

Statement
of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the
Republic of Azerbaijan concerning the civilian casualties and
destructions in Ganja city, occurred due to another missile strike of
Armenia
on 17 October 2020

Following its aggressive policy, the occupant Armenia has consistently and intentionally continued to launch rocket bombs at densely populated settlements of Azerbaijan. Thus, Armenia overtly breaches the UN Charter, general norms and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law, in particular, 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, as well as the agreed humanitarian ceasefire promulgated on October 10, 2020 at 12:00.

We do regret that on October 17, 2020 at around 01:00 a.m., the armed forces of Armenia, which continues committing war crimes and acts of terrorism, including in itself criminal elements against peace and humanity, once again, hit central parts of ancient and densely populated Ganja, Azerbaijan's second largest city located far from the frontline, with rockets from the territory of Armenia. According to preliminary reports, 13 civilians, including 3 minors, were killed, 52 were injured, whereas, there is no news about the fate of 2 children. Numerous civilian facilities were also severely exposed to damage. Rescue operations are underway to save those who trapped under the rubble.

So, Armenia once again committed war crime by targeting civilians of Azerbaijan with military provocations in violation of the UNSC Resolutions #822, #853, #874 and #884 (1993), which require immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The fact of regular shelling of Ganja city as well as Mingachevir, a city of strategic importance for energy security of the region, as well as other settlements in the region, proves once again that the aggressor Armenia, as a mono-ethnic state, ignores and neglects the general rules of international law, as well as IHL. However, according to the IHL rules, in particular the Geneva Conventions, in the situations of armed conflict, parties should make a clear distinction between civilians and combatants, military and civilian objects.

The occupant Armenia continues its war crimes and terror acts against peace and humanity using special missile systems to target civilians in blatant violation of 1949 Geneva Conventions, and their Additional Protocols,

especially the Geneva Convention (IV) related to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (12 August 1949), 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, UN CRC, Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969) and other binding international human rights instruments. Therefore, it is necessary for the leading international organizations and the world community to condemn the acts of Armenia and to take strict measures against it.

Thus, given the continued policy of aggression, war crimes and terror acts by Armenia, which threaten the lives and health of civilians of Azerbaijan and which are against peace and humanity, we immediately and once again urge international community not to remain silent to these violent acts and support our just position and to demand from Armenia to put an end its criminal acts and to take decisive and binding decisions that establish international legal responsibility.

Sabina Aliyeva

**Commissioner for Human Rights
(Ombudsman)
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

October 17, 2020

This Statement is addressed to the UN Secretary-General, UN Security Council, UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Office of High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Human Rights Council, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, European Union, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, International and European Ombudsman Institutions, Asian Ombudsman Association, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Ombudsman Association of its member states, Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, European Network of Ombudspersons for Children, International Peace Bureau, different ombudsmen and national human rights institutions, embassies of the Republic of Azerbaijan in foreign countries and the foreign embassies in Azerbaijan, as well as to the Azerbaijani Diasporas.