

The Bureau of the Congress

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21 October 2019

Letter from Anar IBRAHIMOV, Head of the National Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Congress

Document submitted for consideration to the Bureau of the Congress on 28 October 2019

¹ This document is classified confidential until it has been examined by the Bureau of the Congress

Dear Mr. President,

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that on September 8, 2019, the separatist regime established by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan held illegal "elections" to the so-called "local self-governing bodies". These "elections" were organized not only in the usual areas of settlement of the Armenian community of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, but also in Shusha city and numerous other settlements and villages, where the Azerbaijani community of the region lived before the conflict and the most defiantly, in Kalbajar, Lachin and other surrounding districts located outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, currently under the occupation of Armenia. In the present circumstances of continuing military occupation of one fifth of the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan, these mock "elections" constitute a clear violation of the Constitution of Azerbaijan as well as the norms and principles of international law, and therefore have no legal effect.

It will be worth recalling that the entire indigenous Azerbaijani population of more than 700 thousand men, women and children was forced out of these areas following ethnic cleansing in the early 1990s and since then they have been enduring the plight of internally displaced persons. Basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of those people under the European Convention of Human Rights have thus been blatantly violated.

Already back in August 2001, only a few months after accession of Azerbaijan and Armenia to the Council of Europe, in a joint statement released prior to similar illegal local elections, the Committee of Ministers' Chairman, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Secretary General made absolutely clear that "[t]hese so-called 'elections' cannot be legitimate". In the Declaration adopted in October 2014, the Congress stated unequivocally that "the principles of international law, such as territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of states are imperative for the peaceful settlement of conflicts in Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and the Republic of Moldova faced with separatist movements".

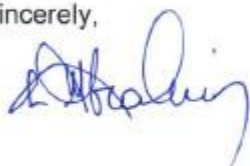
Mr. Anders KNAPE
President of the Congress of Local and
Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

cc: Mr. Andreas KIEFER
Secretary General of the Congress

The Congress of Local and Regional authorities of the Council of Europe as the voice of local and regional authorities of Europe has been resolute in safeguarding principles of the European Charter for Local Self Government. It has also shown its strong commitment to the territorial integrity of member states considering this as an important element in ensuring sustainable local and regional dimension. It will be appropriate to mention here that the at different levels Congress has been firm in its policy of rejection of the legitimacy and non-recognition of so-called "elections" organized in the territories of the Council of Europe member States.

I therefore call on the Congress to remain consistent to this policy and strongly condemn and resolutely reject recently organized illegal "elections" to so-called "local self-governing bodies" in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Sincerely,



Anar IBRAHIMOV

**Head of the National Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe**

25.09.2019