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ACTIVITIES BY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ILHAM ALIYEV TOWARDS RESTORATION OF THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Parvin Ibrahimova,

*PhD, Department of International Relations and Foreign Policy,
Academy of Public Administration under the Republic of Azerbaijan
(Baku, Azerbaijan)*

ORCID ID: 0009-0001-9300-8073

Abstract. The article discusses the activities of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in resolving the long-standing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The work carried out within the framework of international and regional organizations, active participation in security institutions are examined. The success achieved in the military-diplomatic and information space in the Second Karabakh War is discussed. The Republic of Azerbaijan has suffered from the occupation of Armenia for nearly 30 years, and about a million civilians have become internally displaced persons. The author also discusses the state program prepared by the head of state Ilham Aliyev to improve the living conditions of internally displaced persons. Special work has been carried out with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation since 2008 to convey the truths of the conflict – Armenia's acts of genocide, aggression and terrorist policy – to the world community. The research used methods such as content analysis, synthesis, comparative analysis, analogy, and systematization.

Key words: international law, historical justice, genocide, aggressive policy, The Second Karabakh War, Ilham Aliyev, territorial integrity.

Introduction. From the time the Republic of Azerbaijan regained its independence until the Second Karabakh War, the main priority in our foreign policy was the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty. During his speech at the inauguration ceremony of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (October 31, 2003), Ilham Aliyev said: “The Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the most serious problem for our country. We have been living in a ceasefire regime for many years. Unfortunately, the activities of the OSCE Minsk Group, which is directly involved in this issue, have not yielded any results yet. We still do not lose hope. We still hope that the co-chairs will deal with this issue more seriously and responsibly. This issue must be resolved. This problem can only be resolved on the basis of several principles and international law: the lands of Azerbaijan must be liberated from occupation, more than a million refugees and internally displaced persons must return to their homelands, and the territorial integrity of our country must be restored. Azerbaijan will never reconcile itself to this situation, to the fact that its lands remain under occupation. Everyone should know that despite our being supporters of peace, despite our desire for the war not to resume and for this issue to be resolved peacefully, our patience is also is not inexhaustible. Azerbaijan will liberate its native lands at any cost” (Aliyev I. H., 2003).

Meetings between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia continued throughout the conflict. Examples include the following meetings:

The meeting held in St. Petersburg on June 5, 2008, and in Moscow on November 2; the declaration jointly signed by the presidents of Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia on November 2, 2008 at the “Maindorf” castle near Moscow. 28 January 2009 in Zurich, 7 May in Prague, 4 June in St. Petersburg, 17–18 July in Moscow, 8-9 October in Chisinau, 22 November in Munich, 25 January 2010 in Sochi, 17 June in St. Petersburg, 27 October in Astrakhan, 5 March 2011 in Sochi, 24 June in Kazan, 25 January 2012 in Sochi, 19 November 2013 in Vienna, 10 August 2014 in

Sochi, 4 September in Newport, 27 October in Paris and 19 December 2015 in Bern Azerbaijan and the meeting of the presidents of Armenia.

After the April battles in 2016, 3 more meetings were held: in Vienna on May 17 and in St. Petersburg on June 20, and after a long break, in Geneva on October 16, 2017. However, the trilateral meetings of the parties to the conflict, either directly or with the participation of a mediator (in particular, The Russian Federation), did not yield any results. The occupying Armenia was using the negotiation process to gain time and was trying to maintain the status quo in the occupied territories.

In this regard, the activities within the framework of international and regional organizations towards the resolution of the conflict can be considered more successful. The institutions of the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and the European Union adopted documents on the conflict. These documents created a legal basis for the Republic of Azerbaijan to ensure its territorial integrity at a later stage.

Discussion. President Ilham Aliyev's activities within international and regional organizations. Speaking at the 59th session of the UN General Assembly held in September 2004, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev stated that the 4 resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict had not yet been implemented and put forward the creation of a working mechanism for their implementation as a priority. During the visit of the Special Representative of the Chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Goran Lennmarker to Azerbaijan on February 4, 2004, President Ilham Aliyev noted that in addition to the OSCE Minsk Group, which is the main mediator in the process of resolving the conflict, it is of great importance to strengthen the activities of other international organizations – the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Europe and the European Union.

At the next spring session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev made a detailed speech about Armenia's territorial claims and military aggression and created a broad perception of this conflict in the European community. In his speech, he emphasized that: *“... Azerbaijan will never agree to the loss of its territory. The norms of international law must be taken as the basis for resolving the issue. Azerbaijan respects the territorial integrity of all countries in the world and demands that it be treated with the same attitude. Our territorial integrity must be restored. The occupying forces of Armenia must withdraw from the occupied territories. Refugees and displaced persons must be given the opportunity to return to their homelands. In the 21st century, we must not allow one member state of the Council of Europe – Armenia – to occupy the territories of another member state of the Council of Europe – Azerbaijan”* (Ahmadov, 2015, p. 111–112).

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly noted in his speeches that Armenians have already determined their own destiny. Now they are trying to bring these two principles – territorial integrity and self-determination – into conflict with each other. The Armenian state already exists. A second Armenian state cannot be created on the territory of Azerbaijan.

Speaking at the 59th session of the UN General Assembly held in September 2004, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev stated that the 4 resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council on the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have not yet been implemented and put forward the creation of a working mechanism for their implementation as a priority. At the same time, the Azerbaijani head of state stated that “the improved Security Council should be more comprehensive, more responsible and democratic, its working methods should be more transparent, and a more operational response should be provided to the new threats, risks and dangers of the 21st century”. In addition, on October 29 of the same year, at the session of the UN General Assembly, at the initiative of the Azerbaijani delegation, the issue “The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan” was put on the agenda of the meeting. Resolutions entitled “The Situation in the Occupied Territories

of Azerbaijan” were adopted at the 98th plenary meetings of the 60th session of the UN General Assembly held on September 7, 2006, and the 86th plenary meetings of the 62nd session held on March 14, 2008.

Later, at the 98th plenary meeting of the 60th session of the UN General Assembly held on September 7, 2006 and at the 86th plenary meetings of the 62nd session held on March 14, 2008, resolutions entitled **“The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan”** were adopted. These documents condemned the settlement of Armenians in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the arson in those territories, and, referring to the known 4 resolutions of the Security Council, demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. At the same time, the resolutions expressed respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, as well as reaffirmed the right of Azerbaijanis expelled from their lands to return to their homelands. Thus, the mutual relations that arose with the accession of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN membership expanded further, turned into multifaceted cooperation and played an important role in the development of Azerbaijan as an independent state and in taking its appropriate place in the international community. At the same time, Azerbaijan has also contributed to the more effective functioning of this influential international organization and the preservation of international security and peace.

On May 8, 2008, the “Justice for Khojaly” campaign was established on the initiative of Leyla Aliyeva, the General Coordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Youth Forum of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The aim of this international information and agitation campaign is to inform the world community about the Khojaly genocide, to achieve a moral and political assessment of the massacre and to commemorate the victims of this bloody massacre (Tapdighoglu, 2015, p. 373). This campaign was successfully implemented in 30 countries of the world. In February 2010, the anniversary of the Khojaly genocide was already celebrated in more than 100 places around the world with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation (Ahmadov, 2014, p. 8).

The Republic of Azerbaijan was one of the first 47 countries elected to the Human Rights Council established as a result of the UN reforms and contributed to the work of this body with its effective activity during the membership period covering 2006-2009. As a result of his active participation in the Council, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN Office in Geneva and other international organizations was elected as the Rapporteur of the Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Council for 2008-2009.

Activities of the State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

One of the issues that concerned the head of state most, of course, was the improvement of the living conditions of internally displaced persons who had to leave their homeland as a result of the occupation. The State Committee for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons of the Republic of Azerbaijan (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) is the central executive body implementing state policy in the field of placement, settlement, repatriation, social protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (hereinafter referred to as refugees and internally displaced persons) as a result of the Armenian-Azerbaijani, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and improvement of their social, housing and living conditions in the territories liberated from occupation. The Committee is located in Baku. The main tasks of the Committee include:

- 1) to participate in the formation of state policy in the field of increasing the employment of refugees and internally displaced persons, reducing poverty and solving social problems, and to ensure its implementation;

- 2) to prepare drafts of relevant state programs and organize their implementation in order to improve the living conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons (E-qanun.az, 2005).

According to the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, persons who were forced to leave their permanent places of residence in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan and moved to another

place within the country as a result of foreign military aggression, occupation of certain territories or constant fire are considered internally displaced persons. It should be noted that during the occupation, about 1 million civilians were forced to settle in semi-detached houses and tents in various regions of Azerbaijan, as well as in the capital Baku and its surrounding areas. The social policy of the national leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, was addressed precisely to internally displaced persons. From the moment the oil strategy laid down by Heydar Aliyev began to bear fruit, the first funds were directed to improving the housing and living conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons, and out of the 12 tent camps that existed in Azerbaijan, 5 in the Bilasuvar region were liquidated in 2003, 4 in the Barda and Agjabedi regions in 2006, and 3 in the Saatli and Sabirabad regions in 2007. In accordance with the relevant decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, new settlements were built. In accordance with the State Program, new settlements were built and the last tent camps in the republic were liquidated in December 2007. Thus, the unfavorable living conditions of 3,110 families (11,133 people) were improved (Idp.gov.az, 2026).

As a result of the targeted policy implemented by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on April 26, 2012, Azerbaijan was elected a full member of another influential international organization – the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The liquidation of 12 tent camps and settlements consisting of freight wagons on the railway was fully completed in 2007, and the liquidation of 16 finnish-style settlements was fully completed in 2016, and the resettlement of internally displaced families living in deplorable conditions to newly built settlements was ensured. In total, during 2001-2018, 102 modern settlements and multi-storey buildings with an area of 3.5 million square meters and complete social and technical infrastructure were built for refugees and internally displaced persons in more than 30 cities and regions of the republic with funds allocated from the State Oil Fund and other sources. Of these, 97, or 95 percent, with an area of 3.3 million square meters, were built in the last 15 years. A total of 7.1 billion manats were spent to solve the social problems of refugees and internally displaced persons during 1993-2018. Of this:

- 3.4 billion manats were from the state budget,
- 2.3 billion manats from the State Oil Fund,
- 1.4 billion manats from international financial institutions and international humanitarian organizations operating in our country. 85 percent of these funds, or 6.1 billion manats, were used in the last 15 years (Idp.gov.az, 2026).

Increasing the influence of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the world and its election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The Security Council, as the UN body responsible for ensuring peace and security in the world, consists of 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members. It should also be noted that, according to Rule 142 of the Rules of Procedure of the UN General Assembly, 5 of the 10 non-permanent members of the UN Security Council are renewed every year. In 2011, 5 non-permanent members of the Security Council were to be elected for 2012-2013. Candidates for the elections for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council are nominated by groups called regional groups. Thus, five countries from Africa and the Asia-Pacific region immediately nominated their candidacies. These were Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo. They fought for the seats vacated by Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria on December 31, 2011. By the end of the year, three countries from the Eastern European group – Azerbaijan, Hungary and Slovenia – had claimed the seat occupied by Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the regulations, elections for non-permanent membership are held by secret ballot. With the exception of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Guatemala, nine candidate countries had already been non-permanent members of the UN Security Council before.

Azerbaijan, which competed with Slovenia and Hungary, which nominated their candidacy from the Eastern European group, gained an unconditional advantage over Hungary and then Slovenia in the 16th round of the elections, and in the 17th round, it received 155 votes, which is more than

the 129 votes required for victory. In the 16th round of the previous voting, Azerbaijan received 116 votes, while Slovenia received only 77 votes. Before the final round of voting, Slovenian Foreign Minister Samuel Zbogar announced that his country had withdrawn its candidacy. In the final round, 155 countries voted in favor of Azerbaijan, 24 countries abstained, and 13 more countries voted for Slovenia. According to the results of other votes, the new non-permanent members of the UN Security Council were Guatemala, Morocco, Togo, and Pakistan.

Thus, Azerbaijan won a convincing victory in the elections for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for 2012-2013 held on October 24, 2011, gaining the support of 155 out of 193 UN member states. Azerbaijan's non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council will begin on January 1, 2012 and will last until December 31, 2013. In addition, within two years, Azerbaijan will alternately perform the functions of the chairman of the Security Council for 1 month in May 2012 and September 2013. Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan is conducting preparatory work for the 2-year activity in the Security Council and certain events are planned in accordance with the Council's agenda. In addition, it is reported that Azerbaijan, as a member of the UN Security Council, is preparing to put forward new projects in areas consistent with its experience, especially dialogue between civilizations, assistance to economically less developed countries, and other humanitarian issues, during the next two years.

Azerbaijan's admission to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member is a historic event and should be seen as an indicator of Azerbaijan's growing influence in the international community. At the same time, Azerbaijan is constantly developing it in the context of interstate civil relations by establishing bilateral and multilateral relations with world powers. Azerbaijan is the first country in the South Caucasus and Central Asia region to be elected as a member of the UN Security Council. It is also symbolic that Azerbaijan achieved this historic victory on the day the UN was founded – October 24. At the same time, the admission to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member is one of the greatest achievements in the history of Azerbaijan's diplomacy and should be considered as a clear proof of the country's growing political influence on a global scale in recent years. It is no coincidence that this success was achieved on the 20th anniversary of the restoration of independence. Thus, Azerbaijan, as a state that has been developing stably over the past 20 years, has achieved high economic indicators and has won the sympathy of the world community with its actions in international politics, has been elected as a member of the most prestigious organization at the international level as a result of all these successes.

Activities of President Ilham Aliyev within the framework of security institutions

Munich Security Conference – a transparent platform for resolving the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict

Transatlantic security policy and the defense of Europe are among the main topics of the Munich Security Conference (MSC). The MSC aims to organize discussions on these and other key aspects of global defense and security policy through the Defense Program. In order to reflect the complex international security landscape, the activities of the Munich Security Conference are carried out under five programs: *defense, global order, human security, sustainable development and technology*. These programs deal with traditional issues such as growing security challenges, as well as provide intellectual contributions to all events and publications of the Conference. In these five program areas, the MSC works with renowned partners from all over the world. On February 15, 2020, during a panel discussion on the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict within the framework of the Munich Security Conference, President Ilham Aliyev explained the history of Karabakh, Armenia's ethnic cleansing, genocide, and terrorist policy with historical facts, thereby once again conveying Azerbaijan's rightful position to the whole world. At important international meetings, he voiced the idea that “*the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has the same value as the territorial integrity of any other country,*” and stated that we would never agree to the fact of occupation and the creation of a second Armenian state on the territory of our country (President.az, 2020).

President Ilham Aliyev has made many initiatives in the international arena. As he himself said, every country should fully carry out its activities in any organization, that is, this activity, especially the chairmanship, should not be of a formal nature. In the year when the war began, Azerbaijan chaired two influential organizations – the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States and the Non-Aligned Movement. Although the chairmanship of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States is based on the principle of rotation, the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement is through elections. Azerbaijan's position during the negotiations remained unchanged. Because our position was based on both historical justice and international law. This position was to resolve the conflict within the framework of territorial integrity. The principle of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan has never been a subject of compromise.

The Second Karabakh War: Successes in the military-diplomatic and information space.

The history, causes, course and results of wars taking place in the world are studied from various aspects. A new war has been added to the history of war. This is the Second Karabakh War, which resulted in the victory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Second Karabakh War can also be called a hybrid war. Thus, this war was fought with new generation weapons, using not only modern equipment and ammunition, but also new military rules were applied. From this point of view, this organized war can be considered the main success of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces during the period of independence (Ahmadov, 2025, p. 48).

The Second Karabakh War was one of the main topics on the international agenda at that time. The main reason for this was that it coincided with the Pandemic period and attracted all the attention. The world press showed different reactions to it, and different states directly expressed their positions. From this point of view, the positions of the regional countries Russia, Turkey and Iran, as well as France, the USA and Israel, can be considered. Although their positions did not have much impact on the course of the war (because new realities were emerging and changing directly in the combat zone), they could not fail to influence the future phase of bilateral relations with Azerbaijan and Armenia in the post-conflict period.

President Ilham Aliyev participated in a panel discussion on "Defining the Economic Identity of Eurasia" held within the framework of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum on January 20, 2026. At the meeting, the head of state expressed his position on regional security, the current state of the process of normalizing Azerbaijani-Armenian relations, the Washington agreements and their implementation process, steps taken to build an environment of trust between the two states, the geographical location of the region, and other issues.

Conclusion. For many years, the head of state, Ilham Aliyev, used diplomatic and political means to restore the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. These efforts, in fact, created a legal basis for a fair resolution of the conflict. The resolutions adopted by international organizations, the statements made, and the bringing of the history and facts of the conflict to the attention of the countries of the world resulted in its complete resolution after about thirty years. The Second Karabakh War, which began on September 27, 2020 and ended with the Trilateral Declaration signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the President of the Russian Federation, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia on November 10, can be assessed as the second period of escalation and the decisive stage of the conflict. This historic victory is undoubtedly a manifestation of correctly conducted army building and military policy.

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