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Conseil des droits de l'homme

Vingt-huitième session

Point 4 de l'ordre du jour

Situations relatives aux droits de l'homme qui requièrent l'attention du Conseil

Lettre datée du 16 mars 2015, adressée au Président du Conseil des droits de l'homme par le Représentant permanent de la République d'Arménie auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève

J'ai l'honneur de transmettre ci-joint le communiqué de presse de la Mission permanente de la République d'Arménie sur la commémoration du vingt-septième anniversaire du massacre sans merci de la population arménienne de Soumgaït (Azerbaïdjan) (voir annexe).

Je vous saurais gré de bien vouloir faire distribuer le texte de la présente lettre et de son annexe* en tant que document de la vingt-huitième session du Conseil des droits de l'homme, au titre du point 4 de l'ordre du jour.

L'Ambassadeur et Représentant permanent,
(Signé) Charles **Aznavour**

* Distribuée telle qu'elle a été reçue, dans la langue originale seulement.

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Annexe

[Anglais seulement]

Twenty-seventh anniversary of the Sumgait pogroms

In 1988 the people of Nagorno Karabakh, respecting all the existing legal norms and employing exclusively popular means to express their will, raised their voice in defense of their rights and freedom.

Every effort to discuss the dispute in a civilized fashion was followed by an increase of violence, massive and widespread disregard of the Armenian population's rights, economic blockade, etc. Hundreds of kilometres from the Nagorno Karabakh, massacres and mass murders of Armenians were organized in Azerbaijani cities - Sumgait, Baku, Kirovabad, Shamkhor, and later throughout Azerbaijan.

Tragic events in the Azerbaijani town of Sumgait were preceded by a wave of anti-Armenian demonstrations and rallies throughout Azerbaijan in February 1988. Pogroms, beatings, and massacres of Armenians in Sumgait, situated a half an hour from Baku, was carried out at daytime.

The peak of crimes committed by the Azerbaijani authorities fell on February 27-29. Almost the entire town became an arena for unhampered pogroms of the Armenian population. The pogrom-makers burst into the apartments of Armenians, having prepared lists of Armenian inhabitants in their hands. They were armed with metal switches (pieces of armature) and stones. Axes, knives, bottles and fuel cans were used as well. According to many eyewitnesses, around 50-80 people participated in the raid of one apartment alone. Similar crowds committed outrages in the streets. The significant part of numbers killed were burnt alive after suffering beatings, tortures, and rapes. Hundreds of innocent people received injuries of different grades and became disabled. There were over two hundred smashed apartments, numerous burnt and broken cars, dozens of destroyed workshops, shops and kiosks. The result of the of the pogroms were thousands of refugees.

The tragic events of Sumgait in late February of 1998, never received adequate political evaluation, and its organizers and the main executors not only escaped punishment, but their names remain unknown to the world. However, documents, testimonies and other facts allow one to draw a well-defined conclusion: the pogroms were masterminded and carried out on a high state level, and its main organizers and executors were the Soviet Azerbaijani leadership of the time and were connected to various nationalistic pro-Turkish circles. This was expressed in the Moscow magazine "Znamya" (No 6, 1989) by informed public figure George Soros, who agreed to the fact that the first Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan were inspired by the local mafia led by the president of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev.

An Azerbaijani witness, S. Guliyev, testified to the reactions of authorities: "Near the windows of a militia point a man was beaten. The militia gave the town to be torn to pieces. The militia was not in town. I didn't see it".

From the report of the Moscow Human Rights Center of the "Memorial" Association:

"On February 27-29, 1988, the pogroms of the Armenians occurred in Sumgait, situated on the territory of Azerbaijan near the city of Baku, which were accompanied by mass violence, robberies, and massacres, which led to the flow of refugees from Sumgait to Stepanakert and Armenia. No timely investigation of the circumstances of pogroms,

determination and punishment of the guilty ones were carried out, which led to the escalation of the conflict”.

A. Sakharov, who was shocked by the events in Sumgait, wrote: “No half measures, no talks about friendship of peoples can calm down the people. If someone doubted this before Sumgait, then after this tragedy no one has the moral right to insist on maintaining NKAO under the territorial jurisdiction of Azerbaijan”.
