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EU Parliamentary Assembly
His Excellency Walter Schwimmer
Copy
UN Human Rights Commissioner -Geneva
His Excellency Sergio Vieira de Mello

May we refer you to our letter of 221/2002 dated 18/08/2002 in which we have revealed some hard facts about Southern Azerbaijan -which is currently part of Islamic Republic of Iran- and its approximately 30 million inhabitants. We are still deprived of our very basic human right such as education in mother tongue. We, Southern Azerbaijanis, are continuing our just struggle to revive our rights as a nation by using democratic means and international conventions. One of the most important actions of this democratic movement is celebration of birthday of Babek, our national hero during the first weekend of July each year. (Thursday 3 and Friday 4th in Iranian calendar) This peaceful event attracts hundreds of thousands of Southern Azerbaijanis to Babek castle and hills nearby each year.

As you are aware, in order to prevent people from using their democratic right to peaceful gathering in a historic castle in countryside, Iranian regime resorted to repressive measures Last year. This year is no exception and they have started exerting enormous pressure on well-known activists by summoning them to court without any reason. Miss Parisa Babayifar(Also known as Mahni Khanim Zenjanli) a famous poet and correspondent is one of them. Mr. Abbas Lesani of Ardebil has been arrested and interrogated by intelligent officers numerously with no reason given. Also his family was harassed and his house was searched without a search warrant. Mr. Parviz YekaniZare, Mr. Masoud Varmazyar (Known as Haray), Mr. Mahmoud Fazli and Mr. Ebrahim Jafarzade are among those who were summoned to court. Mr Davoudi Manager of Ziraet Bank in Ardebil was poisoned to death by regime's Intelligent Officers simply because he was seen in Babek castle last year. Mr. Ali Suleimani was handed down 5 years jail on charges of taking part in last year's event. Iranian law enforcement officers are arresting popular activists and torturing them into co-operation and denouncing other Azerbaijani rights activists. Although this has proved to be a fruitless efforts in previous attempts but they are still trying to employ the old method of "divide and rule". In order to wipe this day out of our memories, Iranian regime is applying antidemocratic methods and using antihuman measures of pressurising intellectuals, writers, cultural groups and young population of Southern Azerbaijan to refrain from calling Babek a national hero. Yet the regime is trying to

deceive outside world by proposing dialogue of civilisations

We are grateful that you have raised the question of rights of Southern Azerbaijanis in your meetings with Iranian government officials as you have mentioned in your response letter of 23 October 2002. Unfortunately it has had quite the reverse affect and Iranian regime stepped up pressure on our nation.

You are most certainly aware of our nation's contribution towards world civilisation. It is a pity that such a civilisation is under barbaric attack by Persian chauvinism. Illegal policy of forcible assimilation of our nation is still being perused by this chauvinist regime. We believe the main obstacles of having a democratic and secular regime in Iran is the denial of rights of other nations. History tells us that one can only preserve the current status quo by dictatorship.

Her Excellency, Mary Robinsona

We urge you as a representative of civilised world to assist us and help our nation to restore our rights.

We cry for help from international community to condemn the planned repression against our nation in Babek castle in coming weeks and prevent a catastrophe from happening.

World Azerbaijanis' Rights Defence Committee

Chairman

Boyuk Resuloglu