



CENTER OF ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BEYNÖLXALQ MÜNƏSİBƏTLƏRİN TƏHLİLİ MƏRKƏZİ

NOVEMBER-2021

BULLETIN

HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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I. Azerbaijan celebrates Victory Day

On November 8, Azerbaijan celebrated Victory Day in the 44-Day War and the first anniversary of the liberation of Shusha. On this occasion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement, which outlines Azerbaijan's vision for the region in the post-war region. The core of Azerbaijan's vision for the post-war region is based on ensuring lasting peace, development and progress. "After the elimination of the factor of occupation of its territories, Azerbaijan is ready to normalize relations with Armenia on the basis of strict adherence to the principles of international law, in particular, the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders. In order to ensure future peace and security in the region, it is important at this stage to fully implement the trilateral statements, and Azerbaijan expects Armenia to reciprocate the steps taken by Azerbaijan in this direction," the statement read. In its statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that "[w]ith the end of the conflict, new realities have emerged in the South Caucasus region, and everyone must accept these realities," warning that "Armenia must choose between regional cooperation and illegal, as well as unfounded territorial claims against its neighbors. The international community must play a positive role in this regard and call on Armenia to realize that there is no alternative to peace. Attempts to directly or indirectly support revanchism and its armament in Armenia must be stopped."

"As a result of the 44-Day Patriotic War, which began on September 27, 2020 in response to a provocation and further military aggression of Armenia, Azerbaijan liberated its lands from occupation, and in accordance with the related UN Security Council Resolutions, as well as numerous decisions and resolutions of other

international organizations, Azerbaijan's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders was ensured, and the right of about one million Azerbaijani IDPs to live in their native homes has been restored," the statement read, adding that "as a result of the 44-day long military operations, under the leadership of the victorious Commander-in-Chief, President Ilham Aliyev, the heroic Azerbaijan Army liberated more than 300 settlements, including the cities of Jabrayil, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Gubadli, as well as Shusha city, which has a special place in the history and culture of the Azerbaijani people. A Trilateral Statement signed by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia on November 10, 2020 has brought an end to the military operations, and Armenia, recognizing its defeat, withdrew its armed forces from Kalbajar, Aghdam and Lachin regions. Thus the conflict was resolved through military-political means."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs further added that "[a]fter the war, Azerbaijan faces the important task of rebuilding and restoring, as well as of demining of the liberated territories. At the heart of this work is to ensure the safe and dignified return of Azerbaijani IDPs to their homes, whose fundamental rights have been violated for decades. In this process, which requires time, finances and serious efforts, Azerbaijan is not alone, friendly and partner countries are participating in the revitalization of the liberated territories. In the coming years, we will witness the return of the first IDPs to their homes."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also said in its statement that Azerbaijan has taken "appropriate steps to investigate illegal actions, violations of international law, war crimes, urbicide, culturicide and ecocide committed by Armenia within the framework of its nearly 30 year-long policy of aggression,

as well as to bring to justice those responsible for these violations, and these steps will continue at the next stages. Punishing the perpetrators and ensuring justice are important in terms of preventing a recurrence of such cases in the future.”

II. President Ilham Aliyev delivers Victory Day speech in Shusha

On November 8, President Ilham Aliyev addressed a group of servicemen on the Jidir Duzu plateau outside Shusha. “All of Azerbaijan celebrates this glorious holiday. Azerbaijan has restored its territorial integrity and historical justice. We have fulfilled our historic mission by driving the enemy out of our native lands. In 44 days, Azerbaijan has won a historic victory by destroying all the fortifications and military positions Armenia had built for 30 years and crushed the Armenian Army. This glorious holiday was presented to our people by you and dozens of thousands of other servicemen like you,” President Ilham Aliyev said. Praising the people for “mobilizing all their resources and fulfilling this glorious mission”, the president thanked “every citizen of Azerbaijan” for their hard work to bring the “sacred day closer”. President Ilham Aliyev once again emphasized that the people of Azerbaijan never accepted the occupation, and “we mobilized all our resources to put an end to the occupation and drove the enemy out of our historical lands.” Pointing out that Armenia planned to retain lands of Azerbaijan under their control forever, President Ilham Aliyev noted that despite Azerbaijan's hopes for a peaceful solution to the conflict, “many years of peace talks did not yield any results. The result was zero. On the contrary, the enemy became completely presumptuous.”

“Armenia and its supporters wanted to perpetuate this occupation,” President Ilham

Aliyev underscored. President Ilham Aliyev further added that the Armenian leadership and their backers badly miscalculated and did not take into consideration the people's desire to liberate the occupied lands at any cost. “They should have known that we would never come to terms with this situation. They should have known that we would drive the enemy out of our lands at any cost. We had to be ready for this as a people and as a state. All preparations had to be made in time, and they were,” the president noted.

President Ilham Aliyev also highlighted the importance of informing the world about the realities on the ground. “We have been working day and night to inform the world community, to work successfully in leading international organizations and to have decisions and resolutions adopted that would support us and reflect the truth. All this work formed the legal basis for today's reality. That is why today, after we have driven the enemy out of our lands, no one can criticize us. We have conducted a successful operation on our own lands, we have not violated international law, and we have not violated the rules of warfare. We fought a just war and defeated the enemy in the battlefield,” the president stressed.

III. Armenia drastically increases provocations against Azerbaijan

Over the last few months, it has become clear that the utter defeat in the 44-Day War has not pushed the Armenian side to embrace peace and prosperity in the region. On the contrary, it seems that driven by the dangerous delusions of irredentism and expansionism, the Armenian side once again is trying to embrace military adventurism in the region. Over the month of November, the Armenian side continued to irresponsibly escalate the situation on the ground by intensifying its

provocations against Azerbaijan. On November 9, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan released a statement regarding the Armenian Defense Minister Arshak Karapetyan's illegal visit to the territory of Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily stationed. "The unauthorized entry of the Armenian Defense Minister into the territory of Azerbaijan, holding meetings with illegal Armenian formations, and expressing views on their combat readiness is a military-political provocation," the statement read, adding that "the provocative visit of the Armenian Defense Minister was deliberately held on the eve of the anniversary of the trilateral statement signed on November 10, 2020, by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the President of the Russian Federation, and the Prime Minister of Armenia". The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan pointed out that the Armenian side continues to flout the provisions of the trilateral statement, undermine the situation in the region, and overshadow the activities of Russian peacekeepers. The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan added that "the visit of the Armenian Defense Minister once again demonstrates that Armenia continues to directly support irregular Armenian military units, aggressive separatism, and terrorist acts on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan," underscoring the fact that "elements of the armed forces of Armenia continue to remain in the territories of Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily deployed." The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan warned against military adventurism, reminding the Armenian side that "in case of a continuation of such illegal visits to the territory of Azerbaijan, the necessary measures will be taken to prevent aggressive separatism and terrorist acts in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan."

On November 9, the Armenian troops from the positions in the direction of the Yukhari Shorja village of the Basarkechar region opened fire at engineering road construction equipment in the direction of the Yellija settlement of the Kalbajar region. On the same day in the afternoon, about 60 Armenian troops on two military vehicles, moving in the direction of Lake Garagol of the Lachin region, settled on the road leading to the positions of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan. The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan noted in its statement that "the Armenian side used metal obstacles to block the Azerbaijan Army's path between positions on this section of the border and attempted to strengthen itself in the area in order to create a deliberate military confrontation. The Azerbaijan Army Units stationed in this direction took immediate measures, assembling additional personnel and military equipment in the territory in the shortest time. As a result of the taken measures about 60 Armenian servicemen were under siege, all their actions were limited, and in the morning, taking into account the request of the Russian side, the Azerbaijani servicemen allowed the Armenian servicemen to return. We state that the military provocation of the Armenian side has failed." The Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan pointed out that "the entire responsibility for the recent tension that occurred on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border falls on the military-political leadership of Armenia," warning the Armenian side once again that "if such provocations continue, the measures taken in the future will be harsh and more effectual."

On November 13, Norayr Mirzoyan carried out a terrorist attack and hurled a hand grenade at the post near Dashalti village of Shusha District, where servicemen of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan and Russia were stationed. On the same day, starting from

afternoon, the Armenian military units from the positions in the direction of the Yukhari Shorja settlement of the Basarkechar region using various caliber weapons, sniper rifles and grenade launchers again opened fire at the Azerbaijan Army positions in the direction of the Zeylik settlement of the Kalbajar region. Starting from the evening of November 13 to the morning of November 14, the Armenian military detachments from the positions in the Yukhari Shorja, Zarkand, Azizli, and Jermuk settlements of the Basarkechar region using sniper rifles, grenade launchers, and various caliber weapons periodically fired at the Azerbaijan Army positions in the Zeylik, Yellija and Istisu settlements of the Kalbajar region. At the same time, illegal Armenian military detachments in the territory of Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily deployed, from the Mukhtarkend settlement using various caliber weapons periodically opened fire at the positions of the Azerbaijan Army Units. On November 14, the Armenian side attempted to carry out another provocation to aggravate the situation in the Lachin section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border. On November 14 starting from the morning, the Azerbaijan Army Units noted the concentration of a group of personnel and military equipment of the Armenian armed forces in the direction of the border of the Lachin region, including their preparations for a provocation. The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan noted that they took necessary measures to prevent those provocations and forced the Armenian side to retreat from the area. Starting from the night of November 15, the Armenian military units from the positions in Yukhari Shorzha settlement of Basarkechar region subjected to fire the Azerbaijan Army positions in the Zeylik and Yellija settlements of the Kalbajar region. Furthermore, on November 15, the Armenian military units shot at a tractor carrying out road works to restore

infrastructure in this direction, and 2 “Kamaz” vehicles transporting supplies for the Azerbaijan Army Units. On November 15 starting from 16:15 to 04:30 on November 16, the Armenian armed forces units from the positions in the direction of the Azizli, Zarkand, Ashaghi Shorzha, Dara, Goysu, and Pambak settlements of the Basarkechar region, Chinarli, Mosesgekh, Yukhari Mehrab, Aygepar and Gulali settlements of the Shamshaddin region, as well as Jil settlement of the Chambarak using various caliber weapons subjected to intensive fire the Azerbaijan Army positions in the direction of the Yellija and Barmagbina settlements of the Kalbajar region, Galakend, Daryurd, Novoivanovka, Garaveliler settlements of the Gadabay region, Aghbulag, Aghdam, Garalar, Gosha, Kokhanebi, Hajally, Alibeyli and Asrik Jirdakhan settlements of the Tovuz region, as well as Kohnegishlag settlement of the Aghstafa region.

On November 16, in its dangerous pursuit of military adventurism, the Armenian side attempted to carry out its biggest provocation yet since the end of the 44-Day War. On November 16, the Armenian military detachments launched a military operation in order to capture the high grounds in this direction of the state border and take more advantageous positions, thus gaining military superiority. Armenian military detachments at the border combat positions in the Basarkechar and Garakilsa regions launched an offensive at the combat posts in the Kalbajar and Lachin regions. In its statement, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan noted that the Armenian side failed to pull off those provocations, warning that “the military-political leadership of Armenia bears the entire responsibility for the tension and confrontation that arose as a result of Armenia's provocation”. According to the

Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan, as a result of the decisive measures taken by the Azerbaijani servicemen, the Armenian servicemen were disarmed and detained, a large number of weapons of various calibers, and a large amount of ammunition were seized as trophies. At the same time, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan announced that, unfortunately, 7 servicemen were killed and 10 servicemen were wounded at the state border as a result of these provocations.

President Ilham Aliyev said in a phone conversation with European Council President Charles Michel that Armenia's political and military leadership was responsible for the current situation. President Aliyev pointed out that Armenia had repeatedly resorted to military provocations in Karabakh as well as on the border with the districts of Lachin and Kalbajar. President Ilham Aliyev said that there were wounded on the Azerbaijani side and that appropriate response was given to the Armenian provocation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan said in a statement on November 16 that "Armenia is fueling tension deliberately" and that "the current tension in the region is another military-political provocation by Armenia."

On November 17, the Armenian military detachments from the positions in the direction of the Chinarli and Mughanjig villages of the Shamshaddin region using various caliber weapons periodically fired at the positions of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan in the direction of the Munjuglu, Aghbulag, Gosha, Kokhanebi and Asrik Jirdakhan villages of the Tovuz region. On November 18, the Armenian military units from the positions in the direction of the Chinarli village of the Shamshaddin region using small arms once again subjected to intensive fire the positions of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan in the

direction of the Kokhanebi village of the Tovuz region.

IV. The leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia hold a trilateral meeting in Sochi

On November 26, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin met in Sochi. It was the second such a meeting of the three leaders since the end of the 44-Day War. The Sochi meeting focused on two key post-war issues: unblocking of regional transportation and communication channels and the delimitation and demarcation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state borders. Following the meeting, Vladimir Putin said the three leaders had had "a constructive" discussion and agreed on several "key" issues. He said they had agreed that mechanisms to delimitate and demarcate the Armenia-Azerbaijan border would be created by the end of this year, that they had advanced on "sensitive" humanitarian issues, and discussed in detail the development of economic relations, primarily "the unblocking of transport corridors", including a railway and motorway.

At the end of the meeting, the leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia signed a joint statement. The statement said that at their 26 November meeting in Sochi the three leaders discussed the progress of the implementation of the trilateral agreement that ended the 44-Day War and their 11 January 2021 statement on the unblocking of all economic and transport communications in the region. The statement said that on 26 November the three leaders confirmed their commitment to further implementation and observance of all points in the 10 November and 11 January statements in the interest of ensuring stability,

security and economic development in the South Caucasus, and agreed to intensify joint efforts toward a speedy resolution of remaining tasks stemming from the two statements. They pointed out the important contribution of the Russian peacekeeping force in the stabilization of the situation and ensuring of security in the region. They agreed to take action to step up stability and security at the Azerbaijan-Armenia border and create a bilateral commission on the delimitation of the two countries' border with its subsequent demarcation with consultative support from Russia upon the request of the sides. They also praised the operation of the trilateral working group, which was set up in line with the 11 January statement and is co-chaired by deputy prime ministers from the three countries, for unblocking all economic and transport communications in the region. They stressed the need for a speedy launch of specific projects in order to open up the region's economic potential. Russia will continue to provide all necessary assistance in the interest of normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, formation of an atmosphere of trust between the peoples and building of neighborly relations in the region, the statement said.

In his press statement following the trilateral meeting, President Ilham Aliyev noted that “the decisions that we have made in the matter of settling disputes and disagreements will contribute to making the situation in the South Caucasus more secure and predictable,” adding that “I have repeatedly said that we in Azerbaijan are determined to turn the page of a long-term confrontation with Armenia, to begin a stage of normal interaction, and I think that it is in this format that we are achieving our goals.” Touching upon the humanitarian issues, President Ilham Aliyev stated that “Azerbaijan has always consistently advocated

the observance of all humanitarian norms, whether during the hostilities or after. I must say that after the end of hostilities, more than 100 detained Armenian servicemen were handed over to the Armenian side, including one that was handed over this morning – a wounded soldier who received medical assistance from Azerbaijani doctors, as well as one civilian who, having lost his way, got lost in our territory. In other words, we have always proceeded from the principle of humanism and intend to continue to work in this direction.”

Commenting on the results of the meeting, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan said that the meeting of the leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia in Sochi was positive and that the trilateral declaration signed after the meeting “fully reflects” Baku's position. “We welcome the results of the trilateral meeting held between the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan on November 26, 2021 in Sochi. As a result of the meeting, points reflecting position of Azerbaijan have been fully ensured in the Statement signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation,” the statement read.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs further noted that “[t]he speedy implementation of the projects aiming the revealing the economic potential of the region, including the opening of railways and highways highlighted in the Statement should be especially emphasized,” adding that “[i]n the post-conflict period, Azerbaijan called for the full implementation of trilateral statements, the opening of all communications in the region, the start of the delimitation process between the two

countries and spoke from the position of normalization of relations based on international law. Azerbaijani side will continue to take appropriate steps to implement the relevant points reflected in the November 26 Statement.”

Vasif Huseynov, a senior advisor at the Center of Analysis of International Relations (Air Center), also agreed that the trilateral meeting “was a constructive stage in the post-war peace process in the region and has opened up new prospects for peace and reconciliation between Armenia and Azerbaijan.” Vasif Huseynov also noted that “[p]articularly noteworthy is the fact that neither the joint statement nor the subsequent press conference mentioned the issue of Karabakh’s status. In general, it now seems that even the Armenian side realizes that it is no longer possible or reasonable to raise this issue as before. During his November 23 press conference, Prime Minister Pashinyan, commenting on this, stated that “Based on our understanding, it is not a matter of territory, the Artsakh [the Armenian name for Karabakh] issue is a matter of law, and has nothing to do with territory”, adding that “Armenia and Azerbaijan [have already] recognized each other’s territorial integrity under the documents of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991”. Although Pashinyan did not elaborate how he sees the difference between a matter of law and a matter of territory in this context, this statement is markedly different from Armenia’s previous calls for “remedial secession” of “Nagorno-Karabakh” within the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of Soviet Azerbaijan. This statement and the results of the Sochi meeting therefore give ground to assume that we have entered a qualitatively different stage in Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations, the parameters of

which may become clearer in the upcoming months.”

V. Azerbaijan hosts 8th Global Baku Forum

On November 4, the 8th Global Baku Forum organized by Nizami Ganjavi International Center and entitled "The world after COVID-19" was kicked off. Over the years, Global Baku Forum, held annually under the auspices of President Ilham Aliyev, has become one of the important international platforms to address urgent and critical issues of global politics. This year, the Global Baku Forum is organized around panels focused on such topics as "The new world economy", "Peace, security and human rights: in new era", "Combating climate change and meeting the global need for energy", "Public health and the people's vaccine", "Climate change and sustainable development", "Promoting food and nutrition security", "South Caucasus: regional development and prospective for cooperation", "Assessing Western Balkans: the way forward", "Eastern partnership: what its potential", and "Future of EU in the global stage”.

Speaking at the opening session, Director-General of the World Health Organization Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus underscored the absolute urgency of multilateral efforts in dealing with global health challenges, especially when it comes to the enormous gap in vaccination numbers between high-income countries, where almost two-thirds of the population has been vaccinated with at least one dose of vaccine, and low-income countries, where less than 5% of the population has been vaccinated. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus noted that “[w]e encourage countries that have already reached the 40% target to give their place in the vaccine delivery queue to COVAX and the

African Vaccines Acquisition Trust. And we urge manufacturers to prioritize and fulfil their contracts with COVAX and AVAT as a matter of urgency, and be far more transparent about what's going where... The longer the pandemic drags on, the longer the social and economic turmoil will continue, and the higher the chances that a new, more dangerous variant, could emerge," adding that "the pandemic has demonstrated beyond doubt that health is not a luxury for the rich, or simply an outcome of development; it's a fundamental human right, and the basis of social, economic and political stability."

Speaking at the opening ceremony, President Ilham Aliyev once again called for equal and universal access to COVID-19 vaccines. President Ilham Aliyev noted that "we are one of the countries which openly speak about such an issue as vaccine nationalism and the unfair distribution of vaccines on a global scale. Some countries already had the third vaccination plan and implement these plans. Some countries still have a very low percentage of vaccinated people. Therefore, we need to address this issue to create equal opportunities."

President Ilham Aliyev also added that "on a global scale, Azerbaijan also took very active steps in its capacity as a current chair of the Cooperation Council of the Turkic-speaking States and the Non-Aligned Movement. Last year we initiated two summits of both institutions in April and May, particularly addressing COVID. At the Summit of Non-Aligned Movement, we launched an initiative to hold the UN General Assembly Special Session on COVID which was supported by an absolute majority of the international community. That Special Session took place on the 3-4 December last year. So, that was our contribution to addressing the global issues. At the same time, we launched the initiative in

United Nations Human Rights Council, concerning equal and universal access to vaccines and fair distribution of vaccines... I would like to say that based on our initiative the database for COVID treatment which has been established with our participation is used by World Health Organization, I mean in the countries of Non-Aligned Movement, which also makes it easier to plan and forecast the support. In the capacity, as a chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, we provided financial and humanitarian support to more than 30 countries and we provided free-of-charge doses of vaccines to several countries. At the same time, we made a voluntary donation to World Health Organization to support poor countries worth ten million US dollars. So, these are the steps which we have undertaken on a global scale, and again, combining of efforts by the international community and, of course, the responsible approach of the leading countries of the world will help to cope with this disease."

President Ilham Aliyev also talked about how Azerbaijan has been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic domestically so far. "We started vaccination on 18 January this year, one of the first countries in the region and so far more than 60 percent of the population above 18 received both doses. In a relatively short period, we managed to create 13 new state hospitals with a total number of beds standing at almost 4,000. In general, 46 state hospitals have been allocated to treat pandemic. Now we don't have a lockdown. The situation is under control. The only restriction is we have to wear masks in the buildings and hopefully we will be able to keep the situation under control. At the same time, we took serious measures to ease the burden of the lockdowns which we had before. We provided a social and economic support package for those who lost jobs, for those who suffered from these

lockdowns. The total cost of the package is 2.9 billion US dollars. This money was financed from our state budget, and we will continue to do it because we need to ease the burden of the people who found themselves in a new situation. We are using mainly two vaccines: Sinovac and Pfizer. As I said, the level of vaccination is high and this is, of course, due to the state policy. At the same time, I would also like to mention that we are very happy to see that our population is very responsible. Vaccination is not forceful. We do not have any anti-vaccination campaigns or even any anti-vaccination trends,” President Ilham Aliyev added.

Another critical topic that President Ilham Aliyev touched upon in his speech at the opening session of the Global Baku Forum was the conflict with Armenia. President Ilham Aliyev reiterated once again that the conflict has been resolved and that it was Azerbaijan itself which resolved the conflict. President Ilham Aliyev highlighted the fact that “Azerbaijan itself implemented UN Security Council resolutions adopted in 1993, which demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, these resolutions remained on paper for 27 years, and probably, would have remained on paper for another 27 years if Azerbaijan did not itself restore its territorial integrity, using chapter 51 of the UN Charter which provides the right for self-defense using the international legal framework,” adding that “not only UN Security Council, but other leading international institutions adopted similar resolutions and decisions concerning the occupation of Azerbaijan’s territories. United Nations General Assembly, OSCE, Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, European Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of

Europe adopted in different times similar decisions and resolutions concerning the conflict which was fully in line with what we have done last year liberating our territories.”

President Ilham Aliyev also highlighted the fact that, up until the 44-Day War, Armenia had been only interested in maintaining the status quo and thus Yerevan was using the negotiations as a way to freeze the conflict permanently. “And if in previous years, Armenian leadership was pretending that they were willing to work within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group to find the resolution of the conflict which provided for liberation of occupied territories, the last couple of years the Armenian leadership was already announcing that they were not going to give any centimeter of occupied territories back. There is enough proof of that. It’s enough only to mention the statement of the current Armenian prime minister which he made on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan two years ago that “Karabakh is Armenia and period”. So, that was the end of negotiations,” President noted, adding that “it was a very contradictory and false statement, because, on the one hand, the Armenian leadership was saying that Karabakh is an independent country, though no country in the world, including Armenia itself, recognized it. On the other hand, they were saying Karabakh is Armenia. So, this contradiction demonstrates the contradictory policy of Armenia which led to this miserable defeat that they suffered last year.”

President Ilham Aliyev also criticized the silence of the international community that gave Armenia green light to continue its occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan without any consequences. “[A] statement was made by the then the defense minister of Armenia, who was openly threatening Azerbaijan saying that Armenia is preparing for

a new war for new territories. An open threat to occupy more territories of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, the international community, including the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs were silent. There was no condemnation. There was not even a message saying that this kind of statement is inappropriate,” President Ilham Aliyev stressed.

President Ilham Aliyev also recounted a series of intentional provocations by the Armenian side that led up to the 44-Day War. “I can mention the so-called inauguration of the so-called self-proclaimed quasi president of the separatist unit in Shusha which was an open insult to the feelings of Azerbaijanis. I can also say about the decision of Armenia to transfer their so-called parliament of the separatists from Khankandi to Shusha, another insult to the feelings of Azerbaijanis. The Armenian leadership should have understood that they are not in a position to insult the feelings of our people. Every patience has a limit. Then, in July 2020, when they launched open military provocation on the border killing our civilians and military servicemen. August 2020, when they sent a sabotage group to commit acts of terror which were neutralized, and of course, September when they started to shell the peaceful cities and villages of Azerbaijan,” the president highlighted, adding that “[t]he Second Karabakh War, which we called a Patriotic War, lasted 44 days and ended in the total defeat of the Armenian army. Armenia was forced to accept our terms and conditions. During the first days of the war, I was saying that we are ready to stop when the Armenian prime minister gives me the date of their withdrawal from occupied territories. It took the Armenian leadership almost 7 thousand losses, and 44 days to understand that they were in an absolute disaster. On the night from 9 to 10 November, Armenia signed a capitulation act and the war ended. We kept

our word. As soon as they gave us the timetable of the withdrawal from remaining occupied territories the war stopped.”

President Ilham Aliyev also described how the three-decade-long occupation has resulted in a massive destruction of those territories. Armenia has almost completely destroyed the infrastructure in the occupied territories, razing most of the cities, towns, and villages to the ground. “What we have seen in the liberated territories is total devastation. Not a single building is left. During the years of occupation, they demolished all historical monuments; 65 mosques out of 67, homes, houses, public buildings et cetera. It is proof of barbarism,” President Ilham Aliyev noted.

In a new reality that emerged after the 44-Day War, the restoration and rebuilding of Karabakh is a top priority for Azerbaijan. “Now we are actively restoring the liberated territories, the large-scale restoration program has been launched and I am sure that in a relatively short period we will be able to return former refugees, more than one million people who suffered from Armenian occupation. What the war and the results of the war showed is that sooner or later justice prevails. You must be committed to your cause, be well prepared, have an international legal framework, and have a high level of motivation of the people. So, all those factors including our military capabilities were the main reason for the resolution of the conflict. Now the conflict is over and as I said, reconstruction has started,” President Ilham Aliyev said.

President Ilham Aliyev also talked about the importance of signing a peace treaty with Armenia. Azerbaijan’s position on this issue has been very clear. The conflict has been resolved and Baku is ready to move forward in its relations with Armenia by signing a comprehensive peace treaty based on the

mutual recognition of the territorial integrity of both countries. However, the problem is that the Armenian government does not seem to be interested in signing a peace treaty with Azerbaijan. On the contrary, recent provocations along the border show that Yerevan is more interested in escalating the violence and destabilizing the situation in the region. President Ilham Aliyev noted that Azerbaijan made several proposals to Armenia to start working on a peace treaty. "Because we don't want to talk about war, we want to talk about peace, we want to talk about the future. Unfortunately, this proposal is still not answered. At the same time, we proposed to start working on the delimitation and demarcation of our state borders with the recognition of the territorial integrity of both countries. Again, it is in line with the international law norms and conforms to normal behavior. This proposal is not addressed either. Azerbaijan demonstrates maximum constructiveness despite all the sufferings of almost 30 years of occupation, despite vandalism and barbarism on the liberated territories. We need to look to the future. We need to make the region safe, predictable, and ready for large-scale cooperation. There are different proposals about that, probably you heard about them. I think that everything will depend on Armenia's position because our position is absolutely clear. Today, once again, I say that we are ready to start peace talks, we are ready to work on a peace agreement, we are ready to turn the page, we are ready to start border delimitation," President Ilham Aliyev underscored.

The final issue that President Ilham Aliyev touched upon in his speech was the launch of the Southern Gas Corridor, the last segment of which – the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) – was commissioned on December 31, 2020. "It is a

historical achievement for Azerbaijan, for our neighbors, for Europe. Because it's an important factor of European energy security. It's an important instrument of diversification and in the case of the Southern Gas Corridor, it is the diversification of not only the routes but also of sources. A new volume of natural gas from large gas deposits of Azerbaijan is already on the European market. From 1 January this year until 31 October - in 10 months Azerbaijan exported through these routes more than 14 billion cubic meters of natural gas to 5 countries: Turkey, Georgia, Italy, Greece and Bulgaria. Almost half of this volume was consumed by consumers in the European Union. In those countries where Azerbaijan's gas is delivered, there is no gas crisis, there is no price crisis, and there is no freezing. So, this demonstrates that the Southern Gas Corridor is a project of energy security of Europe. Azerbaijan as a responsible country, as a producer and exporter now not only of oil but of natural gas, will play in the future very important role in the energy security issues," President Ilham Aliyev noted.

Addressing a panel discussion, at the 8th Global Baku Forum, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov outlined major tasks facing Azerbaijan in the near future, including the official position of the government on the current and future developments in the region and Azerbaijan's efforts to have peace and prosperity achieved and maintained in the region in collaboration with the key players. "The main task facing Azerbaijan today is the restoration of the formerly occupied territories and their reconstruction, ensuring a dignified and safe return of the people living in those territories for many years," Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov said. On the pace of the reconstruction in Karabakh, Minister Jeyhun Bayramov underlined the enormous

work done by the government in this regard. “We were talking with participants in the humanitarian forum in Baku today. They are surprised that such an amount of work has been done in such a short time. Master plans have been developed for big towns as well as plans for the restoration of infrastructure and creation of new jobs. The return of IDPs is expected in several months. Azerbaijan is also clearing the liberated areas of landmines,” the minister told reporters after the panel discussions. Jeyhun Bayramov also called on Armenia not to miss the historic chance of turning a new page in the development of the South Caucasus after the 44-Day War and heed to Azerbaijan’s calls for normalization of relations. “As a country that has won the war, Azerbaijan has taken unilateral positive steps after the end of the war, showing its goodwill,” the minister added. As positive steps taken by Azerbaijan since the end of the war Jeyhun Bayramov pointed out to the entry of humanitarian aid into Azerbaijan, the supply of gas from Russia to Armenia through the gas transport system of Azerbaijan in the winter of 2020, and the use of roads of Azerbaijan by Armenia. “All these steps are examples showing that the conflict is left behind and Azerbaijan is looking at the future. As President Ilham Aliyev said at the forum today, we have not seen steps in response yet, but we think that the sooner Armenia understands this, the better it will be for Armenia itself,” the minister underscored. Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov also noted Azerbaijan’s readiness to meet with Armenia to normalize relations. “Each of us is witnessing historic days. In a few days, we will celebrate the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the restoration of our territorial integrity, and our great victory, which is the biggest challenge in the history of our country’s independence,” the minister added.

With the victory, the people of Azerbaijan have shown that they are a very proud and great nation, the minister said, adding that Azerbaijan has withstood the occupation for almost three decades. “Over this period, Azerbaijan has done its best to resolve the conflict diplomatically. Azerbaijan has never shied away from negotiations. We have never been against negotiations. This was the case before the war. Azerbaijan has responded to all the calls of the international community. We declared our openness to negotiations after the war. Azerbaijan's position was fair. We demanded the restoration of international law and historical justice,” Minister of Foreign Affairs noted.

Jeyhun Bayramov also pointed out that Armenia has preferred aggression and refused to abide by UN resolutions. “The opposite side chose the path of aggression and military provocations against our people and state due to the slow pace of this political process and its artificial extension. Azerbaijan's patience ran thin and it launched counter-offensive operations in full compliance with the constitution of our country and the UN Charter, in compliance with all norms of international law. Our lands were liberated following the 44-Day War and the statements were signed to this effect. Azerbaijan has restored its international borders, that is, 398km-long state border with Armenia, as well as the 130km-long state border with Iran,” the minister said

Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov also noted that relations with Armenia would normalize once the borders were demarcated. “The victory in the Patriotic War opened up horizons of a new stage of cooperation in the region. I believe that after the demarcation of the internationally-recognized borders, relations with Armenia will be normalized,” the minister underscored, adding that the

normalized relations between Baku and Yerevan would benefit not only the two states, but also the neighboring countries.

Commenting on the relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov emphasized that Azerbaijan advocates for normal relations with all nations. “For many years, one of the main priorities of Azerbaijan's foreign policy has been to establish and develop high-level friendly relations with all countries, including neighboring nations. Over the years, ties between Iran and Azerbaijan have developed in this direction. Numerous joint projects have been implemented between the two countries over the recent years,” Jeyhun Bayramov noted.

Jeyhun Bayramov pointed out that some issues caused discontent in relations between the two states a few months ago and they were mainly due to the illegal entry of vehicles from Iran into the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan despite Azerbaijan's protest. “Azerbaijan has always been in favor of building and resolving all issues on the basis of dialogue, mutual respect, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. I think that work in this direction will continue,” the minister underlined.

VI. Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkmenistan agree on a gas swap deal

Baku, Tehran, and Ashgabat have reached an agreement on a natural gas swap deal for up to 2 billion cubic meters per year. According to Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji, under the deal, Iran will acquire natural gas from Turkmenistan and transfer an equivalent amount to Azerbaijan at the Astara border. Gas swap operations will begin in late December. “Turkmenistan will sell 5-6 million cubic meters of gas per day to Azerbaijan

under the trilateral agreement,” Javad Owji was quoted saying.

The agreement was finalized at the sidelines of the 15th Summit Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), hosted by Turkmenistan in Ashgabat. On November 28, President Ilham Aliyev met with Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi at the sidelines of the 15th Summit Meeting of ECO. During the meeting, both sides praised the high level of bilateral relations between the two countries. It was noted that the geopolitical reality in the region has drastically transformed after the historic victory of Azerbaijan in the 44-Day War. Commenting on the Iranian position over the Karabakh issue, President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi noted that “[t]he position of all officials in Iran's state bodies, starting from the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution, was that the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan should not be compromised, and the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan should be ensured.” During the meeting, the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Iran within the North-South and Zangazur transportation corridor was also discussed. It was pointed out that the realization and the subsequent use of this corridor by Iran would benefit Tehran as well. The presidents also discussed issues related to the establishment of an energy hub between the two countries and between Azerbaijan, Russia, and Iran.

Within the framework of the meeting between the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Iran, the agreement “defining the terms of transit of natural gas through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran” was signed. Commenting on the gas agreement, President Ilham Aliyev underscored that “[i]t is a historic document. It shows again how deep Iran-Azerbaijan relations are. Azerbaijan will receive Turkmenistan's gas via Iran. This is an excellent basis for trilateral cooperation and shows our

intentions. The signed document is of great significance in terms of economy and energy security.” President Ilham Aliyev also noted that relations with Iran are of great importance for Azerbaijan. “Our peoples are brotherly peoples. We have lived together for centuries. Our relations are also quite broad. Our peoples share a common history and culture. This is excellent ground. We are writing the modern history of bilateral relations on this basis,” President Ilham Aliyev said. President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi also noted that “[t]he gas agreement signed today between Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkmenistan will serve the development of relations between our countries, the relations between two and three countries. It is necessary to take serious and numerous steps in this area, and thanks to the two countries' will, the relations between us, including cooperation in the economic, trade, transit and cultural spheres, should aim to expand the ties between the two countries.”

VII. President Ilham Aliyev attends the 8th Summit of the Organization of Turkic States

The Eighth Summit of the Organization of Turkic States, formerly called the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council), entitled “Green Technologies and Smart Cities in the Digital Age”, was held on an island southeast of Istanbul in Turkey on November 12. It was hosted by President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart K. Tokayev, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban, as an observer state, attended the summit. President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan also attended the summit on behalf of Turkmenistan for the first time as an

observer member. During the Summit, the name of the organization was officially changed to the Organization of Turkic States and the “Vision Document” for the next two decades was adopted.

At the Summit, President Ilham Aliyev was awarded the “Supreme Order of Turkic World,” the first-ever order symbolizing the unity of the Turkic-speaking states. Upon a decision signed by the leaders of Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan presented the award to President Ilham Aliyev. “In recognition of the historic victory that ensured the liberation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the restoration of its territorial integrity under the leadership of His Excellency Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Commander-in-Chief, which significantly contributed to the Turkic unity and paved the way to achieving enduring peace and stability in the region, the Council of Heads of State, upon the proposal of the President of the Republic of Turkey, His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan, hereby decided to award with great honor His Excellency Ilham Aliyev with the “Supreme Order of Turkic World,” the decision read. Presenting the Supreme Order to the President of Azerbaijan, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that the liberation of the territories from Armenia’s occupation last year was of great importance for the entire Turkic world, adding that “the re-establishment of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity has expanded the unity and equality of the Turkic world” and “paved the way for lasting peace, stability, and cooperation in the region.”

Speaking at the Summit, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized Turkey’s vital support in the 44-Day War. “[I]t is the backing and moral support of my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan from the first hours to the last minutes of the war

that gave us additional strength. We felt this support, we listened to his words and felt even stronger. The esteemed President said that Azerbaijan was not alone in this war, that Turkey stood by Azerbaijan and would always stand by it, and this gave us extra strength. This kept certain forces, those patronizing Armenia, out of this war and allowed us the opportunity to carry out this glorious mission.”

President Ilham Aliyev also highlighted the role of Turkey in the rebuilding of Karabakh after liberation. “Today, many Turkish companies are working on key infrastructure projects for us – bridges, tunnels, roads, railways, power plants, and airports. They are heavily involved in all these activities. Together with Azerbaijani companies, 12 Turkish companies participated in the construction of the recently opened Fuzuli Airport, which we inaugurated together with Mr. President recently. I think this is why we were able to build it in a record time – in a matter of eight months. At present, Turkish companies are also involved in the construction of Zangilan Airport and will participate in our other projects,” President Ilham Aliyev noted.

President Ilham Aliyev also thanked Shavkat Mirziyoyev for funding a construction of a large school in Fuzuli. President Ilham Aliyev noted that the school project funded by Uzbekistan on the initiative of Shavkat Mirziyoyev is “yet another act of solidarity, friendship and brotherhood, and the people of Azerbaijan appreciate it very much.”

Touching upon the issue of the Zangazur corridor, President Ilham Aliyev noted that “the opening of the Zangazur corridor in terms of transportation will usher new opportunities for the whole region... The Zangazur corridor is a project that can unite the Turkic world, Europe and our neighbors, and active work is currently underway to realize this project,”

pointing out once again that “in 1920, the Soviet government disrupted the geographical connection of the Turkic world by tearing Zangazur from Azerbaijan and handing it over to Armenia, and anyone can see this by looking at the map. We are restoring this geography now. With the implementation of transportation and communication projects, we are redrawing this geography, and I do hope that we will succeed to the end.”

President Ilham Aliyev also noted that during its two-year presidency, Azerbaijan made great efforts to unite the Turkic world. Many events were held in this period. I think we are now stepping into the future in a more cohesive and united manner. Today's summit has a great historic significance. First of all, because we are turning our Council into an organization, and this organization has a great future. Because this organization is based on natural allies, and this unity is dictated by history, culture, our customs and traditions,” adding that “I am confident that the Organization of Turkic States will continue to grow in significance not only for our countries and peoples, but for the world. Because our cooperation is genuine, we are all brothers, we call each other brothers, we all develop our countries on traditional values. The unity and brotherhood between our peoples are strengthening day by day, we cover a great geography today, we have great economic, political and military power within this geography. Our countries have ample natural resources, modern infrastructure and transportation routes. Turkey is a country with military, economic and industrial power. Suffice it to say that Turkey is the second most powerful country in NATO and has repeatedly shown this in securing its interests and peace in the world. Therefore, I am very hopeful that our organization will meet all its objectives.”

VIII. Azerbaijan and BP discuss green energy agenda in Karabakh

On November 11, President Ilham Aliyev met with bp's chief executive Bernard Looney in Baku. President Ilham Aliyev and Mr. Looney discussed joint projects that were successful in delivering energy resources from the Caspian basin to European markets. President Ilham Aliyev credited Bernard Looney for joint success on the Southern Gas Corridor and reiterated that the project was a result of the joint efforts of Azerbaijan and bp. Bernard Looney said that bp has the strongest partnership in the world with Azerbaijan, including SOCAR. For its part, Azerbaijan is the strongest partner of bp. It was noted that Azerbaijan has a rich history and bright future of cooperation with bp based on mutual trust. At the same time, it was noted that bp's interest in renewable energy is in line with Azerbaijan's energy strategy. The sides discussed the expansion of cooperation in this area. President Ilham Aliyev and Mr. Looney also discussed cooperation in the renewable energy sector in the Karabakh region in order to transform the area into a green energy zone.

IX. Azerbaijan pledges to reduce carbon emissions by 2050

Baku has undertaken to reduce carbon emissions by the year 2050. Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mukhtar Babayev made an announcement to this effect at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), held in Glasgow on October 31-November 12. At the conference, Baku confirmed its commitment to global efforts to mitigate climate change. In 2016, Azerbaijan ratified the Paris agreement and committed itself to voluntarily lowering greenhouse gases by 35% by 2030, which is

one of the most ambitious goals in the region. "In Glasgow, Azerbaijan announced new intentions within the framework of the Paris Agreement on climate change – namely, to lower by 2050 the level of emissions by 40% compared to the year 1990 with the condition of ensuring access to modern technologies and support by relevant mechanisms of the convention and also financial institutions," Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mukhtar Babayev said in an interview.

Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mukhtar Babayev also said that the fact that lands in Karabakh region had been under Armenian control for nearly three decades had been a serious barrier for Azerbaijan in achieving voluntary goals. "While the world is fighting consequences of climate change and joining efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions... the Armenian occupying regime has for dozens of years destroyed the unique ecosystem on 20% of Azerbaijani territory," the minister noted, pointed out that Armenians had burned and cut down forests in tens of thousands of hectares in lands that Azerbaijan liberated as a result of the 44-Day War. The minister said that to revive the liberated lands Baku had passed several important resolutions that became critical to the announcement of those lands a "zero net emission" zone by 2050. "A zone of green energy, green agriculture, green transport, smart town and smart village - all these plans, along with the restoration of forests on tens of thousands of hectares, will make a fair share of contribution to common efforts to fight consequences of climate change both at regional and global levels," the minister said.

ADDENDUM I**Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation**

Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and
the President of the Russian Federation

26 November 2021

We, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I. H. Aliyev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia N. V. Pashinyan and President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin, met in Sochi on 26 November 2021 and discussed the implementation of the statement dated 9 November 2020 on a complete ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as well as the statement dated 11 January 2021 on the unblocking of all economic and transport communications in the region.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to the further consistent implementation and strict adherence to all provisions of the statements of 9 November 2020 and 11 January 2021 in the interests of stability, security and economic development of the South Caucasus. We have agreed to intensify the joint efforts towards the earliest possible solution of the remaining tasks arising from the statements dated 9 November 2020 and 11 January 2021.

We have acknowledged the important contribution of Russia's peacekeeping contingent to the stabilization of the situation and ensuring security in the region.

We have agreed to take steps to increase the level of stability and security on the Azerbaijan-Armenia border and to work towards the creation of a bilateral Commission on the delimitation of the state border between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia with its subsequent demarcation with the consultative assistance of the Russian Federation at the request of the parties.

We appreciate the activities of the Trilateral Working Group established in accordance with the statement of 11 January 2021 under the joint chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation to unblock all economic and transport communications in the region. We have emphasized the need to launch, as soon as possible, specific projects in order to unlock the economic potential of the region.

The Russian Federation will continue to provide all necessary assistance in the interests of normalizing the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, creating an atmosphere of trust between the Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples, as well as building good-neighborly relations in the region.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I. H. Aliyev

Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia N. V. Pashinyan

President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin