

From: Office of the Governor Site Support
Sent: 1/28/2015 1:00:49 PM
To: Haley, Nikki
Cc:
Subject: Recognize the 1992 Khojaly Massacre

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January 28, 2015

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Governor of South Carolina
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley:

I join Azeri Americans, members of Azerbaijan Society of America (ASA), to commemorate the 23rd anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy - the first worst war crime in Europe since World War II.

On the night of February 25-26, 1992, in the course of the Nagorno-Karabakh War, Armenian forces supported by Russia's 366th infantry regiment attacked the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly and massacred its fleeing residents. According to Newsweek, "many were killed at close range while trying to flee; some had their faces mutilated, others were scalped". 613 civilians, including 106 women and 63 children, were tortured to death, hundreds more went missing. Over 1,000 people received permanent health damage, 1,275 people were taken hostage. Over 150 children lost one or both of their parents.

Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Associated Press, and others confirmed the fact that the Armenian forces were responsible. Armenian field commander, Monte Melkonyan, provided a shocking witness account of the Khojaly "killing fields" in his diary, reproving fellow fighters for the war crime. Additionally, Armenia's incumbent president, Serzh Sargsyan, admitted that his forces acted in revenge to "break the

stereotype" of Azerbaijanis. Yet, the Armenian government and the Armenian-Armenian special interest groups continue to deny these facts.

As the U.S. mediates a peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, our recognition of its largest atrocity is a key to healing and reconciliation. In recent years, the states of Massachusetts, Texas, Georgia, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia, Florida, and Connecticut recognized the Khojaly tragedy. I request that our elected officials once more recognize the victims of this horrific act of ethnic cleansing ahead of its anniversary. Sample recognition is at:
<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/display/20112012/HR/1594>

Sincerely,

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