

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**  
**on the results of 2024**

28 December 2024

**Introduction**

During 2024, against the backdrop of increasing political and economic tensions in the international system, erosion of international law, and deepening uncertainty on an international scale, the Republic of Azerbaijan, based on the norms and principles of international law, successfully continued its independent and pragmatic foreign policy course to effectively ensure foreign policy interests and neutralize risks and threats to its national security.

Azerbaijan, successfully realizing its international efforts, expanded its relations and diplomatic representation network within the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, strengthened its role and position in ensuring its national interests, as well as peace and security in the region and on a global scale.

In 2024, supported by internal stability and sustainable development, Azerbaijan's swift and effective responses to global challenges, international aid activities, international economic cooperation, and successful organization of globally important events, served to further enhancement of the international reputation of our country.

In this regard, the 29<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) successfully organized in Baku was significant in demonstrating Azerbaijan's leadership at the international level. COP29, which is considered a success of Azerbaijan's sovereign climate diplomacy, was attended by representatives of 196 countries and nearly 200 international, regional, and other organizations. More than 80 heads of state and government participated at the World Leaders' Climate Action Summit organized within the framework of COP29 on 12-13 November. COP29 was considered one of the most successful conferences in terms of the tangible results achieved and the importance of the decisions adopted.

In 2024, our country hosted the Informal Summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Shusha, the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on "Mitigating Environmental Impact of Landmines: Resource Mobilization for a Safe and Green Future," the 6<sup>th</sup> World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue as an integral part of the "Baku Process," the International Conference on "Increasing National and Global Efforts to Clarify the Fate of Missing Persons", and events dedicated to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our accession to the NATO Partnership for Peace Framework Document, and other important conferences. During this year, Azerbaijan continued its activities as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Chairmanship Troika, assumed the chairmanship of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) for the years 2024-2026, and chaired the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM).

2024 was also marked by the accession of our country to the Developing Eight Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8).

This year, using historical opportunities emerged for sustainable and lasting peacebuilding in the region, the establishment of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia based on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and the advancement of the peace process has been one of the main directions of our country's policy in the region. Following the instructions given at the highest level, pertinent contacts have been continued at the level of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs to agree upon a bilateral treaty that will form the legal basis for interstate relations, significant progress has been achieved on the normalization agenda.

## **Bilateral relations with foreign countries**

As in previous years, in the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, special attention was given **to relations with neighboring countries**.

In 2024, high-level visits were paid to Türkiye, Russia, Georgia, and Iran.

Meetings held within the framework of existing bilateral and other cooperation formats throughout the year were an indication of the special importance our country attaches to regional cooperation. To address existing challenges, as well as to strengthen security, stability, and economic cooperation, a trilateral meeting between the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Türkiye and the Prime Minister of Pakistan was held in Astana on 3 July, the 9<sup>th</sup> trilateral meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Georgia was held in Baku on 15 March, a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the 3+3 regional cooperation platform was held in Istanbul on 18 October this year.

The development of existing friendly and brotherly relations with the countries of **Central Asia** was successfully continued. Throughout the year, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan has made 4 visits to the countries of Central Asia, and the Presidents of the countries of Central Asia have paid 10 visits to our country. On 23 May, during the visit of the President of Tajikistan to our country, the “Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Tajikistan” was signed. On 22 August, during the state visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to Uzbekistan, the “Treaty on Allied Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Uzbekistan” was signed. Thus, Azerbaijan’s relations with all the countries of the Central Asian region have been further substantially enriched and have risen to the level of strategic partnership or alliance. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia (Astana, 9 August) as the guest of honor. During the year, the first separate meetings of the Supreme Interstate Councils between our country and Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, respectively, as well as the second meeting of the Supreme Interstate Council between our country and Kyrgyzstan were held. At the invitation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for the first time attended and delivered a speech as an honorary guest on 15 April at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - Central Asia Strategic Dialogue second ministerial meeting. On 30 April, the Foreign Minister also attended and delivered a speech at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the League of Arab States - Central Asia - Republic of Azerbaijan Cooperation and Economic Forum in Doha. Our active involvement in various formats is another indicator of Azerbaijan’s growing role in the regional arena.

Azerbaijan’s relations with the countries of **Europe** have been successfully maintained based on mutual interests. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, paid working visits to Germany, Great Britain, and Italy throughout the year. Heads of state and governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia have paid visits to Azerbaijan. On 7 May, a Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership was signed with Slovakia, followed by a Joint Declaration on Strengthening Strategic Partnership with Bulgaria on 8 May. Strategic dialogue meetings between Azerbaijan and Hungary at the level of foreign ministers in Baku on 5 June, as well as Azerbaijan and Latvia at the level of deputy foreign ministers in Riga on 30 May, were conducted. On 15-17 May, the President of the Republic of Belarus paid a state visit to our country. On 23 December, at the invitation of the Republic of Serbia, Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, addressed the Serbian Ambassadors’ Conference. In his speech, the Minister elaborated on the political, economic, energy, and humanitarian dimensions of the Azerbaijan-Serbia strategic partnership, highlighting common challenges that bond our countries and our common vision for tackling these issues.

The year 2024 marked an important milestone in the advancement of relations with **Asian** countries. On 3 July, the “Joint Declaration on the Establishment of Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the People’s Republic of China” was adopted within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit, marking a significant advancement in the relations between the two countries and attainment a qualitatively new stage. During the state visit of Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 11-12 July, several bilateral documents were signed leading to an expansion of cooperation across various sectors. In 2024, two agreements were signed with the Republic of Maldives regarding visa exemption and cooperation in the tourism sector. At COP29, Nepal, the Republic of Maldives, Mongolia, the Republic of Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau were represented at the presidential level, while the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Tuvalu, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Niue were represented at the prime minister’s level.

Efforts to enhance and advance current collaboration with countries in the **Middle East and Africa** continued. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, paid a visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt, in addition to the visits of the Heads of State of the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Congo to our country. On 9 January, the “Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Arab Emirates” was signed. Throughout the year, meetings were conducted with the Foreign Ministers from 24 countries across the Middle East and Africa region.

In light of the aggravating situation in the Middle East, our country’s diplomatic engagements have intensified. Azerbaijan attended several high-level events concerning the developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict zone, and our position on this matter was brought to the attention. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, a call for the restoration of peace and stability, and a cessation of civil conflict in the country was made. The Republic of Azerbaijan has expressed its support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria, expressing optimism that the challenges will be addressed in alignment with the aspirations of the Syrian population and through constructive domestic political dialogue. Azerbaijan has conveyed its readiness of assistance in addressing the humanitarian challenges encountered by the Syrian population.

This year, high-level mutual visits, meetings, and events were organized with the countries of **North, Central, and South America** to develop bilateral relations, political consultations were held between MFAs, and negotiations have continued on the establishment of an appropriate political mechanism with countries where such a format does not exist. Mutual support was demonstrated on international initiatives with a number of countries, and efforts were made to deepen cooperation in the political, security, economic and humanitarian spheres. In the context of Azerbaijan’s presidency of COP29, cooperation relations with the countries of the region were developed.

Azerbaijan **signed 204 documents with 40 countries on a bilateral and multilateral basis. Political consultations took place with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from 25 countries**, Memorandum of Understanding with several countries to establish a mechanism for political consultations among the Ministries of Foreign Affairs were signed.

In 2024, the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Kingdom of Thailand (Bangkok) and the Sultanate of Oman (Muscat) commenced operations, and on 15 July, the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Islamic Republic of Iran resumed its work. Consequently, **the overall count of Azerbaijan’s diplomatic missions abroad has now reached 92** (69 embassies, 6 permanent missions, 9 consulates general, 7 embassy offices, and 1 representative office). The Republic of Vanuatu has submitted a request to establish its Consulate General in Baku, and the Cook Islands has expressed interest in establishing diplomatic relations.

## Cooperation within international organizations

In 2024, as in previous years, the Republic of Azerbaijan contributed to maintaining peace, security, and sustainable development globally, as well as multilateral cooperation within international organizations in this context.

Positive dynamics in **Azerbaijan-UN** relations were observed, mutual visits took place. In this regard, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres paid visits to Azerbaijan within the framework of COP29.

Azerbaijan has successfully chaired the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** for the past 4 years and handed over the chairmanship of the Movement to Uganda at the 19<sup>th</sup> Summit of the NAM Heads of State and Government held in Kampala, Uganda, on 19-20 January. As a result of Azerbaijan's initiative and efforts, South Sudan, the only non-member country from the African continent, joined the Movement. Throughout the year, Azerbaijan remained active in the Movement as a member of the Chairmanship Troika (alongside Uganda and Uzbekistan).

Azerbaijan has attached particular importance to strategic cooperation within the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) framework. On 6 June in Shusha, within the framework of an Informal Summit of the OTS under the theme of "Building a Sustainable Future through Transport, Connectivity and Climate Action," the Garabagh Declaration was adopted, support was expressed for mine action and humanitarian demining for the return of internally displaced persons of Azerbaijan to their homeland. In July of this year, an opening ceremony was held on the occasion of declaring the city of Lankaran as the Youth Capital of the Turkic World in 2024.

During the year, Memorandums of Understanding were signed between Member States of the OTS on digital economic cooperation, Turkic Green Vision, and the establishment of the Turkic Green Finance Council, and a decision was made to hold the 12<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Organization in Azerbaijan in 2025.

On 3 December, at the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the **Economic Cooperation Organization** held in Mashhad (Iran), the Mashhad Declaration was adopted, and gratitude was expressed to our country for the decision to hold the 17<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization in Azerbaijan in 2025.

On 15 November, the Clean Energy Center (CECECO) was opened in Baku together with the Economic Cooperation Organization and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). In 2024, Azerbaijan hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> ECO Tour Operators Forum (2-3 May) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ECO Think Tanks Forum (4 October).

Azerbaijan in 2024, within the framework of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, also continued to contribute to strengthening cooperation between the Member States. At the 15th Islamic Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the OIC, held on 4-5 May in the capital of the Republic of Gambia, Banjul, for the first time, support was expressed for the safe and dignified return of Azerbaijanis expelled from the territories of present-day Armenia during the past conflict, as well as holding of the 16<sup>th</sup> Summit of the OIC in 2026 in Azerbaijan was confirmed.

At the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, held on 29-30 August in the capital of the Republic of Cameroon, Yaoundé, resolutions titled "Elimination of the Consequences of the Aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan," "Solidarity with the Victims of the Khojaly Massacre of 1992," "Economic assistance to the Republic of Azerbaijan" and "Elimination of destruction and desecration of Islamic historical and cultural relics and shrines resulting from the aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan" were adopted.

In March of this year, by decision of the Council of Ministers of the **Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA)**, the handover of chairmanship to the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2024-2026 was approved. On 17 December,

during an online meeting of the Council of Ministers of CICA, the chairmanship to the CICA was officially handed over to Azerbaijan. The chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be carried out under the theme of “Stronger CICA – Connectivity, Digitalization, and Sustainable Growth in Asia”, and in 2026 the Summit of Member States of the CICA will be organized in our country.

At the 11<sup>th</sup> Summit of the **Economic Cooperation Organization of Eight Developing Countries (D-8)**, which took place on 19 December 2024 in the capital of Egypt, Cairo, the Republic of Azerbaijan was unanimously elected as a member of the D-8 Organization. Our country’s accession to the membership of this Organization, which is the first expansion since the Organization’s foundation in 1996, is a vivid example of the growing reputation and geopolitical position of Azerbaijan. By prioritizing justice and the norms and principles of international law as its goals, our country will make a significant contribution to preserving the fundamental principles of the Organization and further deepening cooperation within the Organization.

Azerbaijan in 2024, as the chairman of the **Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM)**, attended events at the national and regional levels in the field of transport, trade, customs, energy, tourism, landmine threat, reconstruction and reintegration in the post-conflict period and other important areas.

In 2024, the Republic of Azerbaijan, within the framework of the **Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)**, continued cooperation with Member States in various areas, particularly in the fields of culture, humanitarian, scientific, and other areas. On 8 October, Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan attended a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the CIS, held in Moscow. At the meeting, the city of Lachin was declared as the CIS cultural capital in 2025. On 12 December, Prime Minister Ali Asadov attended the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the CIS. The delegation led by Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov took part in the meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the CIS, held on 11-12 April in Minsk, as well as on 7 October in Moscow. At a meeting in Minsk, a decision was made to declare the city of Ganja as the CIS Sports Capital in 2025.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the Summit meeting of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** in Astana on 3-4 July, and the BRICS Plus/Outreach meeting of the BRICS Summit on 23 October.

Activities on multilateral and bilateral cooperation on military-political issues continued throughout the year. While maintaining the importance of the **Azerbaijan-NATO** partnership, political dialogue and practical cooperation continued between the parties, and mutual visits were carried out. The 2024 also marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Azerbaijan’s accession to the Partnership for Peace, and a number of events were organized.

Considering the importance that Azerbaijan attaches to international cooperation in the field of the use of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes, the Country Programme Framework (CPF) for 2024-2029 was signed with the **International Atomic Energy Agency**. This document is an important contribution to the promotion of practical cooperation of our country in priority areas in the field of nuclear energy use.

Azerbaijan made a financial contribution to the Center for Chemical Technologies established under the **Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons** to promote the use of the chemical industry of the for peaceful purposes.

Our country’s large-scale efforts within the framework of the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** have continued. The National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO has organized and attended multiple international events and conferences. The number of examples on UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage lists that belong to Azerbaijan has reached 24. This year, the preliminary list of our country’s cultural heritage in UNESCO was updated and new heritage examples (“Ancient Gabala City” and “Gamigaya and Goygol Historical-Cultural

and Natural Complex”) were added to the list. Also, a nomination for the Ateshgah Temple was prepared and submitted to UNESCO for inclusion in the World Heritage List. On 13 December, an international conference on the topic “Mapping the world in lexicography: The 950<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Diwan Lughat it-Turk” was held at UNESCO headquarters. The aim of the event was to highlight the contributions of the Divani Lughat-it Turk to world culture, as well as to the development of the language and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples.

During the year, activities were continued to **promote the candidacy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for elected positions of international organizations**. Azerbaijan was elected as a member of UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for 2025-2027 and as a member of UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) for 2025-2028, as the Chair of the Central and Eastern European Regional Group and a member of the Bureau for the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (COP16) and as the Vice President of Black Sea Trade and Development Bank for 2025-2026.

### **Climate diplomacy**

On 11-23 November, **29<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29)** was held in Baku. More than 72 thousand participants were registered to attend the event. Under the Presidency of Azerbaijan, two main goals were initially put forward at COP29: setting New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) and full operationalization of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement for carbon markets. At the end of the Baku COP, along with the successful realization of both goals, important decisions were made such as the approval of the necessary mechanisms for the activities of the Loss and Damage Fund, the adoption of the Baku Adaptation Road Map, the high-level Baku Dialogue on Adaptation, the launch of the Technology Implementation Program, the importance of Baku Global Climate Transparency Platform (BTP) in the implementation of Enhanced Transparency Framework and approval of Baku Workplan of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform.

The NCQG decision, adopted at COP29 for the first time in the history of climate negotiations, included a call for all actors to increase climate funding from all public and private sources to developing countries by 2035 to USD 1.3 trillion annually. The proposed USD 100 billion target at the 2009 Copenhagen COP was tripled to at least USD 300 billion. At the same time, this decision not only ensured accessibility to climate finance from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), but also agreed on issues of transparency and accountability regarding the funds.

The important decisions made during COP29 were branded by the UN under the umbrella name Baku Climate Unity Pact (BACU Pact).

14 global and 7 regional initiatives were announced as part of the COP29 Presidency Action Agenda within the framework of the Conference. The above-mentioned initiatives, which received support at the global level, aim to strengthen climate action, ensure sectoral coordination and combine the human dimension with sustainable development.

On 12-13 November, during World Leaders Climate Action Summit held within the framework of COP29, the Presidency hosted 34 high-level events, and on 14-21 November, more than 100 events were jointly organized by the relevant government agencies of Azerbaijan and more than 250 foreign partners. These events were attended by 80 heads of state and governments, representatives of 196 states, more than 200 international organizations, and about 2000 NGOs.

Taking place in the context of the tense geopolitical environment, the growing influence of political forces that are skeptical about climate change in many countries, and the sharp contradictions between developed countries and developing countries, COP29 ended with great success under the Presidency of Azerbaijan.

Besides the fact that the presidency of Azerbaijan will continue until COP30, which will be held in November 2025 in Belem, Brazil, our climate diplomacy will be actively implemented.

### **Economic diplomacy**

In 2024, a number of steps have been taken in the field of economic diplomacy, and economic relations have intensified both on a regional and global scale. During this period, bilateral measures were taken to expand the geography of exports, promote investment cooperation, involve foreign companies in large-scale restoration and reconstruction processes carried out in the liberated territories, as well as strengthen cooperation with foreign partners in various sectors of the economy. The development of cooperation with many countries, including the countries of Central Asia and the Gulf, has been continued. During the year, a business forum was held with the United Arab Emirates, energy agreements were signed with Uzbekistan, and relations within the framework of the Azerbaijan-Saudi Arabia Joint Business Council were strengthened.

During COP29, at the initiative of Azerbaijan, the launch of the Trust Fund for the UN Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECAs) was announced, and a presentation event was held on the launch of the Clean Energy Center for the ECO region, which is part of the UNIDO's Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centers (GN-SEC) and will be hosted by Azerbaijan.

At the regional level, cooperation in the energy and transport spheres was developed within the framework of the projects "Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor" and "Solidarity Ring". On 13 November of the current year, the "Agreement on Strategic Partnership in the Development and Transmission of Green Energy" was signed between the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan in Baku.

### **Humanitarian diplomacy**

Within the framework of the measures implemented by Azerbaijan in the field of humanitarian diplomacy during the current year, on 2-3 October, with the participation of relevant international organizations and countries, an international conference on "Addressing the problem of missing persons: upholding "the right to know" for the families" was held and visits were organized to mass graves discovered in Sirkhavand village of Aghdam region and Shusha prison. At the end of the conference, the Statement adopted on behalf of the participants reflected the holding Baku dialogue on missing persons annually and calls for the establishment of a mechanism to deal with disappearances during armed conflicts. On 14 November, the resolution entitled "Missing Persons" submitted by Azerbaijan to the UN General Assembly was adopted by consensus. The text of the resolution included barriers caused by landmines to the search for missing persons and a clause on the cooperation of states to safe search for human remains.

As a country suffering from the landmines, Azerbaijan has continued its efforts to raise awareness internationally about large-scale humanitarian demining to eliminate the landmine threat and to attract international assistance to humanitarian demining. Consequently, Azerbaijan has demonstrated diplomatic activity in both bilateral and multilateral formats, maintaining dialogue with international organizations, including the UN, UNESCO, the European Union, NATO, and several other countries, to explore ways of cooperating to eliminate the landmine threat in our country.

The annual international conference on humanitarian demining has become an important dialogue platform in this area. On 30-31 May, co-organized by Azerbaijan and the UN, the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on "Mitigating Environmental Impact of Landmines:

Resource Mobilization for a Safe and Green Future” was held in the cities of Zangilan and Baku.

Azerbaijan actively participated in the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the World Urban Forum held in Cairo on 4-8 November, where detailed information was provided on demining, rehabilitation, and reconstruction activities in our liberated territories.

On 18 September, in the framework of the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), 66 countries joined as co-authors of the statement titled “Impact of landmines and other unexploded ordnance on human rights” initiated by Azerbaijan under agenda item 3 named “Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.”

As part of ensuring and promoting human rights at both the national and global levels, the Republic of Azerbaijan allocated a voluntary financial contribution of USD 31,000 to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, designated to support the participation of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the Human Rights Council and to advance environmental and human rights programs, in 2024.

On 2-3 May, the VI World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue was held in Azerbaijan within the framework of the “Baku Process”. Additionally, the annex to the final document of the UN Alliance of Civilizations forum held in Portugal on 25-27 November included a paragraph recognizing the Forum's role as a key platform for promoting intercultural dialogue worldwide, as well as a clause regarding Azerbaijan's “Peace for Culture” initiative which is aimed at fostering intercultural dialogue, protecting cultural and religious heritage, and promoting peace and cultural diversity.

Moreover, the issue of the rights of about 300 thousand Azerbaijanis expelled from Armenia was kept in the spotlight. The distribution of relevant appeals of the Western Azerbaijani Community as official documents on the UN and other international platforms has been ensured. During his speech at the UN General Assembly, Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov emphasized that notwithstanding repeated calls to start a dialogue and ensure their safe and dignified return to their homeland, Armenia violates the right of return of the Community enshrined in important international acts.

### **International aid**

In 2024, Azerbaijan actively continued its aid and humanitarian support activities on a global scale. Requests for assistance from foreign states and international organizations were considered, and aid deliveries were coordinated with other state bodies of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The inaugural admission of foreign students from the OIC, NAM, and SIDS groups, as well as peoples and national minorities with ethnic, historical, and cultural ties to Azerbaijan, to the “Heydar Aliyev-International Education Grant” program, established in 2024 by the Order of Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan took place and a total of 100 students from 35 countries were granted the opportunity to study in Azerbaijan for the 2024/25 academic year.

To support the expansion of international cooperation, financial contributions were made to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICESCO, OIC, and the UN Library and Archives in Geneva.

As part of Azerbaijan's COP29 presidency, support was provided to LDC and SIDS countries, on 27-30 May, financial assistance was allocated for organizing the 4th UN International Conference on SIDS in Antigua and Barbuda, and the LDC Group's Climate Change Strategy and Ministerial Meeting in Malawi on 26-28 August. On 27 August, a Joint



Declaration was signed in Tonga between Azerbaijan and the UN, pledging USD 10 million for five years to support climate action projects in SIDS.

Support was provided for the organization of training on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement for African Union countries this year. Azerbaijan continued its support for the “Alliance to Fight against Avoidable Blindness” (AFAB), implemented in African countries in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and other partners.

In response to the devastating earthquake in Türkiye last year, by the Order of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, financial assistance was allocated to contribute to restoration and reconstruction efforts in the affected region.

Azerbaijan also continued its humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, with the total amount of humanitarian, restoration, and reconstruction aid provided to date reaching AZN 70 million (approximately USD 40 million).

Throughout 2024, assistance was provided to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua, and Barbuda, Vietnam, Yemen, Jordan, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Albania, Zimbabwe, Tajikistan, Gambia and Uganda.

### **Diplomatic efforts in the post-conflict period**

Throughout 2024, the agenda put forward by Azerbaijan for the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on mutual recognition of and respect for each other’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, and state borders has been continuously advanced. Consistent, systematic, and decisive foreign policy activity has been carried out to prevent smear campaigns against our country by Armenia and its supporters, explain the steps taken to neutralize threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country to the international community, and prevent attempts to question and limit these steps.

The normalization agenda put forward by Azerbaijan throughout the year was consistently and decisively advanced through direct bilateral negotiations in line with the national interests of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In 2024, meetings were held between Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan, and Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of Armenia, on 17 February, within the framework of the Munich Security Conference, facilitated by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, in both bilateral and trilateral formats, and bilateral meetings were held in Kazan on 24 October, on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit. Following the instructions given at the high-level meetings, contacts were continued at the level of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs regarding the negotiation of a bilateral agreement that will be the basis of interstate relations.

During the year, a total of five meetings, including on 28-29 February in Berlin, on 10-11 May in Almaty, on 10 July in Washington within the framework of the Summit dedicated to the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO, on 26 September in New York within the framework of the high-level week of the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, and on 18 October in Istanbul within the framework of the “3+3” meeting, were held between the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

As a result of bilateral negotiations between the parties, significant progress has been made regarding the text of the agreement. Consequently, the number of remaining issues in the text of the agreement has been significantly reduced. During the year, positive outcomes were achieved in the field of border delimitation and demarcation. According to the agreement reached by the border delimitation commissions of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the return of the Azerbaijani villages of Baganis Ayrim, Ashagi Eskipara, Xeyrimli and Gizilhajili, which were under the occupation of Armenia, to the sovereign control of Azerbaijan, delimitation, and demarcation of up to 13 km of the state border was ensured.

The aforementioned agreement was significant as the first result of establishing the return of territories occupied by Armenia through bilateral negotiations and the delimitation and demarcation of a part of the state border between the two countries. Furthermore, another significant step forward in the delimitation of the border was the agreement on the regulations of the relevant commissions of both sides, which is of great importance in terms of regulating the joint work of the commissions at the next stage and moving the process forward.

Notwithstanding the progress made towards normalization through bilateral negotiations, the ongoing tendency of revanchism in Armenia, and the rapid militarization of this country with the direct support of foreign forces continue to be the most serious obstacles to the finalization of the normalization process against the backdrop of the Armenian side's failure to demonstrate political will to change the provisions in the Armenian Constitution and other normative legal acts including territorial claims against Azerbaijan. In this context, Armenia's position to maintain the formal existence of the former Minsk process institutions of OSCE, which has lost their relevance, ended their activities, and lost their functionality in emerging new realities, continues to seriously question this country's commitment to the normalization agenda.

On the one hand, the rapid militarization of Armenia by the forces outside the region, and on the other hand, the promotion of a baseless smear campaign against Azerbaijan on various international platforms has seriously hindered the negotiation process from reaching a logical conclusion throughout the year. As a result of systematic, consistent, and decisive steps taken by Azerbaijan, this campaign, which gained momentum by abusing the organization of COP29 in our country, has been significantly neutralized, as well as continuation of the normalization process exactly within the framework of the agenda put forward by Azerbaijan was ensured.

As a result of the decisive steps taken, continuous initiatives that were put forward against Azerbaijan on different international platforms have been fought against, and anti-Azerbaijani initiatives in the indicated directions have failed.

Ensuring the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability of the borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the security and prosperity of the Azerbaijani people which are the main goals of our foreign policy, will, as always, constitute the essence of the normalization agenda with Armenia and our cooperation with other actors. Based on this, in the upcoming year as well, principled, decisive, and consistent actions per our national interests will be continued.

### **International legal measures against Armenia**

Throughout 2024, activities to reveal the crimes committed by Armenia in our territories which were kept under occupation for almost 30 years and to define Armenia's international legal responsibility for these acts have been continued.

On 12 January 2024, the first procedural meeting in the inter-state arbitration filed by the Republic of Azerbaijan against the Republic of Armenia under the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) took place at the Permanent Court of Arbitration. On 19 November 2024, the Government of Azerbaijan filed its Statement of Claim to the Permanent Court of Arbitration against Armenia that details Armenia's multiple breaches of Azerbaijan's sovereign rights over its energy resources under the ECT and fundamental principles of international law. Azerbaijan is seeking redress for Armenia's violations of Azerbaijan's sovereign rights over its energy resources, including Armenia's unlawful exploitation and impairment of renewable resources in the liberated territories.

On 12 April, a procedural meeting was held at the Permanent Court of Arbitration within the framework of the interstate arbitration filed by the Republic of Azerbaijan against the Republic of Armenia under the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European

Wildlife and Natural Habitats. In this arbitration claim, the Republic of Azerbaijan demands that the Republic of Armenia must be held accountable and pay financial compensation for the damage caused to Azerbaijan's environment and the large-scale destruction of biodiversity.

On 15-26 April, hearings were held at the UN International Court of Justice on preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the Court and the claims raised within the framework of ongoing proceedings regarding the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and on 12 November of this year, the Court announced its decisions on the aforementioned preliminary objections. By the Court's decision, attempts to exclude claims regarding Armenia's planting landmines and booby traps from the decision were rejected. At the same time, according to the decision, ethnic cleansing and other illegal activities carried out by Armenia during the decades of occupation of the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan will be examined in detail by the court.

### **Measures on protection of rights and freedoms of Azerbaijani citizens**

In accordance with the relevant legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the protection of the rights and interests of citizens of Azerbaijan and the development of consular services offered to them is one of the priority matters.

To ensure the suffrage of our citizens living outside the country in the snap presidential elections of the Republic of Azerbaijan held on 7 February, 49 polling stations were established in 46 diplomatic missions of the Republic of Azerbaijan accredited in 37 foreign countries. A working group at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided the necessary ballots, all election documents, and equipment to the polling stations at the diplomatic missions and consulates of our country. In total, 22512 voters were registered and 19691 people (87.4% of registered voters) attended the voting process.

Relevant work concerning the persons who immigrated to the Republic of Türkiye since 1990s and presently residing illegally there, and supposed to be citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including their family members born in the territory of Türkiye was continued, as well as besides other measures, 3567 passports were printed on the basis of pertinent applications, 3461 of them were presented to citizens.

In accordance with the "Rules for repatriation and rehabilitation of minors of the Republic of Azerbaijan in poor conditions abroad" approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 2336 dated 28 October 2023, repatriation of citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan continued throughout 2024. During 2020-2024, the number of citizens repatriated from the Syrian Arab Republic to our country reached 224 people, 172 of whom were children and 52 women. At the same time, after the collapse of the Assad regime, work is underway to determine the exact number and location of Azerbaijani citizens in Syria. In accordance with the instruction of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, repatriation of 295 citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan from the Republic of Iraq, including 288 children and 7 women, has been carried out for the last several years.

Throughout the year, consular consultations were held between Azerbaijan and Iraq, Hungary, Türkiye, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Luxembourg, Russia, Iran, Uzbekistan, Colombia, and Georgia. Memorandums of Understanding on consular cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Tajikistan, and Pakistan, as well as bilateral agreements with Albania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Gambia were signed.

In 2024, the relevant activities were carried out in accordance with the "Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the readmission of persons residing without authorization", 382 people were readmitted to our country.

## **Communication of foreign policy and analytical work**

In 2024, intensive activities in public diplomacy, media and communication field, as well as communication of perspectives and information concerning Azerbaijan's foreign policy was carried out.

Throughout the year, interviews of the Foreign Ministry leadership in local and foreign media outlets were broadcast, **11 press conferences** were organized, **515 press releases** were published on the official website, including **about 3,000 posts** on official social media accounts. Events, conferences, seminars and exhibitions on the occasion of memorial days, as well as significant events for our country were organized by diplomatic missions and consulates accredited abroad, up to **2500 articles** were published in the local press of the accreditation countries, interviews and programs were broadcast.

In 2024, **54 media representatives from 538 foreign countries** visited the Republic of Azerbaijan, including the liberated territories. During the year, media tours of journalists from **9 countries** to the liberated territories, including other regions of our country were organized.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs also continued the analysis work, relevant information was presented to our pertinent government agencies, contacts were established with trustworthy research centers and analysts and joint events were organized, participation in global forums (Munich Security Conference, Antalya Diplomatic Forum, Bled Strategic Forum, Dubrovnik Forum, MEDays 2024 International Forum, IISS Manama Dialogue 2024, Doha Forum) was ensured during the year, meetings with international think tanks and researchers (CEVRO Institute event on "Foreign policy priorities of Azerbaijan" held in the Czech Republic, "3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Azerbaijani studies" held in the Republic of Malta) were organized.

In 2024, call for the "Diplomacy Volunteers" group operating under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was announced through an electronic system established for the admission process, and **60 candidates** with top results in the interview stage were provided to join the group. The internship program of the diplomacy volunteers in 16 departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began since October.

## **Human Resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

In order to improve the human resources provision process of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the competitive recruitment for the diplomatic service continued throughout 2024. As a result of a two-stage exam co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Examination Center of the Republic of Azerbaijan, **57 people (29 women and 28 men)** qualified. As of July 2024, within the framework of the phased appointment process, the employment of **45 candidates** to diplomatic positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been carried out. The upcoming period will see the consistent carrying out of the following appointments on the list of reserve personnel to correspond to new vacancies.

Throughout the current year, the appointment of **12 heads of diplomatic missions** of Azerbaijan abroad and **1 deputy ambassador** was conducted.