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To: Dr Walter Schwimmer -
President of Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly

To: Dr. Mary Robinson -
High Commissioner of UN on Human Rights in Geneva- Switzerland

Your Excellency

It is no longer a hidden fact that rights of over 30 million Southern Azerbaijanis in Islamic Republic of Iran are grossly violated. This shameful reality of violation of rights of our compatriots, to the extent that they are even deprived of education in their own mother tongue, is in sharp contrast with European democracy, UN conventions and international consensus. We have been involved in a campaign of disclosing institutionalised racist policies of Islamic Republic of Iran, against Southern Azerbaijanis and her assimilation tactics for the past years. The bitter reality is, this brutal policy of cultural genocide is taking place by a very regime, that is an advocate of dialogue of civilisations. In order to eradicate this injustice imposed upon us, our peace-loving nation has intensified its just struggle in recent years, by democratic means.

Hoping to highlight the plight of our nation we wrote a letter to Secretary General of the United Nation, Mr. Kofi Anan on 11.02.2000 (Reference No. 098/2000) and attached a fifteen page explanatory document in support of our allegations. We would like to attach another copy of those documents, plus a map of Islamic Republic of Iran with the areas where Azerbaijani Turks live and a statistical table derived from Islamic Republic of Iran's sources in 1997. Council of Europe's representative's officials visits to Tehran in July encouraged us to open another avenue to campaign for legitimate rights of our nation. We are certain that this will not be your last envoy in Tehran, therefore we have a duty to provide you with facts and documents about Azerbaijanis living in Islamic republic of Iran and plead for your intervention to prevent a major catastrophe from happening.

Your Excellency,

We are writing to urge you upon assisting us in freeing our compatriots, whom have been detained by Iranian Intelligent officers, in recent weeks and inform you of enormous pressure exerted on us by Iranian regime. Our nation has risen up to restore their long overdue legitimate rights. Every year a huge mass of our compatriots gathers in Babek Castle on the occasion of his Birthday. Babek national hero of Azerbaijanis has fought an honorable fight against Arab invaders 1200 years ago, to rid his people of occupational forces.

In order to discourage people from peaceful march towards the Babek castle on 4 and 5th of July of this year, Iranian regime stepped up its antidemocratic actions by arresting hundreds of organisers and participants. Despite all these efforts hundreds of thousands of our compatriots took part in the march to voice their dissatisfaction with the current situation once again. What we most fear is detention of prominent Azerbaijanis who participated in the march and subjecting them to various known inhuman methods for discouraging them from participating in this yearly event. Please be ware that today's tragedies if ignored, can be prelude to tomorrow's massacres. Based on the information we have received so far in order to halt this movement, Iranian Regime has taken following desperate actions:



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1. On the first of July scores of people were arrested in Tebriz, Urmiya, Qezvin and Zenjan. We have the name of some of these detainees who are still in prison. **Elyas Yekani, Ashiq Jebrayil and Mahammad Bastanichi** were released on bail while **Adigozel Eghdam** is still in jail. Those released on bail are expecting long jail and heavy fines in court if international communities do not intervene.

2. Some 79 Southern Azerbaijani Rights activists of Urmiya, Zenjan, Tebriz, Erdebil and Tehran have been ordered to report themselves to Iranian Intelligence offices and forced to a written commitment not to attend the march. (**Hasan Ark, Yusif Dasran, Hasan Azerbaijan, Manuchehr Azizi, Hamid Shafayi, Mahammad Reza Nasiriyani, Ali Mahmudi, Ahmad Heydaroghlu, ve ...**)

3. All transportation companies in Southern Azerbaijan were ordered not to take passengers to the castle by threatening non-obedient companies with prosecution. Iranian regime by taking these preventive measures was hoping to lower the number of participants to 30-40 thousands, but to their disappointment up to a million people marched to the Babek Castle and security forces had no option but to withdraw from the scene.

4. All vehicles that were heading towards the castle stopped, searched, their registration numbers were taken, and passengers were filmed by numerous checkpoints set up by security forces.

5. After the events fifteen participants including three ladies were arrested. Later on three were released, 5 were handed over to revolutionary court, 7 were taken to an unknown location (**Zohreh Vafayi, Mahmud Yekanli, Jamshid Azari, Mahni Zenjanli and...**)

6. During the days of Babek, Northern Azerbaijani (Azerbaijan Republic) tourists were mistreated and passports of some of them were confiscated on suspicion of attending the march. Two ladies and three gentlemen have lodged a complaint about behaviour of Islamic Republic of Iran's officials to CPWAR.

7. Head of Iranian revolutionary court in Tebriz known as Mahmudi extraordinarily admitted the mass participation of people in the march and used scare-mongering tactics by threatening participants of next years to dire consequences of their action. He branded the participants Panturkist that can carry the death penalty if convicted in court of law.

8. One month after the big march, Iranian Secret Police is continuing to arrest those whom have been spotted in the scores of films they have taken of the event. Some Azerbaijani Cultural Centers which have previously managed to obtain license for their activities were now closed without any explanation. (Goverchin Cultural Centre in Erdebil)

We believe international community and council of Europe have moral and legal obligations to prevent a catastrophe from happening. Our only defence is international public opinion.

May we thank you for your time and attention.

The World Azerbaijanis Rights Defence Comitee
Boyuk Rasuloghlu

Cc: To Dear friend Mr. Drewery Dyke - Amnesty International London