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LIBERATION OF SHUSHI, VICTORY DAY MARKED IN NKR

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NKR OFFICE IN THE USA

122 C St., NW Suite 360
Washington, DC 20001
Tel: (202) 347-5166
Fax: (202) 347-5168
E-mail: info@nkrusa.org
Web: www.nkrusa.org

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At a Recent Military Parade in NKR

world that we are able to solve difficult problems. And first of all, we realized, that we are the masters of our own destiny and that we are the ones to shape our own future," said President Arkady Ghoukasian in his address.

Military parades took place in several cities, including Shushi. The top leadership of the Nagorno Karabakh government were joined by an official Armenian delegation, headed by Armenian President Robert Kocharian, as they laid flowers at the tomb of Artsakh War Hero Ashot Ghouljian and WWII Marshall Hovhannes Baghratian in Stepanakert. The procession then drove to Shushi, where Armenian and Karabakh officials laid flowers at the monument to WWII Hero Nelson Stepanian and Artsakh Hero Vazgen Sargsian.

Armenian President Robert Kocharian issued a statement congratulating citizens of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh on the occasion. Calling Shushi's liberation from Azerbaijani armed forces "a symbol of freedom" for Nagorno Karabakh, he said that the victory in WWII was a great victory for the Armenian people. "Hundreds of thousands of Armenian men heroically fought in the Red Army, bringing the Victory Day closer." he said.

NKR President Arkady Ghoukasian awarded Caroline Cox, the Vice Speaker of the British House of Lords and a staunch supporter of Nagorno Karabakh's struggle for freedom, with the Order of St. Gregory the Illuminator. "I was in Stepanakert during those horrible days, when Stepanakert was under artillery fire from Shushi. I witnessed how your people suffered. But as the time went, I saw a lot to be happy about. I am fighting for justice and I will do my best to achieve international recognition of your victory," said Baroness Cox.

May 9 marked a triple holiday in Nagorno Karabakh - the victory of the Allies in WWII, the 11th anniversary of the Liberation of Shushi and the 11th anniversary of the creation of the NKR Defense Army. The festivities began with a Holy Liturgy and blessing of the NKR Defense Army at the St. Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi. Karabakh's top civilian and military leaders as well as WWII and Artsakh War veterans celebrated Victory Day at the Stepanakert Officers' Club.

"It is very symbolic that the liberation of Shushi coincided with the victory over fascism. This is a testimony of the continuity of our proud and freedom-loving people's good traditions. Shushi proved to the



Volunteers in the Early Stages of War

AZERBAIJAN VIOLATES CEASE-FIRE AGAIN

Azerbaijani armed forces attempted unsuccessfully to move closer to the territory controlled by the NKR Defense Army on April 8, NKR Defense Ministry reported. Facing resistance, the enemy armed formations had to retreat to their previously held positions. NKR Defense Army did not sustain any casualties during the incident. The Defense Ministry re-

ports that beginning in 2000, Azerbaijani armed forces regularly attempted to change the Line of Contact in order to come closer to NKR Defense Army positions. The OSCE monitoring missions routinely recorded these and other aggressive actions on Azerbaijan's part.

Foreign Minister Ashot Ghouljian and the

(Continued on page 2)

AZERBAIJAN VIOLATES CEASE-FIRE AGAIN

(Continued from page 1)

Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk discussed the incident and the overall situation on the Line of Contact on April 30 and May 26. Both sides stressed the importance of strict adherence to the cease-fire regime and regular monitoring of the Line of Contact by OSCE representatives. Kasprzyk also met with Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Seyran Ohanian.

OSCE representatives carried out two monitoring missions to the Line of Contact in May. On May 13th monitoring took place in the southeastern portion of the

frontline. After the monitoring, the OSCE representatives visited a military hospital, where they met with NKR Defense Army soldiers, who were wounded during recent sniper-fire from the Azerbaijani positions. The second monitoring took place on May 27 near Aghdam. During the monitoring, the NKR Defense Army representative reported about several cease-fire violations by the Azerbaijani side to the OSCE officials. No incidents were reported during the sessions. Representatives of the NKR Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs accompanied the OSCE representatives.

In a related development, U.S. Am-

bassador to Armenia John Ordway said during a press conference on May 20 that the main goals of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen are to achieve continuation of the cease-fire regime and reach a lasting, final agreement among the conflicting parties on settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. He also commented on the postponement of the Co-Chairmen's visit to the region, citing elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan and President Aliyev's poor health as the main reasons for the delay.

PEOPLE OF NAGORNO KARABAKH COMMEMORATE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE



On April 24, the people of Nagorno Karabakh commemorated the anniversary of the horrific crime against the Armenian people committed by Ottoman Turkey, the Armenian Genocide. President Arkady Ghoukasian, members of parliament, government ministers and the commanding staff of the armed forces joined hundreds of Karabakh citizens who flocked to the Memorial Complex to pay tribute to the memory of one and a half million innocent Genocide victims. In his speech, Ghoukasian said that the massacre of Armenians in the Azerbaijani town of Sumgait was a continuation of the legacy of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey. "Analyzing history, we have to realize, that our destiny is in our own hands. We have to build a state, that would allow its citizens to live peacefully and prosperously," he said. The clergy of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Church held a liturgy for the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

CAUCASUS NGOs HOLD SEMINARS IN STEPANAKERT

The second round of seminars for regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) took place in Stepanakert on April 17 with participants from Azerbaijan, South Osetia and Russian regions of the North Caucasus. The "Caucasus Initiative" NGO organized the event, aimed at boosting cooperation among the Caucasus NGOs. On the same day the participants of the seminar met with Foreign Minister Ashot Ghouljian. He stressed the importance of the event for drawing international attention to the needs of the non-governmental sector in the Caucasus as well as for the formation of civil society in the region, including Nagorno Karabakh. Ghouljian said that the government is interested in strengthening of local NGOs and helps them in any way possible. The Chairman of the Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan, Eldar Zeynalov, who has visited Nagorno Karabakh on several occasions, said that he noticed a shift towards building a European-style civil society in Karabakh since his last year's visit. Meeting participants also discussed ways of enhancing cooperation among the NGOs of the region, protection of human rights and building con-

fidence among the conflicting parties.

The same group of regional NGOs' representatives participated in another event organized by the local Center of Civil Initiatives (CCI) in Stepanakert. The event was dedicated to the condition of prisoners in the region and penitentiary institution reforms. The Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross' office in Stepanakert, superintendents of Nagorno Karabakh prisons, as well as members of the media participated in the seminar. CCI Director Albert Voskanian, who also represents Nagorno Karabakh NGOs in the International Working Group on Search and Liberation of Missing Persons, Hostages and POWs of the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict, said that sanitary conditions are satisfactory in Nagorno Karabakh prisons. Zeynalov, who had an opportunity to visit some of the prisons in Nagorno Karabakh, agreed with Voskanian's conclusion.

Zeynalov's comments, later broadcast on Azerbaijani TV, led to trouble in Azerbaijan - mobs, made up of members of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party and opposition Musavat party's Organization for Liberation

of Karabakh, attacked Zeynalov's office, shouting anti-Armenian slogans, dumping trash and pouring chlorine at the entrance of the building. The mob "accused" Zeynalov of having ethnic Armenian roots and demanded his deportation from Azerbaijan.

Domestic political dissent as well as Azerbaijani NGOs' participation in joint projects with their colleagues from Nagorno Karabakh are routinely subject to state-sponsored harassment in Azerbaijan. As recently as June 5, the Committee on Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) again criticized Azerbaijani authorities for the arrest of new political prisoners and their failure to act on their promises to implement democratic reforms and release political prisoners.



Eldar Zeynalov