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	Say (No.): 508/ 2008 İlaygün (Date): 19 Sept 2008
<p>The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva Please circulate this to Working Group on arbitrary detention; it is also of relevance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges• Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression• Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance• The Independent Expert on Minority Issues, and <p>CC Mr Dyke and Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London Also: Human Rights Watch and Human Rights Server</p>	

Dear sir/madam,

COMMUNICATION 1 CAMPAIGNING FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF MR. ELIRZA SERRAFI

Please find enclosed Communication 1 for safeguarding human rights of Mr. Elirza Serrafi, a Southern Azerbaijani journalist and activist, who has been deprived of his liberty by Iranian authorities. Included is the following:

- Table 1** The Communication form for the Working Group on arbitrary detention, using confirmed and published information;
- Table 2** Presents a translation of the report by ASMEK on the raid of Iranian authorities to his house;
- Table 3** The Translation of Mr. Serrafi's CV reflecting the scale of his tireless activities to overcome massive pressures exerted against Southern Azerbaijanis by Iranian authorities;
- Table 4** Reproduces a Communiqué compiled by Mr. Serrafi and his fellows for the preservation of our mother language, the Azerbaijani Turkic language (see our report Ref: 444/2007 on 20 February 2007).

Mr. Serrafi is a well-respected scholar, a veteran of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan, a towering vanguard of the mother language of Azerbaijan but today a victim of arbitrary acts of the Iranian authorities ended up as a prisoner of conscience in the Iranian dungeon known as the notorious Evin prison. This relentless scholar has never violated any law but the reason for his ongoing ordeal is evident from the licence by Iranian authorities authorising their agents for arbitrary acts in the following terms (see Table 2):

“for confrontation with pan-Turkist and pro-identity individuals, permission has been granted to make forced entries, arrest and eliminate physical obstacles.”

We say no more, as the the Iranian authorities have told everything above. Mr. Serrafi was one of 19 individuals arrested while attending a traditional gathering related to Ramadan on 10 September, nine of whom were summarily detained. We aim to provide you a full report on the backdrop of the Iranian onslaught to suppress the protests to education in the alien Farsi language in the commencement of the academic year in Iran on 21 September 2008.

We would like to stress that in compiling this Communication, we have not consulted with Mr. Serrafi, his family or his lawyer. This statement is necessary to manage the risk of reprisal by the Iranian authorities.

Mr. Serrafi is only one of Southern Azerbaijani activists suffering from an ongoing wave of repression. The reinstatement of his human rights is only possible through your campaign. Thank you in advance for your care.

Yours faithfully,
Mr. Eli Tashkent



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The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of World Azerbaijanis



Table 1 The COMMUNICATION FOR CASE OF MR. Elirza Serrafi



**Office of the High
Commissioner for Human Rights**



Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

(Article 9, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

VII. Model questionnaire to be completed by persons alleging arbitrary arrest or detention

I. Identity of the person arrested or detained

1. Family name:
Serrafi (صرافى)
2. First name:
Elirza (عليرضا)
3. Sex:
Male
4. Birth date or age (at the time of detention):
7 October 1954
5. Nationality/Nationalities:
Southern Azerbaijani national; a citizen of the Islamic Republic of Iran
6. (a) Identity document (if any):
not available
(b) Issued by:
Being from the Southern Azerbaijani city of Urmu, the provincial capital city of West Azerbaijan, the General Registry Office in Urmu would be responsible for issuing his birth certificate
(c) On (date):
The data not available
(d) No.:
The data not available
7. Profession and/or activity (if believed to be relevant to the arrest/detention):
Civil engineer, journalist, writer and cultural activist
8. Address of usual residence:
He is normally resident in Tehran and Tebriz.

II. Arrest

1. Date of arrest:
10 September 2008 in the afternoon around the sunset time.



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2. Place of arrest:

The victim was arrested when attending a traditional gathering in the Seyyad (known as Ovchu) Mehemmedian, in Navvab Street, Tehran. According to the ASMEK report (http://www.savalansesi.com/2008/09/blog-post_17.html) there were 19 victims arrested during a sudden raid to the house attending the traditional gathering, which was related to breaking fast in the month of Ramadan and the victims included the host.

3. Forces who carried out the arrest or are believed to have carried it out:

The 19 victims were arrested by security agents of the Islamic republic of Iran. An unconfirmed report by a person who was going to attend the gathering has stated that when he arrived near the house, he felt that the surrounding was suspicious and there were two bus loads of individuals quite active. He therefore elected not to go to the gathering but diverted to another road and made a telephone call to the house but there was no response. This signified to him that the house was under raid.

4. Did they show a warrant or other decision by a public authority?

One of the released victims has been specific that no warrant was shown. The source of this information is Mr. Elirza Javanbekht Quluncu (the ASMEK's spokesperson).

5. Authority who issued the warrant or decision:

Undoubtedly, the authority was the Ministry of Intelligence, at least we assume so. The onus is on the authority to provide clear information.

6. Relevant legislation applied (if known):

Normally the authority does not provide this data to cover their act of arbitrary arrests and this case is no exception.

III. Detention

1. Date of detention:

We assume that the victim was summarily detained, as this episode seemed to be pre-planned.

2. Duration of detention (if not known, probable duration):

The detention is ongoing.

3. Forces holding the detainee under custody:

During the detention, the victim would be held by the office of the Ministry of Information in Tehran and this place is believed to be in Evin prison. There is only a single statement by Judge, Matin Rasekh, deputy for the security of the Public Court and Revolutionary Court of Tehran and in charge of the interrogations, these victims are now kept in solitary confinements in Wing 209 of Evin prison and their interrogations will take weeks.



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4. Places of detention (indicate any transfer and present place of detention):
As stated in Item 3 of this section, the place of detention is Evin prison.
5. Authorities that ordered the detention:
Our assumed response would be that the authority ordered the detention was the Ministry of Information.
6. Reasons for the detention imputed by the authorities:
There is no official communiqué other than the single statement by a Judge, as stated in Item 3 of this section.
7. Relevant legislation applied (if known):
As there are no imputed charges, relevant legislation underpinning the arrest, the custody and the detention are not known. The onus is on the authority to issue such information.

IV. Describe the circumstances of the arrest and/or the detention and indicate precise reasons why you consider the arrest or detention to be arbitrary

This case has the full hallmark of arbitrary detentions, including:

- 10-15 security agents raided a traditional gathering and wreaked havoc by arresting the guests and the house owner include nine children and women;
- We have confirmed information that the agents did not produce any warrant;
- The authorities did not issue any communiqué on their illegal acts but there was a meagre statement by Judge Rasekhi after five days as detailed above;
- As given in Table 2, when the victim's house was being searched, security agents had showing a handwritten note stating such a phrase:

“for confrontation with pan-Turkist and pro-identity individuals permission has been granted to make forced entries, arrest and eliminate physical obstacles.”;

The above statement is unique to the Islamic Republic of Iran at the age when Southern Azerbaijanis are supposed to enjoy the protection of the Universal Human Rights Declaration;

- The victim has been denied of the right of access to a lawyer, let alone the lawyer of his choice.
- The victim has been denied the right of access to his family.
- Iran is probably the only country in history since the age of “witch-



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hunters" that legal activities are brought as charges against non-Fasri nations through witch-hunting prosecuting acts. For instance, the victim is a highly law-abiding individual and yet we are predicting that all his cultural activities are now being cited against him as illegal acts during interrogation sessions. (we apologise for this prediction as you may not regard it factual yet.)

V. Indicate internal steps, including domestic remedies, taken especially with the legal and administrative authorities, particularly for the purpose of establishing the detention and, as appropriate, their results or the reasons why such steps or remedies were ineffective or why they were not taken:

The victim's wife has given interviews to Radio *Ferda* and she basically sates that their efforts are in vain to obtain any basic information on their whereabouts. The problem is that the judiciary authorities are colluding with security agents and although their families are active to secure the liberty of their loved ones, the Iranian authorities are seemingly enacting their premeditated plans. They are not even responding to the massive campaign orchestrated by Southern Azerbaijanis to the extent that even Iranian-centric media have also been unable to ignore the event in their usual manner.

VI. Full name and address of the person(s) submitting the information (telephone and fax number, if possible) ^(d)

Mr. Eli Tashkent

On behalf of:

The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of World Azerbaijanis

Address:

Ayna, Sherifzade 1, Baki, Azerbaijan; Tel/Fax +47-99399225; Email: [email: info@dunazhak.net](mailto:info@dunazhak.net)

Date: 19 September 2008

Signature:

This questionnaire should be addressed to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, OHCHR-UNOG, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, fax No. (41-22) 917.90.06.

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Geneva, Switzerland Send e-mail with comments and suggestions to: webadmin.hchr@unog.ch

OHCHR-UNOG
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Telephone Number (41-22) 917-9000



Table 2 The Report by ASMEK on the Raid of the Iranian Authority to the House of the Citizen Elirza Serrafi: http://www.asmek.org/2008/09/blog-post_18.html

Searching Elirza Serrafi's House, a Detained Southern Azerbaijani Writer

According to the information received by ASMEK, agents of the Ministry of Information of the Islamic Republic of Iran entered the house of Mr. Elirza Serrafi in Tehran, the detained Southern Azerbaijani writer and journalist, today at 11 a.m. on Thursday, 18 September 2008 and searched the house for more than 3 hours.

The agents confiscated the computer in the household, two laptops belonging to Mr. Serrafi and his son, his hand writings, his research manuscripts, antiquarian books belonging to this Southern Azerbaijani researcher, his son's books, family passports (his own, his son's and his wife's) and his identity cards (and his wife's one). According to this report, the agents were forced to cut short of their search time due to the neighbours gathering at the surrounding of the house in response to the shouting and protesting outcries of Mrs. Vejihe Serrafi (her maiden name is Fukur), wife of Mr. Serrafi. Owing to Mrs. Serrafi's subsequent psychological trauma, Aslan Serrafi (Mr. Serrafi's son) had to sign the list of the confiscated items. According to the subsequent statement by Aslan Serrafi, he was not given any copy of the signed document.

The agents had shown a handwritten note that bore a stamp and a signature containing such a phrase that "for confrontation with pan-Turkist and pro-identity individuals permission has been granted to make forced entries, arrest and eliminate physical obstacles."

Elirza Serrafi has been denied of the right of access to his family since his detention on 10 September 2008, be it through meeting his family members or through a telephone call. On Monday 15 September 2008, after persistently referring to the authorities of the Revolutionary Court, Mrs. Serrafi was told that her husband was being kept in a solitary confinement in Evin prison. At the time, Matin Rasekh, a prosecutor of the Revolutionary Court, had told her that her husband will not be allowed to appoint a lawyer.

Dropped the penultimate paragraph due to avoiding repetition.

Approximately 10 to 15 security agents of the Islamic republic of Iran with plainclothes suddenly raided in the evening to a traditional gathering in Navvab Street, Tehran, without showing any warrant. There Mr. Elirza Serrafi was arrested together with 18 other Southern Azerbaijani individuals. (We did not translate fully the paragraph, as it would repeat the other information that we will be supplying.

Thursday 18 September 2008

Elirza Javanbekht, spokesperson of ASMEK <http://www.asmek.org/>
guluncu@gmail.com



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The Source Document, the Report by ASMEK: http://www.asmek.org/2008/09/blog-post_18.html

بازرسی از منزل علیرضا صرافی نویسنده بازداشت شده آذربایجانی

بنا بر اخبار رسیده به کمیته دفاع از زندانیان سیاسی آذربایجان-آسمک مأمورین وزارت اطلاعات جمهوری اسلامی ایران ساعت ۱۱ صبح امروز پنجشنبه ۲۸ شهریور ۱۳۸۷ وارد منزل مسکونی مهندس علیرضا صرافی نویسنده و روزنامه نگار بازداشت شده آذربایجانی در تهران شده و بیش از ۳ ساعت آنجا را تفتیش کرده اند.

مأمورین کامپیوتر منزل، دو لپ تاپ متعلق به علیرضا صرافی و پسرش، دست نوشته ها، کارهای تحقیقی، کتابهای قدیمی این نویسنده آذربایجانی، کتابهای پسرش، پاسپورتهای علیرضا صرافی و همسر و پسر ایشان، کارتهای [شناسایی] ملی علیرضا صرافی و همسرش را با خود برده اند. بنابر این گزارش با تجمع همسایه ها که با شنیدن فریاد اعتراض خانم وجیهه صرافی (فکور) همسر علیرضا صرافی به آنجا آمده بودند و همچنین مأمورین مجبور به کوتاه کردن زمان بازرسی منزل کرده اند. به علت آشفتگی روحی خانم فکور پسرش آسلان صرافی صورت جلسه اشیاء ضبط شده توسط مأمورین را امضا کرده است. بنا بر گفته های آسلان صرافی هیچ نسخه ای از این صورت جلسه به خانواده صرافی داده نشده است.

مأمورین برای بازرسی منزل دست نوشته ای حاوی مهر و امضا با مضمون «برای مقابله با افراد پانورکیست و قومگرا اجازه ورود و دستگیری و حذف موانع فیزیکی داده می شود.»

علیرضا صرافی از زمان بازداشت در ۲۰ شهریور ۱۳۸۷ تا کنون هیچ تماس حضوری یا تلفنی با خانواده خود نداشته است. روز یکشنبه ۲۵ شهریورماه به خانم وجیهه فکور، همسر علیرضا صرافی، در مراجعه به دادگاه انقلاب گفته شده که همسرش در سلول انفرادی در اوین به سر می برد. متین راسخ، بازپرس دادگاه انقلاب، به وی گفته است که همسرش نمی تواند وکیل مدافع داشته باشد.

علیرضا صرافی؛ نویسنده کتاب کثرت قومی و هویت ملی ایرانیان، صاحب امتیاز و مدیر مسئول ماهنامه ماهنامه اجتماعی، سیاسی، اقتصادی و فرهنگی دیلماج که تا تاریخ توقیف آن در مهرماه ۱۳۸۶ به دوزبان ترکی و فارسی منتشر می شد، از اعضای هئیت تحریریه مجله دوزبانه فارسی و ترکی وارلیق، مدرس فولکلور آذربایجان در دانشگاه های تهران، برگزار کننده سمینارهای زبان مادری در تبریز و از مؤسسين شورای ملی صلح است.

حدود ۱۰ تا ۱۵ نفر از نیروهای امنیتی لباس شخصی جمهوری اسلامی ایران شامگاه روز چهارشنبه ۲۰ شهریور با یورش ناگهانی به یک ضیافت افطار در خیابان نواب تهران بدون ارائه حکم جلب اقدام به دستگیری مهندس علیرضا صرافی و ۱۸ آذربایجانی دیگر کردند. بیشتر بازداشت شدگان از نویسندگان، معلمان و روزنامه نگاران سرشناس هستند. ۹ نفر از آنها همچنان در زندانند: علیرضا صرافی، حسن راشدی، اکبر آزاد، سعید محمدی، مهدی نعیمی اردبیلی، حسن رحیمی بیات، عباس نعیمی، حسین حیدری، و صیاد محمدیان. هیچکدام از این ۹ تن تا کنون ملاقات و حتی تماس تلفنی با اعضای خانواده خود نداشته اند. رقیه علیزاده به همراه سه فرزند خود و اکرم نجاری، رباب عظیمی و فرهاد رضایی آزاد چند ساعت بعد دستگیری، یوسف هوشیار، شهباز ابراهیم زاده و محمد عباسپور نیز روز ۲۴ شهریور آزاد شدند.

پنجشنبه ۲۸ شهریور ۱۳۸۷ - ۱۸ سپتامبر ۲۰۰۸

علیرضا جوانبخت

سخنگوی کمیته دفاع از زندانیان سیاسی آذربایجان-آسمک

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Table 3 Translation of the Biography of Mr. Elirza Serrafi (<http://bayqush.ca/1971/01/liriza-srrafi.html>)

Elirza Serrafi

The CV:

I was born in the city of Urmu, west of Southern Azerbaijan. My primary and secondary schooling was in Urmu, Tebriz, Esfahan and Tehran. In 1973, I was successful in entry to the civil engineering course of (then) Aryamehr (now Sherif) Technical University, Tehran. In 1974, I started my cultural activities and research in a serious manner.

1977: Engaged in my studies in Sherif University,

1979: Started publishing *Chenli-Bel* and *Azerbaycan Sesi* (Voice of Azerbaijan) bilingual journals in Azerbaijani and Farsi; later published my articles in such journals as: *Varliq*, *Mubeyyin*, *Nevid-e-Azerbaycan*, *Esr-e-Azadi*, *Shems-e-Tebriz*, *Novruz*, *Azeri*, ... and above all in *Dilmaj*.

1997-2007: Lectured in a voluntary capacity to students on literature and folklore of Turkic peoples in universities in Tebriz and Tehran.

October 2004 – October 2007: I was the licence holder and the director of the journal *Dilmaj*. This journal was banned by the Ministry of Culture for unexplained reasons.

2004: In relation to the International Mother Language Day held every year on 21st of February, I together with the Centre for Southern Azerbaijani Culture successfully organised the first conference in Tebriz. The Communiqué ratified and issued at the conclusion of this conference was circulated to international organisation (translator's note: we have provided the communiqué to you as per our Report Ref: 444/2007 on 20 February 2007 and this is reproduced in Table 4) and this communiqué served as the founding stone for the similar future conferences.

2005 and 2006: In relation to the International Mother Language Day on 21st of February, I together with *Dilmaj*, *Abtam*, and *Azer-Torpaq* (Translator: these journal names), *Ap-Agh*, and the Centre for Southern Azerbaijani Culture successfully organised the second and the third conference in Tebriz, celebrating the day.

2005-2006 I together with the collaboration of a society called *Ap-Agh*, and the journal *Dilmaj*, organised successfully up to 20 conferences.

2006: I together with the collaboration of a society called *Ap-Agh*, and the journal *Dilmaj*, organised The *Ferzane* Folklore symposium in the memory of the late Ferzane (Translator: a Southern Azerbaijani folkore scholar). The proceedings of the symposium was later published in a special edition of *Dilmaj*.

2003: Joined as the permanent member of the Southern Azerbaijani Writers Union and so far, I have participated in 7 international conferences and nearly 40 within the country and presented my papers.

Written Works:

1. Popular Turkic Literature (in Azerbaijani Turkic), the second edition in 2006, a special edition of *Dilmaj*;



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2. 70 years of the Southern Azerbaijani Student Movements (in Farsi), 2007, a special edition of the *Gunesh* journal;
- 3 “Multi-ethnicity and National Identity in Iran” with his co-author Dr Zia Sedr, published by *Endishe-ye-Nov*, Tehran
4. Tens of papers related to my research in Southern Azerbaijani problems both in Azerbaijani and Farsi.

Monograms and Articles:

1. “We did it” related to the May 2006 Mass Protests
2. On the Unexpected Loss of the Scholar Samed Serdari-niya
3. The Woman Problem and the Nationality Problem
4. The Democratic Southern Azerbaijan and the Compilation of their Manifesto (this is related to the national government of Southern Azerbaijan)
5. Samed (Translator: a national hero of Southern Azerbaijan who was killed by the Pahlavi system) and the folk.

Speeches

1. The national Movement belongs to the whole of our nation
2. On the Genre of *Divan* (Translator: literary monograms popular in Azerbaijan)
3. On the National Movement of Southern Azerbaijan

Translator’s Note: Without intending to plagiarise, the translator adds Southern to the Azerbaijan to prevent the confusion of international readers, as the Republic of Azerbaijan is not normally a party to the ongoing issues in Southern Azerbaijan.

علیرضا صرافى

حياتي:

1954 -ده گونئی آذربایجانین باتی سیندا اولان اورمیة شهرینده دوغولدوم. ایلک و اورتا اوخولو اورمیة، تبریز، اصفهان و تهران شهرلرینده بیتیردیم. 1973-ده آریامهر(شریف) تکنیک اونیورسیتة سینده اینشاعات مهندیس لیینی قازاندیم. 1974 ایلیندن باشلایاراق، جیددی کولتورل چالیشمالار و آراشدیرمالاردا بولوندم.

1977-ده شریف اونیورسیتة سینده،

1979-دا تورکجه-فارسجا درگیلر (چتلی بئل و آذربایجان سسی) یایملا دیم. سونرالار وارلیق، مبین، نوید آذربایجان، عصر آزادی، شمس تبریز، نوروز، آذری و... قزئت و ژورنالاریندا ان چوخ دیلماج درگیسینده مقاله لریم یایینلاندى.

1997-جی ایلدن 2007-یه قدر تهران و تبریز اونیورسیتة لرینده کؤنوللو اولاراق تورک خالق ادبیاتی اؤیرتمنی کیمی، تورک اؤیرنجی لره فولکلور اؤیرتمیشم.

2004-جو ایلین اکیم(اکتبر) آییندن 2007-جی ایلین اکیمینه(اکتبرونا) قدر دیلماج درگیسی نین صاحیبی و مسئول مودورو گؤرولیسى کیمی چالیشمیشام. همین درگی کولتور باخانلیغی (اسلامی ارشاد ناظرلییی) طرفیندن بیلنمه یین سببلره گؤره باغلانیلیمیش دیر!

2004 ایلینده تبریزده 21 فوریه دونیا آنا دیلی گونونده (آذربایجان مدنیت اوچاغی نین دا امه یی کنجدی) بیرینجی آنادیلی قورولتایینی باشاریلی کئچیرمه یه نابل اولدم. بو کنگره نین سونوندا سسه قوبولان و خارجی یئتکی لی



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اورقانلارا داغیدیلاراق بو اولوسلارآراسی گونون اؤلکه میزده سورکلی اولاراق کئچیریلمه سینه تمل داشی قویولدو.

2005 و 2006-جی ایلین 21 فوریه سینده یئنه ده آنادیللی کنگره و تۆرنلرینی تیریزده (دیلماج-آپ آغ، آبتام، آذرتوپراق و مدنیت اوچاغی نین ایش بیرلییی ایله آنادیللی تۆرنلری کئچیرمه سینه نایل اولدوم.

2005-2006 ایللرینده آپ آغ ادلی درنه بین قوروجولاریندان بیر ی اولاراق و دیلماج درگیسی نین ده ایش بیرلییی ایله تیریزده 20-یه یاخین کنفرانسین قوروجولوغونا نایل اولدوم.

2006-دا تیریزده آپ آغ-دیلماجین دوزنله مه سی 30-ا یاخین آراشدیرماجی نین قاتیلیمی ایله بیرینجی آذربایجان فولکلور سمپوزیومونو (فرزانه آدینا فولکلور سمپوزیومو) کئچیردیم. سونرا سمپوزیوما وئرلن بیلدیرلرین توپلوسو دا دیلماج درگیسی نین بیر اؤزل سایى یاپینلاندی.

2003-ده آذربایجان یازیچیلار بیرلییی نین دایمی اوپه سی اولموشام.
بوگونه قدر 7 اولوسلارآراسی و 40-ا یاخین یورد ایچی کنگره لره قاتیلیمیش و مقاله می سونموشام.

علیرضا صرافى نین اثرلری

1- تورک خالق ادبیاتی (آذربایجان تورکجه سینده)- ایکینجی یابین 2006، دیلماج درگیسی نین بیر اؤزل سایى اولاراق.

2- 70-لی ایللرده آذربایجان اؤیرنجی حرکاتی (فارس دیلینده) – 2007، گونش درگیسی نین اؤزل سایى اولاراق.

3- اونلارچا آذربایجان مسئله لری حاقدا آراشدیرمالار، فارس دیلی و آذربایجان تورکجه سینده یایلمیش دیر.

یازی و مقاله لری:

بیز باشاردیق، 1 خرداد قیامینا دایر
اوستاد صمد سرداری نیانین گؤزله نیلمه ین ایتگیسی مناسبتی ایله
مسئله زن و مسئله ملی
آذربایجان دموکرات و تنظیم بیانیه 12 شهرپور
صمد و ائل

دانشیقلار:

میللی حرکت بوتون ملت ییمیزیندیر
دیوان ادبیاتی حاقدا دانشیق

درباره جنبش آذربایجان



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Table 4 A Reproduction of the Communiqué Compiled by Mr. Elirza Serrafi and his collaborators: See Our Report Ref: 444/2007 on 20 February 2007 and Ref: 447/2007 on 5 March 2007



Mr. Serrafi calls the Tebriz conference for the International Mother Language Day (2004) as a golden page in the history of Southern Azerbaijan. This report is a testimony to his vision. He also has a stark warning:

“History has proven that a civil nation insisting on her national rights through self-restraint and peaceful means is also capable of securing them using other means when the time is right to confront the enemy.”

This report also provides evidence from Tebriz in 2007 that if the authorities suppressed the celebration on the 21st of February, the people used the opportunity of a football match to orchestrate a protest of 30,000 strong. So Mr. Serrafi’s warning should not be interpreted as securing our rights through violence but definitely through strategic manoeuvres.

February 21st was declared the international day of mother tongues eight years ago by the UNESCO. Many countries have been celebrating this day since then. As far as we are concerned, our nation too strives to express their love to our mother tongue but is faced with constraints imposed by the officials. They have mobilised all their resources for a number of years to ensure that such a momentous day could not be aired through the media and would be totally hidden. This is disgrace to them.

Thanks to teamwork of a great many compatriots, the city of Tebriz hosted the very first mother tongue conference on 21st of February 2004. The participants were drawn from the every corner of Southern Azerbaijan, including Urmu, Khoy, Maragha, Zenjan, Erdebil, as well from Tehran and Kerej. One of the accomplishments of the Conference was its rich communiqué. It articulated the reinstatement of our rights to our language based on the United Nations conventions; was unanimously approved by the conference; and within as little as one week, the Communiqué was undersigned by three thousand three hundred and thirty three (3333) individuals. It was published in four languages and was delivered to all responsible authorities within the country, as well as to the UNESCO and the United Nations. In this way, the first Conference and its Communiqué were transformed into the golden pages of our national movement.

In spite of obstacles created against the second and third Conferences in 2005 and 2006, the day was celebrated throughout our cities stressing that our people are defiant and shall preserve our national rights. Nonetheless, our rulers carried on with their indulgence to ignore the peaceful strives of our honourable nation.

If the shackling against our nation was induced eighty years ago by aliens, there is no abatement of the onslaught since then—instead of opening the channels for dialogue, the authorities keep distorting the situation and are getting pig-headed with their incompetent policies. We keep asking questions out of our sincerity, but they respond behind closed doors.

It is hardly surprising that, our nation did not fit the space of conference halls or the reception of their houses to preserve our mother tongue and therefore poured to the streets challenging rotten policies in an arena as vast as Southern Azerbaijan. In this way, another golden page was written in the history of our national movement. I argue that this episode shall be regarded as a classical normative movement in the history of our national movement, and I dare to say that it will mark a paradigm shift too at the international level.



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It may be that tomorrow will be too late. The masters reigning from the upper echelons and engaged in demeaning our nation, should open their ears, and should dare to listen to the just voice of the Turkic citizens. History has proven that a civil nation insisting on her national rights through self-restraint and peaceful means is also capable of securing them using other means when the time is right to confront the enemy.

Our nation is distinguished internationally for a stiff resistance in safeguarding our mother tongue whatever casualties it may suffer. If we consider the extent of our losses in the following terms: only sixty years ago our struggle for our mother tongue some twenty five thousands (25,000) [Translator's Note: This is due to the invasion of Southern Azerbaijan by Iranian Army] of our sons and daughters suffered death; thus we can talk of one casualty per day.

The substance of our claim for our mother tongue has therefore been gained at the expense of one casualty per day, as a result of which I hold that even if the Day of Mother Tongue is truly an International day, we embrace it as our national day of celebration.

Resolution Adopted on the Occasion of The First Congress on Mother Language

(Note: the text is slightly refined here compared with the published text two years ago)

The undersigned, participants in the First Congress on Mother Language held on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day in Tebriz on the 21st of February 2004, with due respect of the:

- International Declaration of Human Rights,
- Convention on The Political and Civil Rights,
- Convention on The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted by the United Nations

and with due consideration of:

- The Convention on National, Racial, Linguistic and Religious Rights adopted by the United Nations on 18 December 1992, ref. 47/135
- Article 15 and 19 of the Constitution of The Islamic Republic of Iran (so far not translated into action)
- The fact that, two thirds of the Iranian population belong to various cultural and linguistic groups such as Turkic, Kurdish, Arabic, Lori, Turkmenish, Balouchi etc.

demand that the esteemed leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran provide convenient judicial, economical and spiritual circumstances for achieving the following objectives:

1. Setting up mother language courses in elementary and intermediate levels.
2. Utilising the mother languages in radio, television and local as well as in the country-scale media in proportion to the ethnic make-up of the regions.