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A nationwide march has been held in Baku to commemorate the 27th anniversary of Khojaly genocide, one of the bloodiest crimes in the history of mankind. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and family members attended the march.

The nationwide march, which began from the Azadlyg Square in Khatai district, involves ten thousands of people. They gathered to pay tribute to victims of Khojaly tragedy and draw the world community's attention to this crime against humanity, which was committed by the Armenian fascists.

With President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva in the front row, the marchers started moving in the direction of the Khojaly memorial in Khatai district.

Thousands of young people gathered along the avenues and streets that the marchers are moving. They hold portraits of innocent victims of the bloody event, slaughtered children, women and elders, photos depicting abominable scenes of slaughter, placards demanding to bring to account and punish perpetrators of the tragedy and to recognize this genocide at an international level, as well as placards with names and surnames of victims. "The world must recognize Khojaly genocide", "Justice for Khojaly", "Do not forget Khojaly", "No to Armenian fascism", "Khojaly genocide -27" and other slogans are displayed on large monitors along the streets, and on placards on building walls and balconies.

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A ceremonial guard of honor was lined up around the memorial.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev put a wreath at the memorial and paid tribute to Khojaly victims.

First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva, Prime Minister Novruz Mammadov, Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov, Vice-President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Leyla Aliyeva, Arzu Aliyeva laid flowers at the monument.

State and government officials, members of the Milli Majlis, ministers, heads of committees and companies, representatives of the diplomatic corps, heads of religious confessions, as well as Khojaly genocide survivors also placed flowers at the memorial.

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A Russian delegation also attended the nationwide march.

President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva met with the Russian delegation and talked to them.

President Ilham Aliyev then was interviewed by the Russian Rossiya-24 TV channel.

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The name of Khojaly, which was wiped off the face of the earth in just one night, is now mentioned along with Katyn, Lidice and Songmy.

This nationwide march is a climax of large-scale work carried out by Azerbaijan in order to make the truth about Khojaly genocide known to the world and convince the international community that if the perpetrators of this genocide remain unpunished, this may lead to a repetition of such tragedies in any place across the globe. The march showed the Azerbaijani people's unity, their respect for martyrs as well as their eagerness to do their utmost to liberate the occupied territories and restore the country's territorial integrity.

The atrocity committed by Armenians in the town of Khojaly in Nagorno-Karabakh on the night of 25-26 February 1992 went down in the history of Azerbaijan as a bloody page. That night helped by the Soviet Union's Khankandi-based 366th motor rifle regiment, the Armenian armed forces massacred innocent people in this ancient Azerbaijani town.

The statistics of Khojaly genocide are as follows: of 3,000 people who were in the town at the moment of the attack 613 were killed, including 106 women, 63 children and 70 elders; 487 people were severely wounded, including 76 children; 1,275 people were captured and subjected to unprecedented torture; the fate of 197 people still remains unknown. Eight families were totally annihilated. All these people were slaughtered, tortured and disabled solely because of their ethnic background, only for being Azerbaijanis.

This genocidal act by the Armenians was deliberately planned and its only objective was to partially or completely wipe out civilians because of their nationality. These actions are defined as genocide under international law, which must be recognized by the world community.

The real essence of this genocide, which was committed in front of the eyes of the world, was uncovered only after national leader Heydar Aliyev's coming to political power. On initiative of the national leader Khojaly genocide was given a political and legal assessment, and February 26 was declared "Day of Khojaly Genocide". Launched by Vice-President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Leyla Aliyeva in 2008, "Justice for Khojaly" international campaign boosted the awareness-raising efforts even more. The campaign has contributed to increasing the international community's awareness of the truth about this genocide, exposing the Armenian nationalists who resort to any violence, including the murder of children, in order to reach their ridiculous and heinous plans. As a result of systematic work, what happened in Khojaly was recognized as a genocidal act by the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as the parliaments of Mexico, Pakistan, Czech Republic, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Honduras, Sudan, Guatemala and Djibouti. The parliaments of Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Jordan, Slovenia and Scotland, as well as executive and legislative bodies of 22 American states recognized Khojaly events as a massacre.

As in previous years the Heydar Aliyev Foundation continued to support the organization of Khojaly commemorative events across the world. This included commemorative rallies in Turkey, USA, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Georgia and the Netherlands, commemorative events, conferences, exhibitions and contests in a number of other countries.

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