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Sent: 2/17/2015 3:30:05 PM
To: Haley, Nikki
Cc:
Subject: Recognize the 1992 Khojaly Massacre

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February 17, 2015

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

Dear Governor Haley:

I join all Azerbaijani Americans in commemoration of the 23rd anniversary of the Khojaly Massacre, the first worst war crime in Europe since World War II.

On the night of February 26, 1992, Armenian forces supported by the 366th infantry regiment of the Russian army attacked the town of Khojaly in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Fleeing residents of the town were chased and brutally murdered by the Armenian militants. Estimated 613 civilians, including 106 women and 63 children, were tortured and killed on that horrific night; hundreds more went missing, over thousand received permanent health damage, 1,275 were taken hostage, and over 150 children lost one or both parents.

Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, New York Times, numerous other media and rights watchdogs documented the atrocity committed by the Armenian forces. Armenian field commander, Monte Melkonian, provided the most shocking witness account of the "killing fields" near Khojaly, reproving fellow Armenian fighters of the war crime. Armenian President, Serzh Sargsyan, admitted that it was an act of revenge against Azerbaijanis. Yet, Armenia and Armenian-American lobby continue denying

the fact that the Armenian forces carried out the Khojaly Massacre.

As the U.S. government mediates peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the recognition of its largest atrocity is essential for reconciliation. In the recent years, 15 U.S. states and many countries formally recognized the Khojaly Massacre. Speaking to the United Nations General Assembly on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance in January 2015, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin highlighted Khojaly among the genocidal acts that the international community failed to prevent.

I urge our elected officials to properly recognize the 1992 Khojaly Massacre through public statements and legislative resolutions. Sample recognition is available at <http://khojaly.azeris.org>

Sincerely,

Murat
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