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HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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## I. **The dawn of a new Azerbaijan: President Ilham Aliyev outlines the blueprint for the future**

On January 8, President Ilham Aliyev gave a comprehensive interview to local TV channels, where he detailed Azerbaijan's achievements, primary objectives, present challenges and future directions following the complete liberation of Karabakh. President Ilham Aliyev outlined Azerbaijan's journey over the past 20 years, emphasizing the strategic decisions made since 2003 that have led to the full restoration of the nation's territorial integrity and sovereignty. President Ilham Aliyev linked the success of Azerbaijan to the continuation of policies initiated by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev in 1993, which were crucial for establishing a path of development and stability for the country. He highlighted that these decisions were instrumental in averting potential misfortunes and ensuring national unity and government cohesion.

The President also pointed out the significant progress Azerbaijan has made in terms of statehood and civil society development during this period. Reflecting on Azerbaijan's current status, President Ilham Aliyev stated that the nation stands as one of the strongest in the world, serving as a model for both domestic policy priorities and international relations. President Ilham Aliyev credited this success to the principled, determined approach and the strategic choices made over the years. Looking forward, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized the new era Azerbaijan is entering, marked by the full restoration of sovereignty following the recent military and political achievements. He expressed optimism about the country's direction and the tasks that lie ahead in this new period of modern history, beginning after September 20. The President's remarks underscore a vision of strength, unity, and forward momentum for Azerbaijan.

In his interview, President Ilham Aliyev shared profound insights regarding the moment he raised the Azerbaijani flag in Khankendi, a symbolic act embodying the collective aspirations of Azerbaijani people. President Ilham Aliyev expressed that this act was not only a personal achievement but a moment of collective pride and joy for all Azerbaijanis, symbolizing the restoration of justice after 30 years of struggle. President Ilham Aliyev emphasized the importance of believing in justice, reflecting on how the prolonged conflict had affected Azerbaijani society's morale. He pointed out that achieving justice in the modern world often requires nations to assert their rights, highlighting Azerbaijan's efforts in restoring its territorial integrity through perseverance and strategic diplomacy.

President Ilham Aliyev reminisced about the historical and emotional significance of the locations in Khankendi and Khojaly, where the Azerbaijani flag was raised. The act of raising the flag in Khojaly was particularly emotional, symbolizing the vindication for the victims of past atrocities. Raising the flag in Khankendi marked the comprehensive restoration of justice and the culmination of Azerbaijan's victory.

President Ilham Aliyev discussed the challenges and diplomatic pressures faced during the negotiation process, stressing the importance of a strategic approach to negotiations and the need for a fundamental resolution that would have ensured Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty. "During this period, many proposals were put forward during the negotiations, and some might wonder why Azerbaijan was not accepting them. After all, based on these proposals, several districts would have been returned to Azerbaijan without any war, the former displaced persons would have returned to their homes, and at the same time, the situation would have been normalized. Why doesn't Azerbaijan agree and come to terms with these proposals? Of course, the negotiations had their own strategy and tactics. Of course, we conducted the negotiations in a manner that minimized

external pressure while achieving our goals. But the main thing for me was that this is a historical issue, it is a national issue, and it would be wrong to seek some seemingly favorable gains. We must solve the issue in a fundamental way, we must solve it once and for all, we must fully restore our territorial integrity and sovereignty,” President Ilham Aliyev noted. President Ilham Aliyev criticized attempts by international entities to dilute the national spirit and patriotism of the Azerbaijani people, underlining the importance of educating future generations to be patriotic and never to accept injustice. The President underscored the collective effort and unity that led to this victory, marking it as a pivotal moment that will be forever remembered in the annals of Azerbaijan's history.

President Ilham Aliyev addressed the strategic decision to establish the "Lachin" border checkpoint and the subsequent international reactions. The President provided a backdrop to the establishment of the checkpoint, emphasizing its importance in the context of Azerbaijan's broader territorial integrity and sovereignty efforts. President Ilham Aliyev outlined the critical period following the November 10 Trilateral Statement, which marked a ceasefire and a pivotal moment in the war. President Ilham Aliyev shared insights into the delicate situation prior to the agreement, particularly focusing on the strategic victory of liberating Shusha, which was a turning point that rendered the separatists' resistance strategically futile. President Ilham Aliyev highlighted the complexities and potential risks of continuing the war, especially in the challenging terrain of the Kalbajar and Lachin districts during winter. He underscored that while Azerbaijan was prepared to continue its military efforts to liberate these areas, the potential human cost and the challenges of the terrain were significant considerations.

“I knew that it would result in our Victory, but it was impossible to say on November 8 how and when that would be the case. Because on November 8, of course, a major event happened –

Shusha was liberated from occupation and the resistance of separatists became meaningless from a strategic point of view. Of course, had the war continued, it would have been very difficult to liberate the Kalbadjar and Lachin districts, especially in the winter season. However, we would have done that too. But our losses could have been extremely high, even higher than in the 44-day war. We all knew that well, because even now anyone visiting those regions can see how challenging the terrain is. However, if Armenia had not signed the act of capitulation, we would have continued the war until the end,” President Ilham Aliyev emphasized.

The negotiation of the Trilateral Statement was a monumental political achievement for Azerbaijan, facilitated by the strategic victory in Shusha. This agreement not only solidified a ceasefire but also allowed Azerbaijan to assert conditions favorable to its interests, including discussions around the Zangezur corridor, which were not directly related to the ceasefire agreement.

President Ilham Aliyev discussed the complex period following the November 10 Trilateral Statement, highlighting the uncertainties and challenges Azerbaijan faced, particularly concerning the former Lachin corridor. President Ilham Aliyev emphasized the strategic and security concerns that arose from Armenia's actions, which included the transportation of weapons, mines, and military personnel to Karabakh through the corridor, undermining the ceasefire's intent and Azerbaijan's security.

The President expressed frustration with the initial lack of cooperation from the Russian peacekeeping forces in securing the corridor, despite Azerbaijan's repeated appeals for joint control to ensure transparency and security. “After a certain period, especially when we saw that Armenia was sending weapons and mines to Karabakh and carrying out rotation of military units through this road, we started to raise the issue that we should exercise control over it. Unfortunately, the Russian side did not take a positive approach to that at the time. However, we continued our efforts. I can say for

sure that we appealed to the Russian side at the highest level for a long time, five times, urging them to let us control this road together. Because it turned out that they did not have full control over it," President Ilham Aliyev noted.

The discovery of mines produced in Armenia in 2021 being transported through the Lachin-Khankendi road raised serious questions about the misuse of the corridor and the effectiveness of the peacekeeping arrangement. After persistent but unsuccessful attempts to negotiate joint oversight, Azerbaijan took unilateral action on April 23 to secure the bridge over the Hakari River, effectively preventing the illegal transportation of military materials to Karabakh. President Ilham Aliyev stressed that this decision did not impede humanitarian movements, highlighting the evacuation and transportation of patients under the Red Cross and the unproblematic use of the road by Armenians living in Karabakh for civilian purposes.

The Azerbaijani border guards were instructed to conduct respectful and non-intrusive inspections of civilian vehicles. However, following a military provocation that targeted an Azerbaijani post, the road was temporarily closed for investigation before being reopened.

President Ilham Aliyev elaborated on the critical significance of the events on April 23 – a pivotal moment when Azerbaijan's territorial integrity was fully reasserted through control over its borders. This date symbolizes Azerbaijan's reaffirmation of sovereignty over its lands. President Ilham Aliyev highlighted several military operations, including "Operation Farrukh," "Operation Saribaba-Girkgiz," and "Operation Revenge," as strategic maneuvers aimed at regaining control over key strategic positions within the Karabakh region. These operations, according to the President, were not random but carefully planned and executed to secure strategic advantages, particularly in controlling high ground, which is crucial in military terms given the terrain of the region.

The successful execution of these operations set the stage for the significant September 19-20 operation, enabling it to be completed swiftly due to the advantageous positions secured earlier and the cut-off of resupply routes to separatist forces. These military achievements underscored Azerbaijan's capability and resolve in asserting its control over the contested areas, contributing to the broader goal of restoring and maintaining the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

President Ilham Aliyev provided insights into the factors leading to the local anti-terrorism operation that ultimately restored Azerbaijan's sovereignty in September 2023. Armenia and the Armenian separatists underestimated Azerbaijan's resolve, possibly misled by assurances that they could maintain their so-called separatist entity indefinitely. President Ilham Aliyev emphasized the clarity and consistency of Azerbaijan's messages to the separatists postwar, highlighting Azerbaijan's willingness to engage with local Armenians for peaceful coexistence within a unified Azerbaijani state. President Ilham Aliyev pointed out the construction of the new Lachin-Khankendi road as a pivotal moment, signaling Azerbaijan's intentions and capabilities to reassert control, culminating in the peaceful takeover of Lachin after notifying the command of the Russian peacekeeping forces.

"There were other positive developments, including the fact that houses in the village of Zabukh were not set on fire. However, I can tell you that we knocked down all the houses built by the Armenians, and citizens of Azerbaijan that moved to Zabukh live in houses built by Azerbaijan. But that was an indicator in itself. And we welcomed that. This was a somewhat normal step after the atrocities in Kalbadjar and Lachin when houses were burned and trees cut down. In other words, all these positive events gave us reason to believe that we will restore our sovereignty without bloodshed and without any operations. The Armenians of Karabakh have been told repeatedly that that was their only option: whoever wants to stay here would live as an Azerbaijani citizen, otherwise go to Armenia or elsewhere. Even during

the meeting with former IDPs in Lachin, on May 28, I openly said that Armenians had one option: to dissolve the illegal entity, surrender and abide,” President Ilham Aliyev noted.

President Ilham Aliyev criticized international actors for their negative influence, pointing out false reassurances provided to Armenia and the separatists, which hindered the resolution process. He stressed Azerbaijan's sincerity and determination in its actions and statements, expressing frustration over the missed opportunities for a peaceful resolution due to external interference and the separatists' refusal to dismantle their illegal entity and integrate within the Azerbaijani state framework.

President Ilham Aliyev detailed the sequence of events leading up to the anti-terrorism operation that resulted in the full restoration of Azerbaijan's sovereignty in September 2023. He mentioned an informal agreement after the 44-Day War between Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, which was aimed at maintaining the status quo. However, this accord was violated by actions from the Armenian side, including illegal elections in Karabakh and a congratulatory letter from Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan to the separatist regime, which was a breach of the informal agreement and a clear provocation.

The operation was a direct response to these provocations and continued mine terror, which resulted in Azerbaijani casualties. President Ilham Aliyev praised the professionalism and heroism of Azerbaijani soldiers in the operation, noting that it was executed swiftly, securing strategic positions and compelling the surrender of separatist forces. The operation was aimed at ensuring the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Karabakh to restore Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

President Ilham Aliyev highlighted the negotiation process following the operation, where Azerbaijan's conditions, including the dissolution of the separatist entity, were accepted. The focus was on the peaceful surrender of the Armenian forces, with guarantees of safety for the soldiers,

while the separatist leaders were targeted for capture. “Our goal was not to destroy the Armenian army there, but to ensure that the Armenian army withdraws from there, and we made this clear many times. We were asked if they would be guaranteed safety if they put down arms. Of course, we were not going to impose any sanctions on innocent soldiers. However, our position regarding the leaders of the separatists was unequivocal – their capture. Some of them tried to escape from there through the Lachin road, others were found in Khankendi, and elsewhere. We knew their whereabouts. In general, I can say that we were fully aware of what was happening in Karabakh after the Second Karabakh War,” President Ilham Aliyev added. Comparing the operation to the strategic victory in Shusha, Aliyev underlined its success in military terms and its significance in ending separatism, asserting Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

President Ilham Aliyev addressed the deteriorating relations between Azerbaijan and France, noting the shift from initially promising interactions to current tensions marked by anti-Azerbaijani sentiments from French officials, efforts to push resolutions against Azerbaijan at the UN Security Council, and concerns over Armenia's militarization. President Ilham Aliyev reflected on the history of bilateral relations, suggesting that changes in French politics might have influenced their stance. The President recounted previous assurances of neutrality from France, particularly during its co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group, and expressed disappointment over recent actions that contradicted these assurances.

President Ilham Aliyev criticized France's role during the 44-Day War and its aftermath, including recognition of the so-called "Artsakh" by French legislative bodies and attempts to sanction Azerbaijan internationally, which was unsuccessful. President Ilham Aliyev mentioned retaliatory measures taken by Azerbaijan in response to French actions, such as desecration of Azerbaijani cultural symbols and breaking sister

city agreements, likening these to acts of vandalism.

The President also highlighted France's colonial legacy, pointing out France's neocolonial practices and expressing Azerbaijan's commitment to exposing and opposing these actions on the international stage, including within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Baku Initiative. President Ilham Aliyev's comments underscore a deep rift with France, driven by France's biased, anti-Azerbaijani policies, and a broader critique of French foreign policy and colonial history.

President Ilham Aliyev pointed out that Armenia was failing to fulfill its obligations under the November 10 Trilateral Statement, specifically regarding the provision of an unimpeded passage in the Zangilan-Ordubad area, and criticized Armenia's attempt to avoid using the term "Zangezur Corridor" and to divert attention from its responsibilities.

President Ilham Aliyev clarified Azerbaijan's stance on the necessity of unimpeded passage for its cargo, citizens, and vehicles across the corridor, stating that customs duties should apply only to international cargo passing through. The President stressed the importance of security for the corridor and expressed skepticism about Armenia's guarantees, citing the agreed role of Russian border guards in providing security as per the November 10 Trilateral Statement.

The President also touched upon alternative routes, noting the agreement with Iran to build bridges facilitating a direct connection between the main part of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan, bypassing Armenia. President Ilham Aliyev highlighted the impasse Armenia finds itself in due to its reluctance to fulfill its obligations and criticized international reactions, particularly from the United States, regarding Azerbaijan's efforts to establish alternative routes.

"[A]s you know, the deputy head of the US State Department made an incomprehensible statement that either it will pass through Armenia or we will

not allow it to happen. Okay, we have been saying it for three years that it should go through Armenia, but Armenia does not allow it to happen. And now they are blaming us for choosing another route. In other words, do create conditions for it to pass through the territory of Armenia, to pass through the territory of Mehri, under the conditions I mentioned, and then there will be no need for another route. Otherwise, it is not clear. Today, the connection between the main part of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan is carried out through the territory of Iran. Why are there no objections to that and only to the Mehri part? Armenia-Iran trade is growing and flourishing day by day. Iran has opened a consulate in West Zangezur. Why doesn't this raise any questions? So, such illogical and nonsensical statements do not bring honor to anyone, and when they say that "we will not allow it to happen" – I have already said this – what exactly does America mean? How will it not allow it to happen? Will they come and build a barrier in Zangezur or place an army in Zangilan or in the territory of Iran? How exactly will they not allow this to happen? This is our sovereign matter. Recently, a bridge over Astarachay was opened with Iran. Why? Because the volume of cargo transported along the North-South Corridor has doubled and the terminal in Astara is unable to handle all that cargo. We have opened a second crossing with Russia in Khanoba, and there are now two crossings on the Russia-Azerbaijan border, there used to be one. There are also two crossings with Iran. So, it is our sovereign business," President Ilham Aliyev noted.

President Ilham Aliyev called for Armenia to stop manipulations and to facilitate the agreed-upon route through Mehri, warning that failure to do so would leave Armenia in a permanent deadlock. He emphasized Azerbaijan's sovereign right to develop its transportation infrastructure and criticized external interference in these matters. "My advice to the Armenian side is not to engage in manipulations here. Their proposed route from the main part of Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan is completely useless and it will be impossible to use that route year-round. The weather conditions and

natural terrain there are very harsh. The most appropriate option is through the Mehri area. Back in Soviet times, a railway passed through it, and a highway was being built there as well. Both the railway and the road should pass through there. People and goods should pass from Azerbaijan to Azerbaijan, as I said, without any inspections. Otherwise, Armenia will remain an eternal deadlock, and if the route I mentioned is not opened, we are not going to open our border with Armenia anywhere else. So, they will do themselves more harm than good,” President Ilham Aliyev added.

President Ilham Aliyev emphasized that the full restoration of Azerbaijan's sovereignty is as an epochal event, which necessitates the inauguration of a new era with presidential elections. This historic victory and the liberation of territories occupied for 30 years signify a monumental shift, warranting the beginning of a new chapter in the nation's history. President Ilham Aliyev also invited public debate on Azerbaijan's future direction, stressing the need for new national missions and goals appropriate to the new era. He cautioned against complacency, highlighting ongoing adversities and the necessity of remaining vigilant, particularly in the face of external pressures and the potential for armed conflict in the region. The President reiterated his commitment to strengthening Azerbaijan's military capabilities and defense industry as part of ensuring the country's security and sovereignty in this new era.

Following the September military operations, President Ilham Aliyev noted a significant shift in the negotiation dynamics. International promises of sanctions and pressure on Azerbaijan emboldened Armenia, delaying their response to Azerbaijan's peace proposals. However, recent developments have seen Armenia's stance change, with their latest comments omitting any mention of Karabakh and the Armenians living there. “The promises were made to Armenia, especially in the UN and the European Union, that sanctions would be applied against Azerbaijan, that Azerbaijan

would come under great pressure, and this so-called operation would cost Azerbaijan dearly. All these communications created confidence in Armenia that they could draw up the peace agreement as they want and that someone can pressure us into agreeing to it. This was why they didn't respond to our proposal for 70 days – because proposals were exchanged here five to six times and texts were sent for review. When we officially informed them that we had been waiting for 70 days, or it was perhaps 60 days, they made an offer, and now their offer, their comments do not contain a single word about Karabakh and the Armenians of Karabakh. So, this topic has already been removed, and real conditions have emerged for signing a peace agreement only now, after the September operation. I should also point out that in contrast to them, we provided our comments after 30 days, not 70 days, and two weeks later they submitted new comments on January 4. So, the question may still be asked: if these comments can be provided in two weeks, why did it take you 70 days last time?” President Ilham Aliyev noted.

The President also addressed the issue of guarantors for the peace treaty, expressing Azerbaijan's position that no external guarantors are necessary for a treaty between two sovereign states. He emphasized the desire to avoid turning the Armenia-Azerbaijan relations into a geopolitical contest and maintained that the resolution should be achieved bilaterally. President Ilham Aliyev expressed optimism that the fundamental conditions for signing a peace treaty have been established, advocating for swift progress on the agreement's wording and emphasizing the importance of mutual agreement for the treaty's success. “We don't need any guarantors here, and if it is going to be signed in a bilateral format, it should be signed. If someone wants to help, we don't mind that either. However, this help cannot be mandatory. Because some are now competing for hosting negotiations in this country, that country or elsewhere. It is a bit like a geopolitical rivalry. I wouldn't want that. I would not want Armenia-Azerbaijan relations to become a geopolitical issue. This is an issue between our

two countries and we have to solve it ourselves. If we agree, a peace treaty will be signed. If we do not reach an agreement, then either the negotiations will be continued or they will stop. Both options are possible,” President Ilham Aliyev added.

President Ilham Aliyev elaborated on the progress and future expectations of the Great Return program, emphasizing the rapid recovery and reconstruction efforts in Karabakh and East Zangezur. President Ilham Aliyev announced the return of displaced people to five cities in 2024. These cities are Shusha, Jabrayil, Kalbadjar, Khankendi and Khojaly. Former IDPs are expected to return to the cities of Aghdam, Zangilan and Gubadli in 2025. Simultaneously, construction will continue in the Sus village of the Lachin district and then in the villages of Karkijahan, Malibayli, Turshsu of the Khojaly district. President Ilham Aliyev detailed the ongoing and planned infrastructure developments, including reservoirs, roads, schools, hospitals, and industrial zones, which are crucial for facilitating the return of displaced persons and stimulating economic activity. He mentioned the construction of two large industrial zones in Aghdam and Jabrayil and the expectation of former IDPs returning to several cities and villages in the near future.

The President called for active involvement from local entrepreneurs and foreign investors in the reconstruction efforts, noting that the private sector is already participating in various projects. He encouraged further investment, emphasizing the opportunity for people from all parts of Azerbaijan to live in Karabakh and East Zangezur, not just the natives. The state's role in providing infrastructure and housing for those wishing to permanently reside there was highlighted, with the private sector encouraged to contribute to housing and enterprise development. President Ilham Aliyev's stressed the importance of social responsibility for businesses to invest in these areas, noting that the state would handle the essential infrastructure to support these endeavors. The President's remarks reflect a

comprehensive strategy for revitalizing Karabakh and East Zangezur, ensuring the well-being of returning citizens, and promoting economic growth through public and private sector collaboration.

President Ilham Aliyev addressed the complex issues surrounding the delimitation and demarcation of borders between Azerbaijan and Armenia, providing a historical context to explain the challenges and Azerbaijan's stance. He outlined the gradual loss of Azerbaijani territory to Armenia through the 20th century, highlighting significant moments when lands were transferred, notably during the establishment of the Azerbaijan People's Republic, the Soviet era, and up to the late 1960s. President Ilham Aliyev criticized Armenia's preference for using 1970s maps for border delimitation, noting that such a choice selectively ignores earlier territorial configurations that would favor Azerbaijan.

“It is no secret that in the 20th century the lands of Azerbaijan were given to Armenia in parts. One day after the establishment of the Azerbaijan People's Republic in 1918, unfortunately, the city of Irevan was handed over to Armenia...The republic was declared on May 28 and Irevan was handed over to Armenia on May 29. And the explanation of that defies any logic – in exchange for that, Armenia would give up its territorial claims against Azerbaijan. Did it? No, it got even worse... After the Sovietization in April 1920, in November, the Soviet government took the bigger part of West Zangezur from Azerbaijan and handed it over to Armenia. This is also a historical fact, there are maps, there are maps of the early 20th century. There is a map of the Azerbaijan People's Republic and there is Zangezur on it - not eastern or western, all of Zangezur was the territory of Azerbaijan, and this happened during the Soviet era. Such gifts of land continued over the years. The last such gift of land was made in May 1969. By then, our lands were given to Armenia in parts, and from an area of about 100,000 square kilometers – I am talking about the territory of the Azerbaijan People's Republic – it dropped to 86,600 square kilometers.



After Heydar Aliyev became the leader of Azerbaijan in July 1969, these land gifts and this process was stopped. Until then, it was given away in parts,” President Ilham Aliyev pointed out.

“This is why they wanted to use the maps of the 1970s as a basis. I asked them why maps of the 1970s. Tell me, explain to me what the methodological and political basis for that is. There is none. If we refer to the political foundations, then we should take either the period of the establishment of the Azerbaijan People’s Republic or the period of Sovietization as a point of reference. It is a political methodology. If we prefer the chronological methodology, then let’s see what maps were like at the beginning of the 20th century and build our work on these maps. That is, you are leaving out the 1960s, 1950s and 1940s and want to refer to the 1970s. Precisely because our historical lands had already been given to them. This is why we strongly objected to that and continue to do so. Unfortunately, it is not only Armenia that wants to use the map of the 1970s as a basis, but its “Armenia Plus” group, and we can never agree to this,” President Ilham Aliyev added.

President Ilham Aliyev insisted on a fair and logical approach to border delimitation, proposing either political or chronological methodologies or, alternatively, not basing the process on any specific historical maps at all. He emphasized the importance of on-the-ground expert evaluation to define the borders accurately, given their conditional nature today.

Regarding the specific issue of eight Azerbaijani villages currently under Armenian occupation, President Ilham Aliyev shared that this matter is actively being discussed, including in his personal dialogues with the Armenian Prime Minister. He proposed a straightforward return of the non-enclave villages to Azerbaijan and suggested expert group discussions for enclave villages, advocating for the return of all enclaves with secure access for their residents. “The villages that are enclave – an enclave Armenian village is in the territory of Azerbaijan – a separate expert group should be established and this issue should be discussed. We

believe that all enclaves should be returned. The roads leading to these enclaves should have the necessary conditions and the people living there should be accommodated in these enclaves. So, this is our position,” President Ilham Aliyev stressed.

President Ilham Aliyev strongly rejected any notion of Azerbaijan retreating from its current positions along the border, clarifying that these locations do not include any settlements and have never been inhabited. He stressed that while Armenia occupies Azerbaijani villages, Azerbaijan's stance remains firm on not stepping back and emphasized the ongoing negotiation process through commission meetings aimed at resolving these issues.

“I just want to report to you what they are saying. They are saying that the sides should retreat in a mirror-like fashion. But to retreat where? Some of my colleagues asked me this question in May 2021. You remember that some clarification was being done on the border at the time and they asked us during a telephone call to fall back. I asked where do we fall back. They said where we you come from. I said we had come from Baku, so shall we return to Baku? We haven't been there in 30 years. If that was indeed a border, then Armenia should have recognized it as such and placed border markers. After all, they did not see it as a border. They believed that their border was in Aghdam. Because we went there from Baku, we hadn't been there. So, where are we supposed to go back? Tell me where to go back and we will. There was no answer to my question. So, of course, we are not going back anywhere. Neither from the positions of May 2021 nor from the positions of September 2022. We are not taking a step back because that border must be defined. However, our location, which is currently disputed by Armenia, does not include any settlement. The positions and heights where we stand have never been inhabited before. Today, Armenia continues to occupy our villages, and this is unacceptable,” President Ilham Aliyev noted.

“Let me say again now that they are accusing us of willing to attack Armenia. I have already said this

and I will repeat it again with total sincerity. If we had wanted to, we would have done so. We would have gone to the very end. The city of Jermuk – the city with former real name of Istisu – was right in front of us. Who could have stopped us? We had no intention. Our intention was to protect our border. We had to have the heights to be able to monitor Armenia's plans visually. A westerner told me during a conversation about this topic that you have a satellite and you can see it from the satellite. I told him that my eyes were my satellite. I have to see it with my own eyes. A satellite is a device, it may get out of order or may be turned off, as it is in your hands," President Ilham Aliyev added.

President Ilham Aliyev clarified that while the issue of border delimitation and demarcation between Azerbaijan and Armenia could be mentioned in a peace treaty, it should not delay the treaty's conclusion. He referenced the lengthy processes of delimitation with Georgia, which remains incomplete, and with Russia, which took 20 years to formalize and still hasn't fully concluded in terms of physical demarcation. President Ilham Aliyev expressed the viewpoint that waiting for delimitation to conclude could potentially postpone a peace agreement with Armenia indefinitely, possibly for decades. The President advocated for signing a peace treaty as soon as possible, emphasizing that while Azerbaijan is open to negotiation, its proposed terms for the treaty are fair. He suggested that the peace treaty could include a clause regarding the continuation of the delimitation process, implying that the two matters—achieving peace and resolving border issues—can progress concurrently without one hindering the other. President Ilham Aliyev's stance highlights a pragmatic approach to resolving one of the region's most protracted conflicts, advocating for immediate steps towards peace while continuing to address complex territorial issues through ongoing negotiations.

President Ilham Aliyev emphasized Azerbaijan's commitment to advancing its renewable energy sector, positioning the country as a key player in

Europe's energy transition. He highlighted the substantial potential of the Caspian region, with plans to increase renewable energy capacity by 30 percent by 2030, aligning with global trends towards green energy.

The President mentioned the operational launch of Azerbaijan's first large solar power station in October of the previous year and outlined ambitious plans to boost renewable energy capacity to 3,000-4,000 megawatts within the next three to four years. This expansion aims to reduce natural gas consumption for electricity production, enabling increased gas exports to meet growing demand in Europe.

Azerbaijan has signed contracts and memorandums of understanding with leading green energy companies to produce 10,000 megawatts, enough to satisfy domestic demand and contribute to climate change mitigation efforts. President Ilham Aliyev anticipates that these initiatives will not only address environmental concerns but also foster job creation, technology adoption, and regional development, including in the Karabakh region.

Hosting COP29 underscores Azerbaijan's dedication to environmental sustainability and its role in the global discourse on climate action and energy transition. The President's remarks reflect a strategic vision for integrating renewable energy into the national economy, enhancing energy security, and positioning Azerbaijan as an influential energy partner globally.

President Ilham Aliyev emphasized Azerbaijan's expanding role as a crucial energy partner for Europe, highlighted by his participation in the opening ceremony of the Serbia-Bulgaria Gas Interconnector in Nis, Serbia. This event underscored Azerbaijan's reliable energy partnership, with the country now supplying gas to eight nations, including six European countries. The Southern Gas Corridor, initiated and implemented by Azerbaijan, serves as the backbone for various interconnectors across

Europe, facilitating the continent's access to Azerbaijani gas.

President Ilham Aliyev detailed Azerbaijan's substantial gas resources, including the Shah Deniz field, the Absheron gas field, and other significant projects that promise to bolster the country's gas exports. The potential for expanding the Southern Gas Corridor to accommodate increased demand was noted, alongside the consideration of creating new gas infrastructure.

The President underscored the economic and political dividends of Azerbaijan's energy contributions, especially in the context of Europe's energy security. Despite the shift towards green energy, President Ilham Aliyev affirmed that Europe's demand for natural gas would persist, positioning Azerbaijan as a key player in meeting this demand and enhancing energy security for the foreseeable future.

President Ilham Aliyev articulated Azerbaijan's proactive involvement in the green energy sector, highlighting the development of a green energy corridor, which includes a significant undersea cable project across the Black Sea, leveraging Azerbaijan's resources. This initiative, aimed at exporting green energy to Europe, underscores Azerbaijan's evolving role from a traditional oil and gas supplier to a prominent green energy partner, further enhancing its strategic importance to the European energy market.

President Ilham Aliyev also addressed concerns raised by certain European politicians following the events of September, specifically mentioning statements by the president of the European Parliament suggesting a halt to gas cooperation between Azerbaijan and Europe. He criticized these remarks as potentially damaging to bilateral relations, pointing out the legal and financial implications of such a stance, including significant fines that would be incurred by companies under long-term contracts with Azerbaijan for unfulfilled commitments.

“Unfortunately, some politicians in Europe either do not understand this or lack sufficient

information. After the events of September, some of them even declared that gas cooperation between Azerbaijan and Europe should be stopped. Such statements, of course, do not strengthen our cooperation. It is true that this statement was made by the president of the European Parliament. The European Commission has never made such statements and, of course, will never do. But the president of the European Parliament is not a minor position, and if this person says this, then it is thought provoking. But I must state from the very beginning that if this position prevails for whatever reason, then the companies that simply signed long-term contracts with us will have to pay fines worth hundreds of millions, if not billions of euros. Therefore, senior officials making such nonsensical statements should be more careful,” President Ilham Aliyev noted.

Highlighting the discrepancy in revenue from gas exports compared to oil, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized that Azerbaijan's economy would not be significantly impacted if gas exports were halted. However, he warned that such a scenario would pose considerable challenges to many European countries reliant on Azerbaijani gas, underscoring the mutual benefits of continued energy cooperation. The President's comments reflect a call for a more informed and cautious approach from European officials regarding statements on energy relations, considering the interdependent nature of these partnerships.

President Ilham Aliyev also detailed the achievements and contributions of Azerbaijan during its chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), emphasizing the country's proactive and principled approach to international relations and solidarity among member states. Under Azerbaijan's leadership, NAM experienced revitalization and increased relevance on the global stage, reflecting Azerbaijan's commitment to the foundational principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independent politics. Azerbaijan focused on promoting the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity

within the Movement, aligning with its national policy and contributing to a collective stance against external pressures and geopolitical dominance. Azerbaijan initiated the establishment of parliamentary, youth, and women's platforms within NAM, injecting vitality into the organization and enabling more dynamic engagement among member states. Azerbaijan's leadership in opposing vaccine nationalism and advocating for equitable vaccine distribution underscored its commitment to global solidarity. The country's efforts, including financial assistance and vaccine donations to over 80 countries, highlighted its role as a responsible international actor. Azerbaijan's chairmanship reinforced the Movement's original purpose as a platform for countries to pursue independent policies free from the influence of major geopolitical centers, advocating for voluntary integration and mutual respect among nations. President Ilham Aliyev's remarks underscored the significance of Azerbaijan's chairmanship in enhancing NAM's visibility and impact, particularly in addressing contemporary global challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and neo-colonialism. The establishment of the Baku Initiative Group, aimed at combating neo-colonialism, marks a lasting contribution to NAM's efforts to support self-determination and independence for all countries. As Azerbaijan concludes its chairmanship and passes the leadership to Uganda, the country leaves behind a legacy of active, principled engagement and a reinvigorated Movement poised to address the needs and aspirations of its member states in the face of global challenges.

## **II. Azerbaijan seeks justice against Armenia in landmark Energy Charter Treaty arbitration**

On January 12, 2024, a significant procedural meeting marked the commencement of the inter-State arbitration filed by the Republic of Azerbaijan against the Republic of Armenia, under the auspices of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). This pivotal meeting took place at the Permanent Court of Arbitration's headquarters

in The Hague, Netherlands, with Azerbaijan's delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Elnur Mammadov.

The initiation of arbitration proceedings on February 27, 2023, by Azerbaijan seeks to address and rectify the multiple breaches of the ECT and international law principles committed by Armenia. Central to Azerbaijan's claim is the assertion that Armenia has violated its international duties by not acknowledging Azerbaijan's sovereign rights over its energy resources within the Karabakh (Garabagh) region—an area of Azerbaijan internationally recognized but was under Armenia's illegal occupation for nearly three decades. During this period of unauthorized control, Armenia not only barred Azerbaijan from accessing its own energy resources but also appropriated these resources for its benefit, thereby obstructing Azerbaijan's ability to exploit and develop them. This denial extended to the rich potential for hydropower, wind, and solar energy within the Karabakh (Garabagh) region, further compounding the loss and damage.

The decision to proceed with arbitration under the ECT came after unsuccessful attempts at diplomatic negotiations between the two nations, aiming to resolve the dispute amicably. The arbitration, to be adjudicated by a panel of three judges appointed by both parties, is tasked with making a definitive judgment on Armenia's failure to meet its ECT obligations. Furthermore, it will determine the appropriate compensation for Azerbaijan, adhering to the principles of international law, to redress the violations and losses incurred.

## **III. The January 20 Tragedy: A pivotal moment in Azerbaijan's quest for independence**

On January 20, 1990, Azerbaijan experienced a day of profound sorrow and immense heroism that would significantly alter its path to independence. This day witnessed the tragic loss of lives but also showcased the bravery of

Azerbaijanis who stood valiantly against Soviet tanks and gunfire, symbolizing their unwavering desire for independence. The events of January 20, therefore, represent a crucial turning point in Azerbaijan's journey toward sovereignty, marking a moment when the nation collectively realized the impossibility of remaining under the dominion of an empire that not only took lives but also dishonored its people.

The background to this tragedy lies in the deepening political and socio-economic crisis of the Soviet Union. This period saw the rise of national liberation and democratic movements across several Soviet republics, met with brutal force by Moscow in an attempt to quell dissent and prevent the empire's dissolution. The massacre in Baku in 1990, resulting in over 130 deaths, hundreds injured, and thousands arrested or persecuted, was part of a broader strategy of suppression witnessed in Tbilisi in 1989 and Vilnius in 1991.

Azerbaijan's national liberation movement, particularly strong and thus frightening to Moscow, was driven by the desire for independence and exacerbated by the Karabakh conflict, arising from Armenia's territorial claims. The movement gained unstoppable momentum through widespread protests, the founding of the People's Front in 1989, and significant strike actions, culminating in the adoption of the constitutional law on sovereignty in September 1989—a first among Soviet republics.

The USSR's decision to deploy troops to Baku in January 1990, under a decree signed by Gorbachev, was a clear violation of the constitutions of both the USSR and Azerbaijan, as well as international law. This aggressive act aimed to crush the Azerbaijani people's aspirations for democracy and freedom but instead fueled their resolve for national liberation, leading to the declaration of independence on October 18, 1991.

Today, Azerbaijan stands as an independent and influential state on the global stage, having restored its territorial integrity and succeeded in both foreign and domestic policy realms. The sacrifices of the January 20 martyrs are forever etched in the nation's memory, serving as the foundation for Azerbaijan's independence and ongoing prosperity.

#### **IV. Azerbaijan responds to Armenia's landmine map statement**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan has acknowledged the announcement from Armenia's National Security Service on January 25, 2024, regarding the intention to provide Azerbaijan with maps of landmined areas. This gesture comes in the backdrop of a long-standing demand by Azerbaijan for such critical information, aimed at addressing the severe threat posed by Armenia's widespread and deliberate landmine deployment within Azerbaijani territories. These actions, described as war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law, significantly hinder post-conflict restoration efforts, endanger civilian lives, and obstruct the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Despite Armenia's initial denial of the existence of landmine maps following the Trilateral Statement of November 10, 2020, subsequent international pressure led to the submission of maps. However, Azerbaijan has consistently criticized these maps for their limited accuracy, which is estimated at only 25%, and their failure to comprehensively represent the reality on the ground. Contrary to claims that 400,000 landmines were laid, Azerbaijan contends that over one million mines infest its soil.

A worrying statistic underscores the ongoing danger: more than 55% of recent landmine explosions occurred outside areas covered by Armenia's provided maps. Since the conclusion of the 2020 Patriotic War, 342 Azerbaijani citizens, including three journalists, have fallen victim to landmines, resulting in 65 fatalities, 50 of whom were civilians.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan highlights the continued deployment of new landmines by Armenia post-2020, even within areas patrolled by Russian peacekeeping forces, estimating around 500,000 mines were planted. This contradicts Armenia's claims of not having produced or exported landmines in recent years.

Azerbaijan views the latest statement from Armenia not as a gesture of goodwill but as an insufficient step that falls short of constituting a meaningful confidence-building measure. The Azerbaijani government calls for the provision of comprehensive and accurate landmine maps for all areas yet to be disclosed. Additionally, Azerbaijan urges Armenia to reveal information regarding the fate of 4,000 missing Azerbaijanis and the locations of mass graves from the last three decades, pressing for immediate action to address these humanitarian concerns.

#### **V. Commemorating one year since the terror attack on Azerbaijan's embassy in Iran**

On January 27, 2024, the Republic of Azerbaijan solemnly marks the first anniversary of the terror attack against its embassy in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This grievous incident resulted in the tragic death of one embassy employee and left two others with serious injuries. In the wake of the attack, embassy personnel and their families were evacuated due to significant threats to their safety.

The Iranian authorities, as the host state, failed to uphold their responsibilities under the "Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations" by not preventing the intrusion into the embassy compound or ensuring the safety of its staff. This breach of duty has drawn widespread condemnation from countries and international organizations worldwide, emphasizing that attacks on diplomatic missions undermine the very foundation of international relations.

Over the past year, efforts to address the aftermath of this terror attack and secure justice for the victims have involved continuous dialogue and cooperation between Azerbaijani

and Iranian officials. Azerbaijan has clearly stated its expectations for the resolution of this issue, including the stringent punishment of those responsible for orchestrating and executing the attack and the assurance of the embassy's security. The Iranian government has kept Azerbaijan informed about the investigative proceedings, leading to the scheduling of the first court hearing for the accused terrorist on the one-year anniversary of the attack. Azerbaijan unequivocally condemned the attack and urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to take immediate and effective measures to ensure such incidents are never repeated, safeguarding the inviolability of diplomatic missions and fostering a secure environment for international diplomacy.

#### **VI. Azerbaijan halts cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

On January 24, Azerbaijan announced the suspension of its collaboration with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), citing a deteriorating relationship with Brussels. The Azerbaijani delegation to PACE highlighted concerns over the assembly being utilized as a platform for targeting certain member states, particularly following PACE's provocative denial to approve the credentials of the Azerbaijani representatives. During a PACE meeting on January 24, the Azerbaijani delegation strongly criticized an initiative to challenge its credentials, viewing it as part of a broader, malign campaign against Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan, asserting its status as an independent, sovereign, democratic, and multicultural nation, expressed disappointment with PACE's failure to address the human rights violations and injustices resulting from Armenia's military aggression and occupation of Azerbaijani territories. Despite joining the Council of Europe in 2001 with hopes of

resolving these issues, Azerbaijan criticized PACE for its inaction over 19 years to hold Armenia accountable, especially concerning the rights of Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The recent decision to challenge Azerbaijan's delegation credentials is a part of a broader campaign to undermine its democratic institutions and electoral processes. The Azerbaijani delegation condemned the double standards and discriminatory practices within PACE, citing instances of political corruption, ethnic and religious hatred, and Azerbaijanophobia. On the inaugural day of the 2024 winter session, the Azerbaijani delegation's credentials to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) faced scrutiny. Spearheaded by Frank Schwabe, the leader of the German delegation at PACE, a motion was presented to reject the credentials of the Azerbaijani representatives. This incident follows a contentious resolution passed by PACE in October 2023, which critiqued Azerbaijan's anti-terror operations in Karabakh. Following these developments, the Azerbaijani delegation declared its decision to withdraw from participation in PACE activities until further notice, signaling a significant protest against the council's current atmosphere of bias and hostility. Azerbaijan's move underscores the deep rift between the nation and PACE, challenging the impartiality and credibility of the Council of Europe amidst accusations of selective justice and interference in Azerbaijan's internal affairs.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov echoed the sentiments of Azerbaijan's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), highlighting the delegation's stance against biased actions by PACE. Minister Bayramov emphasized that the root of such prejudice lies in Azerbaijan's successful restoration of its territorial integrity and sovereignty, a move that has seemingly

unsettled the European Parliament. Minister Bayramov underscored the systematic nature of the bias against Azerbaijan, noting that the country's actions on September 19–20 of the previous year, aimed at reclaiming its territorial sovereignty, were conducted in strict adherence to international norms and principles. Despite this, PACE's response has been anything but favorable. President Ilham Aliyev also emphasized the issue facing the Azerbaijani delegation within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The President pinpointed the actions of a specific minority faction within PACE that harbors anti-Azerbaijani sentiments and has actively worked against the accreditation of the Azerbaijani delegation, undermining the spirit of constructive dialogue and cooperation that parliamentary platforms traditionally uphold. President Ilham Aliyev underscored the urgent need to restore the rights of the Azerbaijani delegation. He made it clear that the continuation of such discriminatory practices against Azerbaijan's delegation could lead the country to reassess its engagement not only with PACE but also with broader institutions of the Council of Europe, including the European Court of Human Rights. This stance reflects Azerbaijan's firm commitment to equality and fair treatment within international parliamentary bodies and its readiness to take decisive steps to protect its interests and dignity on the international stage.

#### **VII. Azerbaijan and the UAE sign memorandum on strategic partnership**

On January 9, Azerbaijan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance the strategic partnership between two countries. This agreement was highlighted during a meeting between UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and President Ilham Aliyev in Baku. Sheikh Mohamed emphasized the significance of this memorandum in strengthening the bonds between the two nations, mentioning

plans to boost cooperation in sectors such as trade, economy, industry, agriculture, culture, and education. He noted the positive momentum in the relationship between Azerbaijan and the UAE, expressing a commitment to further develop this cooperation for the benefit of both countries and their people.

Moreover, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan praised Baku for being selected to host the 29th UN Climate Change Conference (COP29), seeing it as recognition of Azerbaijan's reliability by the global community. He offered the UAE's support and expertise in organizing the event.

President Ilham Aliyev expressed optimism that Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's visit would greatly enhance the friendship and brotherhood between the two countries. President Ilham Aliyev appreciated the reaffirmation of the strategic partnership during the visit and was pleased about the regularity of such high-level meetings. President Ilham Aliyev also congratulated the UAE on the successful organization of COP28 and expressed gratitude for the UAE's support for Azerbaijan's role in hosting COP29, as well as for its support in the UN Security Council and backing Azerbaijan's stance.

"Today, a multitude of crucial documents have been signed, and a ceremony for the exchange of these documents is scheduled shortly. I am confident that these agreements will form a solid foundation for our future cooperation," President Ilham Aliyev noted.

The relationship between Azerbaijan and the UAE began in the early 1990s, marked by the UAE's recognition of Azerbaijan's independence on December 26, 1991. This gesture made the UAE one of the first Muslim nations to acknowledge Azerbaijan's sovereignty, laying a solid foundation for bilateral relations. On December 13, the former President and the National Leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev and the UAE's President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan held a significant meeting, further cementing bilateral ties. Moreover, during the conflict with Armenia, the

UAE consistently supported Azerbaijan, affirming its solidarity in times of dispute. Over the years, the connection between Azerbaijan and the UAE has matured into a comprehensive strategic partnership, spanning sectors such as economy, tourism, security, culture, and energy. The recent visit by Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan particularly highlighted the importance of reinforcing the bonds between these two Muslim nations. This visit signified a continued dedication to strengthening bilateral ties and exploring further opportunities for cooperation.

Economic collaboration is a major focus, with the "Azerbaijan UAE Joint Intergovernmental Commission on economic, trade, and technical cooperation" serving as a cornerstone for deepening economic ties and unveiling new prospects for both nations. From January to July 2023, trade between the two countries reached \$58.5 million, marking a 21.1 percent increase compared to the same period in 2022.

The partnership also extends to the energy sector, where both nations are building on their rich fossil fuel resources to bolster economic ties. Azerbaijan, known for its significant energy resources in the Caspian region, has embarked on numerous inter-regional energy projects that connect global energy markets with the Caspian region. Despite the reliance on fossil fuels, both Baku and Abu Dhabi are committed to sustainable development goals. They are actively promoting decarbonization initiatives and the generation of power through renewable energy sources, showcasing their dedication to environmental sustainability alongside their economic and energy cooperation.

Azerbaijan is actively expanding its renewable energy capabilities, and its collaboration with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is pivotal in this regard, particularly in generating power from renewable sources. The Azerbaijani government has forged key partnerships with Masdar, the UAE's leading renewable energy company, to spearhead green energy initiatives within Azerbaijan. Notably, Masdar has committed to developing solar and onshore wind projects in Azerbaijan, boasting a



combined capacity of 1GW. This initiative includes the 230 MW Garadagh Solar Park, the largest operational solar facility in the region, constructed with a \$262 million investment from abroad. These strategic agreements are part of a larger plan, initiated in June 2022, to develop the first phase of a 10 GW renewable energy project pipeline in Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, ACWA Power, a company listed in Saudi Arabia, has entered into an agreement to undertake 500 MW of renewable energy projects in Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, in partnership with Masdar and the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR). Masdar is also set to develop integrated offshore wind and green hydrogen projects, alongside onshore wind and solar projects, with a total capacity of 4 GW. These comprehensive green energy projects are integral to Azerbaijan's ambitious goal of ensuring 30 percent of its installed capacity comes from electricity generated through renewable sources by 2030.

During Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's visit to Azerbaijan in January, the economic and energy collaboration between the UAE and Azerbaijan was significantly advanced through the signing of four critical documents. These include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UAE's Ministry of Investment and Azerbaijan's Ministry of Energy focused on investment cooperation in electricity transmission projects, a Framework Agreement for Strategic Collaboration to enhance Azerbaijan's renewable and clean energy capacities and facilitate green energy export operations, a Calendar of Actions (roadmap) for constructing solar and wind power plants with a total capacity of 1 GW, and a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC).

These agreements mark a new chapter in the partnership between the two countries, setting the stage for deeper strategic engagement. The MOU

aims to establish a cooperative framework in the energy sector, particularly for electricity transmission projects, network development, and the sharing of technical expertise. The strategic cooperation document outlines investment opportunities in emerging areas such as rooftop solar projects, green hydrogen, green ammonia, synthetic methane, sustainable aviation fuel production, and the export of green energy. It also includes ambitious plans for developing 2 GW of solar and 2 GW of wind onshore projects, as well as 6 GW of offshore wind energy. The Calendar of Actions provides a detailed roadmap for the implementation of 2 solar and 1 wind energy projects from 2024 to 2027, aiming to install 1 GW of solar and wind onshore projects in Azerbaijan.

These priority areas of cooperation demonstrate the UAE's support for Azerbaijani initiatives in the South Caucasus, positioning Azerbaijan as a key partner for the UAE to extend its economic footprint in the Caspian region. Azerbaijan's backing of the "Green Energy Corridor" project, alongside Georgia, Romania, and Hungary, to facilitate renewable energy flow from the South Caucasus to Europe, creates a promising investment landscape for UAE companies in Azerbaijan's renewable energy sector. Moreover, as Baku prepares to host the 29th Conference of Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change following COP28 in Dubai, the UAE's experience will be invaluable to Azerbaijan, marking the region's first hosting of a UN climate summit.