate Caucasus in Syria', and therefore expressed loyalty to an idea of EC<sup>45</sup>.

Needless to say, that since his involvement in ISIS Umar al-Shishani became one of the most influential non-Iraqi commanders in this Iraqi-led group and even managed to enter Al-Baghdadi's inner circle. Due to his military experience he was promoted to a military *emir* (commander) of ISIS<sup>46</sup>. Aside from Umar al-Shishani, there are several other influential Georgian commanders in ISIS. First, Umar al-Shishani's brother Abdurahman Al-Shishani (Tamaz Tsatiashvili<sup>47</sup>), who is responsible for intelligence, counterintelligence and the control of prisons. Unlike his brother, Abdurahman participated in the Second Chechen War in the early 2000s and was responsible for technical issues, such as installing explosive materials<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> Burchuladze, "Tarkhanma" (see note 38 above)

<sup>42</sup> Steinberg, "A Chechen" (see note 37 above), 5

<sup>43</sup> Souleimanov, «Globalizing Jihad? North Caucasians In The Syrian Civil War», Middle East Policy 21, № 3 (2014);, p. 158

<sup>44</sup> Vatchagaev, Mairbek. "Chechens Fighting in Syria Increasingly Joining Forces With Islamic State", The Jamestown Foundation, <https://jamestown.org/program/chechens-fighting-in-syria-increasingly-joining-forces-with-islamic-state-2/#.Vt0Q9fi97IU> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>45</sup> Roggio Bill, "Chechen commander in Syria pledges to Islamic Caucasus Emirate" FDD's Long War Journal, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/chechen-commander-in-syria-pledges-to-islamic-caucasus-emirates.php> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>46</sup> Paraszczuk, Joanna. "The Clear Banner: "The Clash Over 'Real Jihad' in Syria: ISIS vs. the Caucasus Emirate", <http://jihadology.net/2014/06/04/the-clear-banner-the-clash-over-real-jihad-in-syria-isis-vs-the-caucasus-emirate/> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>47</sup> He uses his mother's last name in the official documents

<sup>48</sup> Museliani, Diana. "Tamaz Batirashvili: mitebi da realoba. [Tamaz Batirashvili: myths and reality]", Accent, <http://accent.com.ge/ge/news/details/20394> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

According to his father, ‘They [Umar and Abdurrahman al-Shishani] are together. Tamaz is his mentor. He survived that huge Grozny war and came back alive. [But] in Syria, Tamaz does not show himself’<sup>49</sup>. The second influential Georgian commander is Pankisi-born Al-Bara al-Shishani (Tsezar Tokhosashvili), who before his allegiance to ISIS was leading an independent Chechen brigade under the control of Ansar al-Sharia and operated in Idlib province. Nowadays, he is reportedly leading a group named ‘Vilayat Gurjistan’ (Province of Georgia) made up of Kist and Adjaran *jihadist*<sup>50</sup>. Another reported ISIS-affiliated Georgian warlord is Adam al-Shishani (Guram Gumashvili), who has participated in the Second Chechen War in Dagestan campaign<sup>51</sup>.

The conflict between ISIS and non-ISIS associated Caucasians (including Georgians) encompasses the difference in ideology and the nature of transnational activism. In the case of EC-sworn *jamaats*, the main motivation is the various forms of religious nationalism, whereas ISIS’s transnational agenda relies on the fictive kin ties based on the shared identity of Sunni Islamic *Uma*. The clear illustration of ISIS’s grievances can be seen when some Russian speaking ISIS ideologists blame EC-affiliated groups for prioritizing nationalism over Islam. Even veteran *jihadists* such as Muslim al-Shishani were depicted by them as Chechen nationalists<sup>52</sup>. The counter example is that non-ISIS Caucasian warlords have capitalized on the generational gap and the unwillingness of young militants to follow the experienced *mujahedeen*. As Muslim al-Shihani noted in his interview to Al-Risala:

‘In Chechnya, we were always accepting advice from those who were wiser than us [...]. Only the people like Jokhar Dudaev, Basayev, and Khatlab were allowed to make a communique from the screens about the state of emergency and *jihad*. But now we see young inexperienced ones who have ruined everything. They are not willing to listen to experienced *mujahedeen*. In Chechnya we could not argue with the elderly people. Nowadays, the new generation of young inexperienced *mujahedeen*, who lack an Islamic knowledge and morality, have destroyed the whole big achievements of the previous generation. It is a pity, but it is true’<sup>53</sup>.

Not only the internal clashes of Georgian militants, but the external features have played a vital role in their downfall. The varying number of casualties among Georgian combatants can tell us a lot about the dynamics of their activities. Of the 35 Georgian citizens killed in Syria and Iraq in 2012-19<sup>54</sup>, at least half occurred in 2015-16 which can be explained by a

<sup>49</sup> Catchcart Will, Tavberidze Vazha and Burchuladze Nino “The Secret Life of an ISIS Warlord”, The Daily Beast, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/the-secret-life-of-an-isis-warlord> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>50</sup> Cecire, “Same Sides Of”, (see note 4 above), p. 6

<sup>51</sup> Burchuladze, Nino “ISIS-is mukara pankisis «jamaats» - ekskluzivi: audiomimartvebi rakkadan - «islamuri sakhelmtsipos» bunagidan” [ISIS’s threat to Pankisi jamaat. Exclusive. Audio messages from Raqqa, the stronghold of the Islamic State], Kviris Palitra, <https://www.kvirispalitra.ge/versia/30470-isis-is-muqara-pankisis-qjamaathsq-eqskluzivi-audiomimarthvebi-rakkadan-qislamuri-sakhelmtsifosq-bunagidan.html> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>52</sup> Cecire, “Same Sides Of”, (see note 4 above), 6

<sup>53</sup> Müslim Şişani: Sira Çeçenisan’a gelecek. [Muslim Shishani. Soon will be Chechnya’s turn], Time Turk, <https://www.timeturk.com/muslim-sisani-sira-cecenisan-a-gelecek/haber-26829> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>54</sup> Tsuladze, Zviad. “ISIS: dusesli muhmad baghakashvili - 27-e mskhverpli. [ISIS: Muhmad Baghakashvili from Duisi. 27th victim], Voice of America, <https://www.amerikiskhmma.com/a/georgian-islamist-militant-killed-in-iraq/3890298.html> (Accessed 11 January, 2018); siriashi giorgi margoshvili (feizula kushtanashvili) daighupa [Giorgi Margoshvili (Feizula Kushtanashvili) Died in Syria], Way Radio, <https://radioway.ge/news/people/item/627-siriashi-pankisel-giorgi-margoshvili-peizula-kushtanashvili-daighupa> (Accessed 11 January, 2018); “siriashi 14 tslis Muhmad Pareulidze daighupa” [14-years-old Muhmad Pareulidze died in Syria] (Accessed 18 January, 2019)

sharply increased number of airstrikes launched by anti-ISIS coalition since 2015<sup>55</sup>. The number of deaths has dramatically declined since autumn 2016. Three reasons can explain the decrease of Georgian activity in Syria and Iraq. First, rapid downturn caused by the death of the charismatic leader Umar al-Shishani in July 2016 and therefore decapitation of the Caucasian fraction of ISIS. Loss of leadership is known as one of the major causes of breakups of terrorist organizations<sup>56</sup> and it might have caused the weakening the Chechen influence in the command structure of ISIS. ISIS-affiliated Chechen commanders such as Akhmed Chatayev or Al-Bara al-Shishani did not manage to fully replace Umar al-Shishani. The second factor is the heavy security measures implemented by Georgian law enforcement, such as arrests of Ayub Borchashvili, the ISIS's representative in Georgia and chief recruiter in Pankisi, Temur Bakhuntaridze - the bridge-figure in Adjara and some other ISIS activists in Guria-Adjara provinces<sup>57</sup>. The absence of skilled recruiters and *jihadi* ideologists created a logistical hindrance of mobilizing militants from Georgia. Third, military losses of ISIS and ongoing schisms between various *jihadi* groups in Syria and Iraq could have severely impacted the motivation of potential recruits. All those factors might have facilitated the demoralization among the Georgian members of ISIS.

#### *The Future Trajectories of Georgian Foreign Fighters*

The recent developments and advances of the Iraqi army and anti-ISIS coalition in Syria show that ISIS has lost most of its captured territories, and therefore no longer can wage conventional warfare. Notwithstanding the likelihood of mass death and casualties among *jihadist* during the breakdown of ISIS, the previous conflicts show that certain amount of foreign fighters have survived or were released from captivity. It is worth asking what will be the future and the next destination of Georgian foreign fighters. Potentially four possible scenarios of Georgian *jihadist*' trajectories can be identified: re-integrating back into society, focus on global *jihad*, focus on *jihad* in Caucasus, and focus on *jihad* in Georgia.

*Integrating back into society.* One of the possible scenarios for Georgian *jihadist*' future is to spread across different countries, live under civilian camouflage and wait for the appropriate political circumstances. It is known that 'retired' members of terrorist groups may follow two possible directions in their future activity: disengagement or decreasing violent participation<sup>58</sup>; and de-radicalization which means "commitment to, and involvement in violent radicalization is reduced to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activity"<sup>59</sup>. By virtue of Georgian legislation, which prevents *jihadist*' returning, they are more likely to settle in states with more tolerant positions towards Salafism. After the simplification of visa regime with the EU states, Georgian citizens are allowed to travel to Europe and stay there up to 90 days. Furthermore, ethnic Kists also may enter European countries as 'Chechen

<sup>55</sup> Saideman, Stephen M. «The Ambivalent Coalition: Doing The Least One Can Do Against The Islamic State». Contemporary Security Policy 37, № 2 (2016): 292

<sup>56</sup> Cronin, Audrey Kurth. How Terrorism Ends. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009, 8

<sup>57</sup> „sakartvelo khalipatis natsili gakhda“ - rashi adanashaulebs pankiseli abdula khelisuplebas. [Georgia became the part of Khalifat. Why Abdullah from Pankisi blames Georgian government?], Pirveli Radio, Available at: <http://pirveliradio.ge/?newsid=52039> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>58</sup> Horgan, John, and Kurt Braddock. «Rehabilitating The Terrorists?: Challenges In Assessing The Effectiveness Of De-Radicalization Programs». Terrorism And Political Violence 22, № 2 (2010): 280

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

asylum seekers.’ There are many cases of veterans of the war in Chechnya, including the members of Islamist groups, who have managed to find a safe haven in Europe. For instance, in spite of his previous association with the *jihadi* branch of Chechen separatists, Akhmed Chataev managed to acquire refugee status in Austria in early 2000s<sup>60</sup>. As it was mentioned in previous chapters, vast majority of Georgian foreign fighters are young men from rural areas without higher education or any professional skills. The process of their re-integration in host countries will be highly complicated. Such a trend could eventually lead Georgian militants to the following outcomes: Firstly, involvement in organized crime. An obvious example of the transition from *jihadism* to the criminal activities is the group Abu-Sayyaf in Philippines<sup>61</sup>. Moreover, features such as military experience, existing Chechen mafia and the extensive multinational contacts acquired in Syria and Iraq can facilitate their involvement in violent criminal activities. Secondly, Georgian veterans of Syrian conflict can find shelter in various Islamic Salafi organizations and under their umbrella continue the proliferation of Salafi ideas in other places. Finally and highly unlikely, a small minority of experienced fighters could become useful for intelligence services of different states or private military companies. Followed to its logical conclusion, the Georgian militants might exist in passive state until next transnational Islamist mobilization.

*Focus on the global jihad.* Such a trend could involve promoting *jihad* in different parts of the world. According to unconfirmed reports, Abdurrahman al-Shishani has already left Syria and Iraq, and joined the insurgency in Afghanistan<sup>62</sup>. As far as facts suggest, foreign fighters after the end of wars in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya conflicts did not quit their transnational activities but were employed in the other conflict zones. Further targets of the cross-border militancy might be regions with the more favorable conditions for *jihad*. Large territorial entities lacking full administrative control such as tribal zones in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen or Sahel region can facilitate movement of *jihadi* activists, especially those with military experience. In addition to Chechen militants’ excellent skills of waging asymmetrical warfare in urban and forested-mountainous environment they have also acquired combat experience in the Middle Eastern deserts. Moreover, in the conflict of Syria and Iraq Georgian foreign fighters not only had the opportunity to interact with *jihadist* from all over the world but learned to lead sizable transnational armed groups and therefore became the elite of the global *jihad*. Alternatively stated, in future *jihadi* conflicts, they can become not just cannon fodder but aspiring leaders of the insurgency. Aside from migration to another volatile region Georgian and other foreign fighters along with local militants may continue irregular warfare in Syria and Iraq against local governments. During the years spent fighting in this conflict Caucasian militants have fully adapted to local climate and socio-cultural landscape. In any case, in this scenario Georgian transnational insurgents will no longer focus on their homeland or region but will merge with the global *jihadi* agenda.

*Focus on jihad in North Caucasus.* One of the possible directions for Georgian foreign

<sup>60</sup> Chataev Akhmed Radjapovich [Chatayev Akhmed Radjapovich], Kavkazskii Uzel, <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/285270/> (Accessed 12 January, 2018)

<sup>61</sup> Makarenko, Tamara. «The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing The Interplay Between Transnational Organised Crime And Terrorism». *Global Crime* 6, № 1 (2004): 137

<sup>62</sup> Kartveli Mojahedebis Gaprtkhileba Siriidan [The warning of Georgian Mujahedeen from Syria], Kviris Palitra, <https://www.kvirispalitra.ge/versia/36126-qar-chamokhvidethq-eqskluzivi.html> (Accessed 12 January, 2018)

fighters is merging with the North Caucasian insurgency. The central aspect that makes this idea realistic is the ethnic kinship between Kists and Chechens. Numerous attempts by Kist fighters to join North Caucasian insurgency owing met with failure mainly due to the absence of an entry route. In this context ethnic Georgian insurgents could follow the way of their Kist commanders.

*Focus on jihad in Georgia.* The fourth probable orientation of Georgian returnees is waging *jihad* in Georgia itself. Historical experience suggests that foreign fighters associated with transnational terrorist organizations often re-ignite violence upon return to their home countries<sup>63</sup>. Veterans of *jihadi* conflicts often have a tremendous impact on domestic activists<sup>64</sup>.

The threat messages released by Georgian *jihadist* reveal their potential targets in Georgia. For example, Georgian newspaper *Kviris Palitra* obtained the audio recording of Adam al-Shishani addressing Pankisi-based non-ISIS Salafi groups. In that recording, which provoked the ire of ISIS, he discussed potential activities of local Salafis such as communication and joint seminars with Georgian (therefore ‘non-Muslim’) NGOs, campaigning in elections, avoiding *jihad* and gossiping about ISIS<sup>65</sup>. Additionally, the Adjaran faction of Georgian foreign fighters in Syria published a video which contains threats to Georgian population, local authorities and non-radical Muslim clergy<sup>66</sup>. Georgian Security Service suggests that Akhmed Chataev’s group aimed to carry out terrorist attacks against diplomatic missions in Georgia and Turkey<sup>67</sup>.

This speculation may seem realistic due to three factors: the weakness of Georgian law enforcement and state institutions, high level of grievances among local Muslim population and interest of the global *jihadi* leadership in Georgia. More precisely, socio-political conditions in Georgia must be similar to those during Pankisi crisis in the early 2000s. In spite of the large number of *jihadist* from Pankisi this region is less likely to become a separatist problem for official Tbilisi in the future due to its small population and landlocked geographical location. The more severe threat to Georgian state comes from Adjara and Kvemo Kartli regions. Grievances caused by Georgian Orthodox Church’s policy of Christianization can also facilitate radicalization in Adjara<sup>68</sup>. Adjara and especially its mountainous part with a Muslim majority has a high share of young and unemployed males and similarly to North Caucasus terrain creates ideal conditions for guerilla warfare. In any event, even in the present state of Georgian government institutions this scenario is highly unlikely.

<sup>63</sup> Byman, Daniel. «The Homecomings: What Happens When Arab Foreign Fighters in Iraq And Syria Return?». *Studies In Conflict & Terrorism* 38, № 8 (2015): 585

<sup>64</sup> Cilluffo, Frank J., Jeffrey B. Cozzens, and Magnus Ranstorp. *Foreign Fighters*. Washington, DC: Homeland Security Policy Institute, 2010.

<sup>65</sup> Burchuladze, “ISIS-is Mukara” (see note 51 above)

<sup>66</sup> Tsuladze, Zviad. “ISIS-is „acharis jamaatis imami“ siriashi mokles”. [The leader of ISIS’s Adjaran jamaat was killed in Syria], *Voice of America*, <https://www.amerikiskhma.com/a/khvicha-gabodze-report-from-tbilisi/3163084.html> (Accessed 11 January, 2018)

<sup>67</sup> “State Security Service of Georgia Detained 5 Individuals on Charge of Financing, Providing Other Material Support and Resources to Terrorist Activities”, State Security Service <http://sbg.gov.ge/en/news/303/State-Security-Service-of-Georgia-Detained-5-Individuals-on-charges-of-Financing-Providing-other-Material-Support-and-Resources-to-Terrorist-Activities> (Accessed 12 January, 2018)

<sup>68</sup> Smolnik, Franziska, Andrea Weiss, and Yana Zabanova. «Political Space And Borderland Practices In Abkhazia And Adjara: Exploring The Role Of Ottoman Legacies And Contemporary Turkish Influences». *Eurasian Geography And Economics*, 2017: 16

### *Conclusions*

Our analysis suggests that despite their relatively small numbers Georgian foreign fighters have achieved significant influence among transnational militant groups. It is worth noting that Georgians fighters have not achieved such military success in the Middle East since the period of Mamelukes. The evidence of that are at least five prominent Georgian military commanders in various *jihadi* groups. At the same time meteoric rise of Tarkhan Batirashvili from a retired army sergeant to a prominent leader of *jihad* Umar al-Shishani inspired a huge number of young Georgian Muslims to join the insurgency. Analysis of the official data suggests that the vast majority of Georgian transnational insurgents were young unemployed males from rural areas. Strictly speaking, militant activism in Georgia is an offshoot of the regional Islamist militancy which has become an integral part of global *jihad*.

Possible return of Georgian Islamist insurgency poses a threat to stability in Caucasus. It can be violent, as well as nonviolent continuation of their activism. Whether they focus on global or local *jihad* in North Caucasus or Georgia will become apparent after the end of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. In any case returning Georgian foreign fighters are a severe security challenge for Georgia, not only in terms of domestic security but also in terms of its international reputation.



## **Министр иностранных дел Горской Республики (1918-1919 гг.) Гейдар Баммат: представитель интересов демократических сил народов Северного Кавказа**

*Севиндж АЛИЕВА\**

11 мая 1918 года была провозглашена Горская республика – светское демократическое государство народов Северного Кавказа. С первых дней своего существования лидеры Горской Республики находились в прямом контакте с азербайджанскими деятелями. До и после оккупации Горской республики белогвардейцами Азербайджанская Республика оказывала помощь своим мусульманским соседям. На Парижской Мирной конференции азербайджанская делегация отстаивала не только свои, но интересы северокавказской делегации, не допущенной к переговорам. Со своей стороны, деятели Горской республики всегда ориентировались и трепетно относились к Азербайджанской Республике. Министр иностранных дел Горской республики Гейдар Баммат, в свою очередь, всегда разделял интересы Азербайджана и азербайджанского народа. В своих письмах и статьях он выражал свою принципиальную позицию в отношении действий армян против мусульман. Причем он обращал внимание российского правительства на эти действия еще весной 1917 года.

Гейдар Баммат был не просто из цвета кумыкской когорты того времени, а именно представителем интересов всех национальных демократических сил народов Северного Кавказа. Гейдар Баммат беззаветно ввергся в пучину процессов, охвативших распадающуюся Российскую империю. В марте 1917 г. он вошел в состав Временного областного исполнительного комитета – органа Временного правительства, основанного в Темир-Хан-Шуре представителями национальной интеллигенции Дагестана. С этого момента, можно сказать, и началась его бурная общественная деятельность.

Именно в этот период Гейдар Баммат проявил себя выразителем обще мусульманских интересов. Когда 19 мая 1917 года помощником по гражданским вопросам генерал-комиссара областей, занятых российскими войсками по праву войны был назначен Я.Завриев, Гейдар Баммат направил телеграмму в Тифлис с протестом. Ввиду важности описания накала общественно-политических страстей в регионе и гражданской позиции Гайдара Баммата предлагаем полный текст документа:

«Редакцией получена следующая телеграмма от представителя Дагестанского областного комитета в Тифлисе Г.Бамматова:

Сегодня мною послана Министру Председателю, министру иностранных дел, председателю совета солдатских и рабочих депутатов следующая телеграмма: «Распоряжением Временного Правительства управление занятыми по поводу войны областями Турции передано Особому генерал-комиссару генералу Аверьянову. Помощником его назначен один из руководителей партии Дашнакцутюн доктор

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Завриев. Тифлисский мусульманский комитет считает долгом обратить внимание Правительства, что настоящее назначение в особенности доктора Завриева вызывает в мусульманском населении Кавказа глубокую тревогу и беспокойство.

На почве широкой провокации в последнее время отношения между мусульманами и армянами крайне обострились. В завоеванных областях над мирным мусульманским населением со стороны армян были допущены возмутительные насилия, выразившиеся в отдельных случаях в массовых избиениях женщин и детей. Назначение в такой момент на руководящий управлением завоеванных областей пост представителя наиболее агрессивной армянской партии вызывает в кавказских мусульманах чувство глубокого недовольства и протеста. Во имя справедливости и спокойного течения кавказской жизни Тифлисский Мусульманский комитет настоятельно просит о замене доктора Завриева представителем более терпимых течений армянской мысли, а также о назначении еще одного помощника генерал-комиссара мусульманина по указанию центрального Мусульманского Кавказского комитета. Мусульманский Комитет подчеркивает, что 70% населения завоеванных областей составляют мусульмане. Прошу областной Комитет энергично поддержать».

Областной Комитет, известив об этом Бюро объединенных горцев, обратился с особой телеграммой к представителям власти в Петрограде.

На основании этой телеграммы и других дополнительных сведений Дагестанский Исполнительный Комитет послал телеграммы в Петроград председателю Совета министра иностранных дел в Комитет Всероссийского Мусульманского Совета и Председателю Совета солдатских и рабочих депутатов следующего содержания:

«Дагестанский областной исполнительный комитет уведомлен о назначении доктора Завриева, члена партии Дашнакцутюн помощником генерал-комиссара областей Турции занятых по праву войны. В видах справедливости необходимо назначение еще одного помощника генерал-комиссара мусульманина по указанию центрального Мусульманского комитета; в этих областях семьдесят процентов мусульман. Назначение Завриева, представителя самой крайне армянской партии, совершенно недопустимо. Должно быть избрано более лояльное лицо. Уже теперь допущено возмутительное насилие над мирным мусульманским населением областей, в виде массовых избиений беззащитных женщин и детей армянами как результат провокационной агитации. Тревога населения растет, передаваясь в другие мусульманские области, грозя повсюду столкновениями массового характера. Единственный способ предотвратить подобное бедствие разрешением вопроса на началах справедливости, согласно проведенному нами ходатайству. Просим о скорейшем разрешении вопроса с уведомлением Областного комитета»<sup>1</sup>.].

Г. Баммат интересен не только как одна из необыкновенно зрелых личностей своего

<sup>1</sup> РГАСПИ (Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории) Ф. 71. оп. 34. Д. 1059, с.8

времени, как общественный и государственный деятель, но и как мыслитель, публицист, аналитик. Творческое, историческое наследие Г. Баммата явилось предметом изысканий многих исследователей. Однако, интерес к его творческому и историческому наследию не утихает, напротив, есть потребность в анализе его понимания и оценки ситуации того времени, в котором он жил. Ведь Г. Баммат пережил самые крутые повороты истории, был в гуще наиболее знаковых событий, соприкасался с историческими личностями своего времени.

Зачастую с его именем связывают дипломатическую историю Горской Республики – государства народов Северного Кавказа (1918-1920) и эмигрантскую политическую деятельность кавказцев. Однако, не менее интересна фигура Г. Баммата и в общем контексте азербайджано-северокавказско-турецких взаимоотношений. Еще будучи членом Тифлисского мусульманского совета, Г. Баммат принял участие в работе Особого совещания 11 ноября 1917 г. в Тифлисе. От Дагестанского областного исполкома Г. Баммат вошел в состав и основанного в конце 1917 г. Закавказского комиссариата (15 ноября 1917 – 10 апреля 1918).

В то время среди представителей Кавказа наметилась поляризация взглядов на идущую в Европе и Азии Первую мировую войну и особенно на Оттоманскую империю. Представители Азербайджана и Северного Кавказа сочувственно относились к единой Турции. В условиях роста национальных и религиозных чувств эта тяга была особенно велика.

Гейдар Баммат на страницах газеты «Горская жизнь» от 17 декабря 1917 года выразил надежду, «что братья-грузины, так же как и армяне, не втянутся в непосредственные боевые действия с турецкими войсками, а будут бороться вместе с другими народами Кавказа за подписание со странами Центрально-Европейских держав мирного договора, который бы стал не только основанием для выхода Кавказа из мировой войны, но и заложил бы основу его будущей государственной независимости»<sup>2</sup>. 28 февраля 1918 года была принята «Резолюция временного правительства Союза горцев Северного Кавказа и Дагестана о принятии срочных мер к политическому воссоединению территории и народов Северного Кавказа и Дагестана с Закавказьем, а также к вступлению в сношения с Оттоманской империей и союзными ей державами для выяснения возможности активной поддержки названными государствами независимого кавказского государства»<sup>3</sup>.

В марте 1918 г. на закрытом совещании руководителей Дагестанского областного исполкома и Национального комитета с представителями Союза горцев Северного Кавказа, состоявшемся в доме князя Тарковского, была обсуждена тяжелейшая ситуация в

<sup>2</sup> «Горская жизнь». 17 декабря 1917. № 46// Гасан Оразаев. Из публицистики Гайдара Баммата// Гайдар Баммат – известный и неизвестный. Сборник документов и материалов. Баку, 2015, с.206

<sup>3</sup> Резолюция временного правительства Союза горцев Северного Кавказа и Дагестана о принятии срочных мер к политическому воссоединению территории и народов Северного Кавказа и Дагестана с Закавказьем, а также к вступлению в сношения с Оттоманской империей и союзными ей державами для выяснения возможности активной поддержки названными государствами независимого кавказского государства. г. Владикавказ, 28 февраля 1918 г.// Гайдар Баммат – известный и неизвестный. Сборник документов и материалов. Баку: Азербайджанское историческое общество, 2015, с.206

связи с угрозой северокавказским народам со стороны захвативших власть большевиков, а также поддерживающих их солдат и дашнаков. Было принято единогласное решение направить в Османскую империю делегацию за военной помощью «для установления порядка и спасения ислама», так как национально-государственному строительству мешали находившиеся в Дагестане большевики<sup>4</sup>. В состав полномочной делегации вошли Зубаир Темирханов, Абдул Меджид Чермоев, Мухаммед-Кади Дибиров и Гайдар Баммат. Они отправились в Трапезунд, а затем в Стамбул на переговоры с османским правительством, заверявшим, что окажет помощь народам Северного Кавказа. Упомянутый визит демонстрировал, что кавказские мусульмане возлагали надежду на Турцию. Члены делегации призвали Закавказский комиссариат «прекратить враждебные отношения между Тифлисом и Турцией». Планировалось объединение Южного и Северного Кавказа в одно государство и признание его независимости. Делегаты Северного Кавказа, и в частности, Гайдар Баммат доказывали, что судьба Южного Кавказа зависит исключительно от существования на Северном Кавказе независимого государства. В декларации от 1 апреля, представленной главой северокавказской делегации Г. Бамматом председателям османской и закавказской делегаций в связи с этим отмечалось: «Северный Кавказ твердо убежден, что Закавказье не может существовать без связи с территориями народов Дагестана и Северного Кавказа. Создание единого Кавказского государства продиктовано географическими, экономическими, стратегическими и политическими размышлениями...»<sup>5</sup>. Эти же инициативы получили свое развитие и на состоявшейся в мае Батумской мирной конференции, целью которой было заключения договора мира и дружбы между Османской империей и Закавказской Федеративной Республикой<sup>6</sup>. Политические руководители Закавказья вели переговоры с горским правительством о провозглашении всего Кавказа независимой федеративной республикой.

Со своей стороны, по поводу деятельности делегации горцев Северного Кавказа в Османской империи протестовал Смольный<sup>7</sup>, вопреки провозглашенному им же принципу права наций на самоопределение, не желавший признавать независимость ни Северного, ни Южного Кавказа. Об этом, в частности, сообщалось в ноте Народного комиссариата иностранных дел турецкому посланнику Халиб Кемаль-бею от 30 мая 1918 г. В документе отмечалось, что Народный совет Терской области также выступал против намерения закавказского правительства привлечь Северный Кавказ к акту отделения Кавказа от России<sup>8</sup>. Несмотря на эти потуги большевиков, Стамбул продолжал поддерживать Союз объединенных горцев Северного Кавказа. Вместе с османской делегацией представители Северного Кавказа выехали в Батуми на переговоры с целью объединения со странами Южного Кавказа<sup>9</sup>. Надо отметить, что

<sup>4</sup> Расулзаде Мамед Эмин. Сборник произведений и писем // Составление, предисловие и примечания Исхаков С. М.: Издательство Флинта, 2010, с.48; РГАСПИ. Ф. 71. Оп.33. Д. 1708, с.1-11

<sup>5</sup> Баммат Г. Кавказ и русская революция (политический аспект). Махачкала, 2000, с.23-24

<sup>6</sup> Из протокола первого заседания Батумской мирной конференции от 11 мая 1918 г. // Документы и материалы по внешней политике Закавказья и Грузии. Сборник материалов. Тифлис, 1919, с.312-313

<sup>7</sup> На тот момент столицей России был Петроград, а центром правительства Смольный (хотя решение о переносе столицы было принято в начале 1918г. практически этот перенос завершился лишь к концу года). Кремль, как синоним Советского правительства, стал употребляться лишь в середине 20х годов.

<sup>8</sup> Документы внешней политики. М.: Гос. Изд-во политической литературы, 1959, с.335-338

<sup>9</sup> Там же, с.253

о допуске представителей Горской Республики на конференцию ходатайствовала и турецкая сторона. 9 мая 1918 г. состоялось заседание закавказских представителей по вопросу допуска делегации Горской Республики на Батумскую конференцию. Выступивший на ней Гайдар Баммат отметил, что Стамбул поддерживает идею объявления независимости Северного Кавказа, хотя по тактическим причинам этот акт пока и не был принят руководством Союза горцев Северного Кавказа и Дагестана: «Оттоманское правительство заверило нас, что принципиально оно отнесется также благосклонно к нашему объявлению независимости, как оно отнеслось к объявлению независимости Закавказья. Мы не предрешаем содействия Турции, но возможность этого содействия есть в случае осложнения с Севера. Я категорически заявляю, что никакого объявления независимости горцами сделано не было...»<sup>10</sup>. Однако идея эта «витала в воздухе», оживленно обсуждалась в кулуарах<sup>11</sup>. Наконец, 11 мая 1918 г. независимость Горской Республики, – государства народов Северного Кавказа, – была провозглашена. Председателем нового государства стал А. М. Чермоев, а министром иностранных дел – Гайдар Баммат. Он стал рупором, лицом Горской Республики, воплощением ее идей и идеалов. В первую очередь, он стал добиваться налаживания отношений с Оттоманской империей и странами Южного Кавказа. 8 июня ему удалось подписать с Оттоманской империей договор о дружбе и мире, в силу которого турецкое правительство признало независимость Горской Республики.

К началу июля 1918 года грузинские войска с помощью немцев заняли Адлер, а затем и Сочи. Значительная часть Черноморского побережья Кавказа оказалась фактически под контролем Германии<sup>12</sup>. Германо-турецкие войска продолжали наступать. Скоро в Гяндже обосновались две турецкие дивизии и штаб генерала К. Нури-паши. По оценке Г. Баммата, «если мусульманское население Азербайджана относилось с нескрываемой симпатией к успехам турецкого оружия и никакой привязанности к России не проявляло, другое было к ней отношение Армении и в социалистических кругах Грузии»<sup>13</sup>.

В то же время, с целью получения военной помощи против большевиков, оккупировавших не только Владикавказ, столицу Горской Республики, но и Дагестан, Г. Баммат вел в Стамбуле переговоры с турецким правительством. Дело шло о выделении из состава, находящихся под командованием Нури-паши, войск воинских контингентов для оказания помощи горцам в освобождении их территорий от большевистских сил.

По сообщению Г. Баммата, «с целью оживления нашей самодеятельности мы двинули вопрос назначения к нам Юсуф Изет-паши и организации добровольческих отрядов из беглых черкесских солдат. Юсуф Изет-паша выезжает на днях к нам – с

<sup>10</sup> Союз объединенных горцев Северного Кавказа и Дагестана (1917-1920 гг.), Горская Республика (1918-1920 гг.). Документы и материалы. Махачкала, 1994, с.108-117

<sup>11</sup> Там же.

<sup>12</sup> Империалистическая интервенция на Дону и Северном Кавказе / Под ред. Минца И. И. М., 1988, с.109-110

<sup>13</sup> Мамулия Г., Вачагаев М., Доного Х. М., Гайдар Баммат и журнал «Кавказ». Сборник статей за период существования журнала 1934-1939 гг. Махачкала-Париж, 2010, с.80-81

ним кадровые офицеры. Нижних чинов и унтер-офицеров, он получит в Батуме. Ему отпускают все технические принадлежности: радио, телеграф, телефон и средства. Оружие и патроны в достаточном количестве. Мы должны использовать дорогу Нуху-Ахты, получить по ней максимум того, что можно и поставить Германию перед свершившимся фактом восстания наших народов [...] относительно займа, о котором я имел беседу с Талаат-пашей я должен повторить, что этот вопрос турки ставят в зависимость от политического общего положения. На военные расходы Изет-паша кое-что получил, Энвер обещал только телеграфировать Изет-паше выдать нам 10 000 лир»<sup>14</sup>.

Объясняя причины необходимости сближения с турецкими руководителями, Г. Баммат писал: «Зачем нужно быть возможно ближе к Нури-паше? – Он может, если пожелает, выделить из своих сил части для Северного Кавказа – хотя бы маленькими порциями выуживать у него нам полезно... неофициально Турция будет посылать нам оружие и инструкторов. По подсчету Энвер-паши, инструкторский состав будет около 3 тысяч. Заем можно будет реализовать... До окончания необходимых формальностей Энвер-паша обещал телеграфировать Эссад-паше, чтобы... отпустили 10.000 лир (150.000 руб.) по бывшему при моем отъезде курсу...»<sup>15</sup>. Далее, в своем письме председателю горского правительства А. М. Чермоеву Г. Баммат признал, что «нашим основным и единственным другом, увы слишком слабым, является Турция и в ней Энвер-паша...»<sup>16</sup>.

Следует подчеркнуть, что Горское правительство не имело территориальных претензий к Азербайджанской Демократической Республике. В связи с этим, уже находясь в эмиграции, Г. Баммат подчеркивал, что «мы окончательно и бесповоротно признаем границы Кавказа, установленные Карским договором 1921 г.»<sup>17</sup>.

Со своей стороны помощь и поддержка со стороны Азербайджана имела огромное значение для Горской Республики.

На своем заседании от 10 июля 1918 г. правительство Азербайджана обсудило вопрос о платформе и формах объединения с Горской Республикой, признав создание объединенных государственных структур необходимыми и полезным. Было решено приступить к объединению четырех областей управления: а) вооруженных сил, б) духовных дел, в) иностранной политики и г) финансовых вопросов.

31 августа 1918 г. Г. Баммат, сообщая из Стамбула премьер-министру Горской Республики Абдул-Меджиду Чермоеву о политике Турции в отношении Кавказа, отмечал, что Али Башамин от имени Энвер-паши высказался за объединение

<sup>14</sup> Тахо-Годи А. Революция и контрреволюция в Дагестане. Махачкала: Даг. кн. изд-во, 1927 // Научное наследие А. А. Тахо-Годи. Книги, статьи, доклады, выступления, письма. Ч. 1. Махачкала, 2006, с.79-80

<sup>15</sup> Союз объединенных горцев Северного Кавказа и Дагестана (1917-1920 гг.), Горская Республика (1918-1920 гг.). Документы и материалы. Махачкала, 1994, с.145-146

<sup>16</sup> Там же.

<sup>17</sup> Мамулиа Г., Вачагаев М., Доного Х. М., Гайдар Баммат и журнал «Кавказ». Сборник статей за период существования журнала 1934-1939 гг. Махачкала-Париж, 2010, с.323

Горской Республики и Азербайджана. Мотивация заключалась в том, что положение Азербайджана было более благоприятное. Баммат писал: «со времени проезда Фаруха-бека Везирова и Агаева здесь стали ходить слухи о соединении Дагестана (одного) с Азербайджаном и образовании самостоятельной единицы из чеченцев и прочих народов наших на Северном Кавказе. Я, конечно, самым критическим образом возражал против проектов, называя их инсинуациями и подчеркивая, что мы рассматриваем такой проект как предательство наших братьев, я заявил от своего и имени коллег Башамина..., что мы немедленно покинем Константинополь, если турецкое правительство по тем или иным видам станет на эту точку зрения. Вопрос формального воссоединения с Азербайджаном в настоящий момент дал бы тот же эффект, так как ни наши кавказские соседи, ни их покровители не допустили чрезмерного увеличения Азербайджана и, конечно, сильнее всего сократили его на Север, отдав все возможное казакам»<sup>18</sup>. Последний пассаж имел в виду политику Германии, которая, стоя на точке зрения Брест-Литовского договора, не желала нарушать мир с большевиками из-за Горской Республики.

6 октября 1918 г. Дербент был занят частями турецкой дивизии генерала Юсуфа Изет-паши, прибывшим из Баку в Дагестан на помощь горцам-мусульманам с отрядом из 4 000 человек. 29 октября турки вошли в Темир-Хан-Шуру и восстановили Горское правительство во главе с А. М. Чермоевым. По благодарной оценке Г. Баммата, высказанной им уже в эмиграции в статье «Тюркизм, Турция и Кавказ»: «Мы слишком хорошо помним и никогда не забудем той крови, которую пролили у нас турецкие аскеры в совместной борьбе против красных и белых оккупантов нашей территории... Этого священного долга никаким гостеприимством оплатить нельзя»<sup>19</sup>. Флаг Горской Республики был водружен в Темир-Хан-Шуре. «На приход турок смотрели как на силу, которая поможет созданию твердой власти. Из среды ярых сторонников турок – духовенства и мелкобуржуазной части были группы, которые хотели, чтобы быть под протекторатом Турции или даже быть присоединенными к ней», - отмечал представитель национальной интеллигенции Дагестана Адиль-Гирей Даидбеков<sup>20</sup>.

В октябре 1918 г. между Азербайджанской и Горской Республиками был заключен договор, предполагающий установление общей оборонительной системы и проведения согласованной экономической политики. Уполномоченными от правительства Азербайджанской Республики выступили председатель правительства Ф. Х. Хойский и министр финансов М. Г. Гаджинский, а от Горской Республики – председатель правительства А. М. Чермоев и министр финансов В. Г. Джабагиев. В ходе работы над договором было принято постановление, согласно которому:

«I. Общими делами Республики Азербайджана и Горцев Кавказа объявляются:

<sup>18</sup> Союз объединенных горцев Северного Кавказа и Дагестана (1917-1920 гг.), Горская Республика (1918-1920 гг.). Документы и материалы. Махачкала, 1994, с.149-153

<sup>19</sup> Мамулия Г., Вачагаев М., Доного Х. М., Гайдар Баммат и журнал «Кавказ». Сборник статей за период существования журнала 1934-1939 гг. Махачкала-Париж, 2010, с.369

<sup>20</sup> В объятиях красного дьявола. Сборник материалов и документов // Ответственный редактор и составитель Х. М. Доного Махачкала, 2011, с.261

1) Иностранные дела – причем, заключение международных трактатов и соглашений обеими странами, а также установление своих основных взаимоотношений с другими державами проходит либо, сообща и совместно обоими странами, либо, с ведома и согласия правительства каждой из сих стран.

2) Внешняя военная оборона обоих государств и их независимости – причем система такой обороны устанавливается соглашениями договаривающихся сторон. Равным образом, договаривающиеся стороны обязываются оказывать друг другу военную помощь для поддержания внутреннего порядка и спокойствия в сих странах в тех случаях, когда о такой помощи попросит заинтересованная сторона.

Примечание: Во время войны воинские силы обеих стран поступают под общее командование одного лица, избираемого правительствами сих стран по согласованию между собою.

3) Финансы, поскольку речь идет о расходах, которые должны быть покрыты сообща на основаниях, которые будут выработаны особо.

II. Следующие дела должны решаться на основаниях общих, устанавливаемых путем соглашения правил:

1) Вопрос об установлении для обеих Республик общей таможенной территории, таможенное законодательство и основание распределения таможенных сборов.

2) Установление монетной системы и денежной валюты.

3) Постановления, касающиеся системы мер и весов.

4) Постановления, касающиеся эксплуатации и тарификации железнодорожных, почтовых, телеграфных и телефонных сообщений между правительствами договаривающихся стран по каждому отдельному вопросу»<sup>21</sup>.

7 ноября 1918г. Кавказская исламская армия вместе с горскими отрядами с боями взяла город Петровск, выбив оттуда отряд казаков и армян под командованием полковника Лазаря Бичерахова. После этого вся территория Дагестана и Чечни перешла под контроль Горского правительства<sup>22</sup>.

Таким образом, к моменту окончания Первой мировой войны 11 ноября Горская республика в целом контролировала Северо-Восточный Кавказ. Но вскоре из-за поражения в Первой мировой войне стран Четверного союза турецкие войска вынуждены были покинуть Дагестан. По свидетельству современников, некоторые офицеры турецких войск были выходцами из Северного Кавказа. Адиль-Гирей Даидбеков отмечал: «В среде командного офицерского состава было много лиц из горцев Северного Кавказа, жаждавших побывать на родных землях и видеть остатки

<sup>21</sup> ГААР (Государственный Архив Азербайджанской Республики). Ф. 970. Оп. 1. Д. 23, с.1-5

<sup>22</sup> Германно-турецкое соглашение от 23 сентября 1918 г. и временная консолидация Союза объединенных горцев Северного Кавказа и Дагестана// Георгий Мамулиа. В борьбе за Конфедерацию народов Кавказа. К вопросу о политической деятельности Гайдара Баммата в 1917-1921 гг. Гайдар Баммат – известный и неизвестный. Сборник документов и материалов. Баку, 2015, с.82-84



своих соплеменников, они уезжали убитые горем и печалью, но с надеждой вернуться в будущем»<sup>22</sup>. Оставшиеся в горах офицеры-турки обучали местную молодежь военному делу и в дальнейшем задействовали их для занятия укреплений в Гунибе, Хунзахе, Кумухе и пр. Турки оставили горскому правительству много медикаментов и оборудования для лазаретов, оружие, и т.д., которые потом переправили из Шамиль-Калы в Темир-Хан-Шуру<sup>23</sup>.

В конце 1918 г. Г. Баммат выехал в Западную Европу для того, чтобы в составе находящейся под председательством А. М. Чермоева дипломатической делегации Горской Республики принять участие в работе Парижской мирной конференции, на которой должны были решиться и судьбы народов бывшей Российской империи.

В первой половине 1919 г. территория Горской Республики была оккупирована Белой армией генерала А. Деникина, захватившей к маю этого года и Дагестан. Вынужденное покинуть свою территорию горское правительство обосновалось в Тифлисе. Несмотря на это делегация Горской Республики в Париже продолжала действовать от имени своего правительства, однако не была допущена к работе Парижской мирной конференции. Интересы горцев представлял А. М. Топчибаши<sup>24</sup>.

Находящийся в Париже Г. Баммат долго и безрезультатно обивал пороги представительств держав Антанты, с просьбой рассмотреть вопрос о признании независимости Горской Республики. В случае, если Англия не окажет поддержки Республике Северного Кавказа, Г. Баммат предлагал Горскому правительству «искать пути примирения с большевизмом, так как проливать кровь горцев для реставрации старой России мы считаем преступлением»<sup>25</sup>. По оценке Баммата, все попытки горцев отстоять свою государственную независимость отдельно от Южного Кавказа заведомо обречены на провал. Единственным выходом является создание Кавказской Федерации<sup>26</sup>.

В ноябре-декабре 1919 г. основные силы Деникина терпели поражение на Южном и Юго-Восточном фронте, в результате чего командование Добровольческой армии пошло на переговоры о мире с Советом обороны Дагестана. Предполагалось признание Совета обороны Дагестана в качестве правительства страны и вывод с ее территории войск, за исключением территории железной дороги до Петровска<sup>27</sup>.

В то же время, с целью противодействовать попыткам большевиков захватить Дагестан, азербайджанское правительство направило туда находящегося на их службе

<sup>23</sup> В объятиях красного дьявола. Сборник материалов и документов // Ответственный редактор и составитель Х. М. Доного Махачкала, 2011, 262-263

<sup>24</sup> В объятиях красного дьявола. Сборник материалов и документов // Ответственный редактор и составитель Х. М. Доного Махачкала, 2011, с.262-263; РГАСПИ (Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории). Ф. 71. Оп. 33. Д. 686, с.12

<sup>25</sup> Союз объединенных горцев Северного Кавказа и Дагестана (1917-1920 гг.), Горская Республика (1918-1920 гг.). Документы и материалы. Махачкала, 1994, с.252-253

<sup>26</sup> Там же, с.174

<sup>27</sup> Там же.

турецкого генерала Нури-пашу в качестве главнокомандующего северокавказского фронта. Его задача заключалась в том, чтобы в случае приближения к Дагестану русских большевиков присоединить Дагестан к Азербайджанской Республике, тем самым предотвратив аннексию страны Советской Россией<sup>28</sup>.

Нури-паша должен был объединить разрозненные воинские части горцев под знаменем ислама для борьбы с большевиками (новой угрозой, возникшей после разгрома белогвардейцев). Турецкий генерал организовал переговоры между командирами и лидерами Дагестана и Северного Кавказа Али-Гаджи Акушинским, Ибрагимом-Гаджи, Кязим-беем, Нажмутдином Гоцинским и Кайтмазом Алихановым, обещая им военную помощь из Азербайджана<sup>29</sup>.

Поражение Белых войск, усиление большевизма и распространение советской власти на большую часть бывшей Российской империи, подтолкнуло 17 января 1920 г. Верховный совет Антанты признать де-факто независимость Азербайджана и Грузии. Члены дипломатической делегации Горской Республики в Париже вели переговоры с отдельными представителями держав Антанты об образовании Общекавказской Федерации. Однако в то время правительства Антанты считали возможным пойти на признание де-факто лишь Южного Кавказа. Исходя из этой реальности, Г. Баммат вернулся на Кавказ и пытался вести переговоры о создании Кавказской Конфедерации с правом Горской Республики на автономию в составе Азербайджана. В этих обстоятельствах глава азербайджанской делегации на Парижской мирной конференции А. М. Топчибаши предложил главе английского правительства Д. Ллойд-Джорджу признать де-факто Горскую Республику, что, однако, не встретило понимания руководителей держав Антанты.

Ситуация изменилась к худшему и в самом Дагестане, так как к этому времени руководство кемалистов, ведущее борьбу с государствами Антанты, с целью получения военной и финансовой помощи от Кремля окончательно взяло курс на союз с большевиками, таким образом признавая как Северный, так и Южный Кавказ, сферой их влияния.

По этим и другим причинам 20 марта 1920 г. Нури-паша вместе с офицерами своего штаба и азербайджанскими добровольцами вынужден был вернуться в Азербайджан. Еще 13 апреля Г. Баммат обратился по радио к комиссару иностранных дел советского правительства Г. Чичерину, напомнив ему об обещании большевистского правительства уважать права на самоопределение народов бывшей империи Романовых. Исходя из этого, Баммат требовал от Кремля освободить от Красных войск территорию независимой Республики Северного Кавказа. Однако этот призыв остался без ответа<sup>30</sup>. Прекращение помощи национально-освободительному движению горцев со стороны Турции, а также последовавшая за этим в конце апреля 1920 г. оккупация

<sup>28</sup> Баммат Г. Кавказ и русская революция (политический аспект). Махачкала, 2000, с.29-30

<sup>29</sup> Деникин А. И. Очерки русской смуты. Москва, 1991, с.195-196

<sup>30</sup> Баммат Г. Кавказ и русская революция (политический аспект). Махачкала, 2000, с.31-33

Красной армией самого Азербайджана, имели роковые последствия для независимости государств как Северного, так и Южного Кавказа.

Оказавшись в эмиграции, Гайдар Баммат тесно соприкасался и сотрудничал с представителями азербайджанских политических кругов. Был очень близок с Алимардан бекком Топчибашевым. Вся его деятельность в Турции, а также в дальнейшем в Европе, была неразрывно связана с деятелями азербайджанского национально-освободительного движения. Он все больше и больше убеждался в правильности идеи объединения народов Кавказа, несмотря на то, что, как и подавляющее большинство кавказских эмигрантов, был вынужден уехать из Турции, свернув там свою деятельность. В многочисленных статьях, опубликованных на страницах эмигрантской печати, Г. Баммат, защищая право на независимость народов Кавказа, считал позицию Турцию крайне важной для национальных интересов кавказцев.

До конца своей жизни Гайдар Баммат был одним из основных пропагандистов и последователей идеи объединения Азербайджана, Грузии и Северного Кавказа в единое конфедеративное кавказское государство.

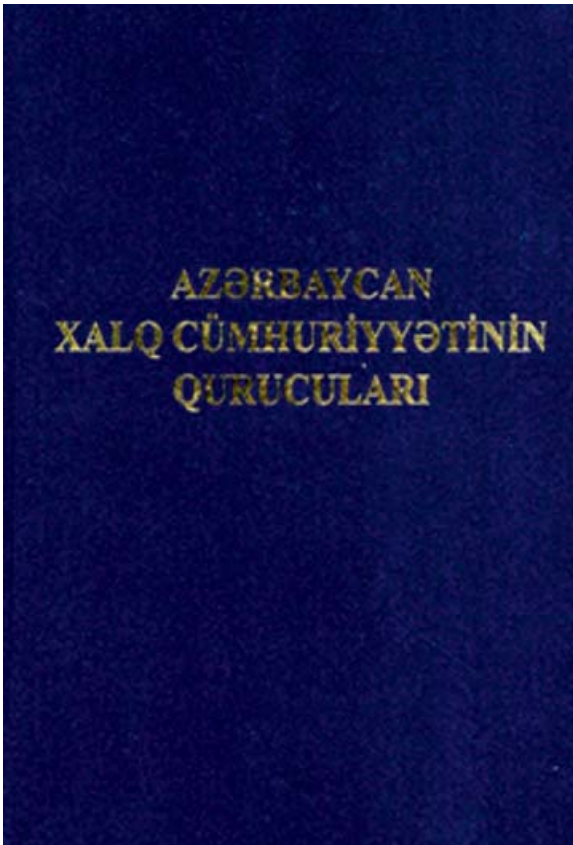
## NEW APPOINTMENTS

- 31 July 2018** The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Ashraf Shikhaliyev, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of India as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Republic of Maldives, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, People's Republic of Bangladesh and Kingdom of Bhutan
- 16 October 2018** The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Oktay Gurbanov as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Kingdom of Morocco
- 16 October 2018** The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Fakhraddin Ismayilov as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe
- 16 October 2018** The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Gaya Mammadov as the Head of Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to NATO
- 16 October 2018** The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Elshan Valiyev as the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the city of Poltava of Ukraine
- 6 November 2018** The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Hussein Najafov as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Romania
- 13 December 2018** The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan appointed Tamerlan Garayev as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Lithuania

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### AZƏRBAYCAN XALQ CÜMHURİYYƏTİNİN QURUCULARI (PORTRET-OÇERKLƏR VƏ MƏQALƏLƏR)

Azərbaycan Respublikası Milli Arxiv İdarəsi



Kitab Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti İlham Əliyevin “Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin 100 illik yubileyi haqqında” 16 may 2017-ci il tarixli 2867 nömrəli Sərəncamının 2-ci hissəsinin icrasını təmin etmək məqsədilə Azərbaycan Respublikasının Nazirlər Kabinetinin təsdiq etdiyi “Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin 100 illik yubileyinə dair Tədbirlər planı”na uyğun olaraq hazırlanmışdır.

Kitabda Azərbaycan Respublikasının Milli Arxiv İdarəsi və Dövlət Arxivləri əməkdaşlarının arxiv sənəd və materialları, eləcə də digər tarixi mənbələr əsasında yazdıqları və müxtəlif illərdə mətbuat səhifələrində çap edilmiş portret-oçerkləri və məqalələri toplanmışdır.

## CÜMHURİYYƏTİN TƏHLÜKƏSİZLİK ORQANLARI (1918-1920)

Cəlal QASIMOV



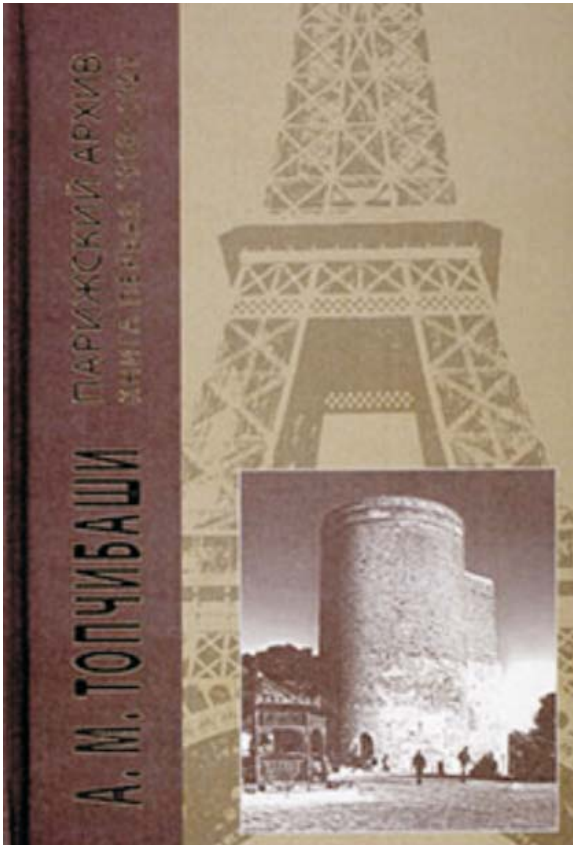
Geniş oxucu kütləsinə təqdim olunan bu kitabda Şərqdə ilk demokratik dövlət olan Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin təhlükəsizlik orqanlarının - Mudafiə Nazirliyinin tərkibində Kəşfiyyat və əkskəşfiyyat bolməsinin, bir qədər sonra Əksinqilabla Mubarizə Təşkilatının təsis edilməsi, həmin təhlükəsizlik orqanlarının hansı zərurətdən yaradılması, suqutu, əməkdaşlarının taleyi və digər bu kimi məsələlər dövrün mətbuat orqanları və arxiv materialları əsasında tədqiq edilmişdir.

Monoqrafiyada Əksinqilabla Mubarizə Təşkilatı rəhbərlərindən Məmmədbağır Şeyxzamanlı, Əli Razi Şamcızadə, Mahmud Səfikurdiski, Məmmədtağı Dadaşov kimi əməkdaşların sonrakı taleyi də tədqiqatın predmetinə çevrilmişdir.

## А. М. ТОПЧИБАШИ ПАРИЖСКИЙ АРХИВ 1919–1940 В ЧЕТЫРЕХ КНИГАХ

### Книга четвертая 1931–1940

Составители Георгий МАМУЛИЯ и Рамиз АБУТАЛЫБОВ



Хронологические рамки четвертой книги Парижского архива А. М. Топчибаши охватывают события 1931–1940 гг. Первый массив публикуемых документов подробно освещает политическую деятельность А. М. Топчибаши вплоть до его кончины в ноябре 1934 г.

Второй, охватывающий события 1935–1940 гг., касается деятельности азербайджанской делегации в Париже на основе документов и материалов, добавленных в отцовский архив сыном А. М. Топчибаши – Алекпер-беком Топчибаши.

**СБОРНИК ПРИКАЗОВ ПО ВОЕННОМУ ВЕДОМСТВУ  
АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОЙ ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ  
(НОЯБРЬ 1918 – АПРЕЛЬ 1920)  
В ТРЕХ ТОМАХ**

Составитель Атамалы ШАХБАЗОВ



Предлагаемое вашему вниманию многотомное издание сборника приказов по военному ведомству Азербайджанской Демократической Республики (с 07 ноября 1918 по 28 апреля 1920 года). В сборнике приказов широко отражена деятельность Военного Ведомства в области формирования и строительства вооружённых сил Азербайджанской Демократической Республики. Сборник приказов подготовлен на основании архивных документов и большая часть приказов публикуется впервые.

Многотомное издание сборника приказов по военному ведомству рассчитано на научных работников, исследователей, специалистов по общественным наукам, преподавателей вузов, аспирантов и студентов, а также на широкую читательскую аудиторию, интересующуюся историей Азербайджанской армии.