



***AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ BAŞ KONSULLUĞU***  
***CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN***

**The Massacre of Khojaly: Armenia's War Crime**

**February 26, 2008**

Sixteen years ago on this date the people of Azerbaijan witnessed what the Human Rights Watch later called the largest massacre to date in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenian soldiers backed by Russia's 366th motorized infantry regiment attacked the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly brutally murdering over 600 civilians, including women and children. Hundreds more were wounded; some are still missing.

As the Western media documented details of the gruesome massacre such as scalping and other forms of mutilation, the Armenian soldiers institutionalized the pattern of extermination and ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani civilian population.

That pattern has since become an integral part of the Armenian policy in the region. Serzh Sarkisian, the Armenian President-Elect as of last week, stated: before Khojali, the Azerbaijanis thought that they were joking with us, they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We were able to break that [stereotype]. (Thomas De Waal. Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War, NYU Press, 2004).

The continuous Armenian occupation of 20% of Azerbaijan's internationally-recognized territory and the lingering displacement of a million Azerbaijani civilians illustrates both the vision and the character of Armenia's current leaders.

Recognition of the Khojaly massacre as a crime against humanity is a debt owed to the memory of those perished and a necessity for building long-term peace for the Azerbaijanis and Armenians alike.

The Azerbaijanis in Southern California joined millions of their compatriots around the world in remembering the victims of Khojaly. On February 25, the Azerbaijani students and Amnesty International co-hosted a memorial event at the California State University - San Bernardino.

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