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# Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Təhlükəsizliyi Xidməti

## Security Bodies of the Independent Republic of Azerbaijan

After regaining its independence in 1991 and the recognition of the sovereignty of our country by the vast majority of world powers, the pressure on the Republic of Azerbaijan and domestic and foreign threats intensified. All this aggravated the already complicated socio-political situation in Azerbaijan. The severe socio-economic crisis, chaos and anarchy in the country paralyzed public administration. The creation of illegal armed groups under the guise of "volunteer fighters" by some members of the government eventually accelerated the collapse of the ruling forces. In such circumstances, it was impossible to talk not only about the rule of law and democracy, but also about the ordinary right of people to live in security. The deepening crisis of power as a result of the disobedience of individual political parties to the then leadership of the state by creating illegal armed groups created favourable conditions for the separatists to carry out their insidious intentions in the south and north of the country. In the north, the Sadval movement began to operate openly, and in the south, with the creation of the so-called "Talysh-Mughan Republic", virtually the entire southern region of Azerbaijan was cut off from the republic.

The tense situation in the country necessitated the reconstruction of the national security system and the implementation of priority tasks such as the protection of national interests. It was very difficult, important and vital to fulfill these tasks properly, as well as to abandon the principles of the security system, which only pursued the interests of the Soviet empire for 70 years, to break the existing stereotypes in society, and to create instead a national security body independent of any state and able to guard the interests of the Azerbaijani people.

By the decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of National Security was established on the basis of the State Security Committee on 1 November 1991. This decision also highlighted the need to change the content and nature of the tasks facing security agencies, because if the entire potential of the State Security Committee was aimed at ensuring the existence and strategic interests of the Soviet empire in general, the main task of the Ministry of National Security was to protect the sovereignty, constitutional system, economic, defence and scientific-technical potential of the Republic of Azerbaijan, safeguard state secrets, prevent the intelligence and other subversive activities of the special services and organizations of foreign states, criminal groups and individuals, in short, to protect and safeguard the national interests of our people. However, for certain objective and subjective reasons, first of all, due to the incompetent leadership of the republic and prevailing arbitrariness, it was impossible to carry out the tasks set in 1991-1993 with high professionalism, to ensure stability within the country, as well as to prevent smugglers, saboteurs and violators illegally crossing the border that was ruined before. The forces that hindered the strengthening of our independence began to hinder the national security of Azerbaijan and deepen political tensions in the country. As a result, the fate of our independence was already called into question.

National leader Heydar Aliyev divided the history of the Azerbaijani security forces during the years of independence into two periods: 1991-1993 and beyond. The first period was characterized by the reassessment of all values for personnel who suddenly had their purpose changed and confusion due to reorganization, and these were objective difficulties. However, due to the incompetence of those who led the country during this period, the activities of the Ministry of National Security were out of control, this body was not properly directed, and took shape in the interests of groups and parties rather than on the basis of professionalism. Therefore, instead of gathering preventive intelligence about the serious disasters that had befallen the country and taking measures to prevent them, the ministry often became a registrar of crimes that had already been committed and dealt severe blows to national interests.

Returning to political power at the insistence of our people, Heydar Aliyev set principles and duties for special services to form professional human resources, improve their structure, define the activities of security agencies, and train them to perform their responsibilities in the interests of the people. Despite the existing foreign and domestic threats, security officials tried to build and implement their work on the instructions and recommendations of national leader Heydar Aliyev. It is safe to say that the revival and rise of the law enforcement and security agencies of the Republic of Azerbaijan and their true service to national interests are related to the return of our national leader Heydar Aliyev to the leadership of Azerbaijan, his demand for the reorganization and regulation of the work of these agencies, as well as his daily control, care and attention.

In his speech at the ceremony dedicated to the professional holiday of national security employees at the Ministry of National Security on 28 June 1997, national leader Heydar Aliyev set the following tasks for the security agencies: "Azerbaijan's Ministry of National Security has already been revived, formed and strengthened, and is capable of ensuring and protecting the state security of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan. But at the same time, you still have great tasks ahead of you. The first task is to ensure that the mistakes made in this body both in the Soviet era and during independence are not repeated. Your main goal is to ensure that no citizen is treated unfairly. Protecting the rights of every citizen is the main task of our state and my

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main task as the president. You have to do a big part of this task. It is your duty to protect human rights, ensure security, and ensure the security not only of the state, but also of society and our people. Therefore, on the one hand, you must take very serious, courageous measures, and on the other, you must not repeat any mistakes made in the past. I repeat, no one should unjustly face any deprivation, no one's rights should be trampled upon, no one's self-esteem should be violated, and everyone's civil dignity should be preserved."

As a result of his demands to the security and law enforcement agencies, substantial work was done in 1990-94 to prevent attacks on our independence and statehood, terrorist acts and other serious crimes. Thus, in his decree "On measures to strengthen the fight against crime and increase the rule of law" dated 9 August 1994, national leader Heydar Aliyev set important tasks for the law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The fight against terrorist acts, sabotage, premeditated murder, banditry, looting of weapons, ammunition and explosives aimed against the security of the economic and political foundations of the state, the lives, health and property rights of citizens and committed by organized criminal groups, illegal armed groups and other criminal elements intensified.

In addition, the Ministries of Internal Affairs and National Security were instructed to develop and implement comprehensive measures to substantially improve the work of operational search services to prevent and detect serious crimes. Collection of weapons and ammunition from the population and illegal gangs, liquidation of criminal gangs, prevention of provocative actions of disruptive forces and other measures in these areas laid a solid foundation for ensuring stability and national security in the country.

Thanks to Heydar Aliyev's professionalism and high managerial skills, stability was achieved. With the national leader setting tasks for the security services based on new realities, it was already possible to prevent crimes at the time of planning or occurrence on the basis of preventive information. The elaboration of the leading directions of Azerbaijan's national security policy by Heydar Aliyev, identification of fateful tasks facing the Azerbaijani special services, his consistent activity in the formation of our republic's strategic partnership with other countries, announcement of conceptual provisions of Azerbaijan's security policy for the short- and long-term allow us to say with full responsibility that Azerbaijan's security strategy in modern times is associated with his name. The great politician Heydar Aliyev not only formulated this strategy, but also clearly defined specific directions for its practical implementation.

As a result of intensive work carried out by the Ministry of National Security, the activities of foreign special services against the Republic of Azerbaijan were mostly prevented in 1994-1997, 213 citizens they recruited for secret cooperation were identified, 27 of them were convicted of espionage, 186 people were dissuaded from taking a criminal path, and 13 foreign spies were exposed. The threat of civil war was averted in the republic 3 times, 7 coup attempts were prevented, 5 attempts were localized at the stage of planning, dozens of individuals and groups trying to commit terrorist acts were neutralized in time.

Today, the Republic of Azerbaijan, which has resolutely strengthened its independence and proved its steadfastness in building a civilized and law-governed state based on democratic principles, is further developing its statehood traditions and creating an unshakable foundation for a secure future and eternity. The Ministry of National Security, which has important responsibilities in this area, has done important work in preserving and further strengthening the state independence, which is the greatest achievement of the Azerbaijani people. Along with ensuring the security of the country and the people, the Ministry of National Security has achieved great success in protecting the national and spiritual values inherited from the predecessor of our independent republic, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, and restoring the ties between heritage and heirs. If it is possible to say so, under the leadership of national leader Heydar Aliyev, the Ministry of National Security not only guarded the progressive traditions of the past and the security of our modern state, but also tried to fulfill the function of the guarantor of tomorrow and the future.

As a result of the measures taken under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev, acts of sabotage and provocations were stopped. As our national leader Heydar Aliyev noted: "... Destructive forces abroad and inside the Republic of Azerbaijan resorted to other acts of sabotage and even terrorist acts against the head of state in order to destabilize socio-political stability in the Republic of Azerbaijan, impede economic reforms and prevent the inflow of foreign capital into the country. As a result of purposeful and decisive measures taken, all these attempts were prevented." However, in modern times, the fight against terrorism in order to ensure domestic security in Azerbaijan is not limited to the fight against Armenian terrorist organizations or terrorist organizations supported by the Armenian state. As a result of the policy pursued by Heydar Aliyev, today, as a member of the international anti-terrorist coalition, Azerbaijan has managed to keep the activities of relevant organizations inside the country and organizations suspected of links with them under maximum control. These facts are also reflected in the Country Reports on Terrorism 2002 published by the US State Department in early May 2003.

The fact that Azerbaijan is an active member of the international anti-terrorist coalition in modern times is important in terms of keeping our country as a member of the international community in the processes taking place at the global level on the one hand, and on the other, it stems from our country's internal motives. In this regard, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

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Heydar Aliyev said in a statement on the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States: "Strongly condemning all forms of terrorism, Azerbaijan fights terrorism and demonstrates its readiness to cooperate with world powers and organizations. Terrorism poses a serious threat to domestic security by disrupting socio-political stability in the country."

When Heydar Aliyev condemned the terrorist policy of the Armenian state from one of the world's largest podiums and declared that terrorism is a great disaster for mankind, there was no serious reaction to these words. Only when a terrorist attack took place in big, civilized countries, did they realize the foresight of this politician, that terror was more terrible than war, and did major world powers begin to deal with this problem at the global level.

The issue of combating terrorism, which is currently in the spotlight of the special services of most of the world's leading countries, is also important for the Azerbaijani security agencies. The Azerbaijani security agencies have taken a number of urgent measures to closely monitor nuclear technologies and smuggling of dual-purpose substances, which have recently emerged as a new branch of terrorism, and the processes taking place in the world in order to prevent the transport corridor passing through the territory of our country, which is of interest to a number of countries due to its geopolitical position, from being used in international terrorist activity.

The overlapping interests of the aggressor Armenia, as well as certain circles of some countries, which do not hide their political, economic and military aggression against our country, and their intelligence-subversive activities arising from these interests motivate the Azerbaijani security agencies to take deliberate and preventive steps. As a result of the highly professional and deeply responsible attitude of MNS employees to their work under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev, the recent attempts of some foreign special services to influence and put pressure on our republic and several terrorist acts against its sovereignty were prevented in time and appropriate measures were taken. The policy pursued by Azerbaijani national leader Heydar Aliyev to strengthen the state and statehood is successfully continued by his worthy successor, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, and shows its winning power.

It is safe to say that it is Heydar Aliyev's political course that integrates Azerbaijan into Europe as a law-governed, democratic and secular state and leads it to globalization. The path of modern civilization also goes through globalization. The fact that the MNS is expanding from year to year its international relations with the special services of many countries in the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime also serves to completely eliminate this threat. Azerbaijan's firm and principled position as an active member of the anti-terrorist coalition, concrete results of the fight against terrorism, intensive exchange of information, arrest and extradition of internationally wanted persons, important examples of our cooperation are always appreciated by our society and partner countries.

As things improved in the Ministry of National Security after stability was ensured in the country, the necessary legal documents related to its formation were signed. The decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the enforcement of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On state protection of persons participating in criminal proceedings" (1 February 1999) and the decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the enforcement of the Law "On combating illicit trafficking in narcotics, psychotropic substances and their precursors" (4 August 1999, 24 August 2002), the decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the enforcement of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Combating Terrorism" (30 August 1999), the decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the enforcement of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On operational-search activity" (11 November 1999 and 24 August 2002) and the adoption of other legal documents played an irreplaceable role in directing the activities of the MNS and creating a legal framework.

Today, under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, who confidently and successfully continues the political course of the great leader, Azerbaijan is further developing its traditions of statehood. It is under the leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Mr Ilham Aliyev, that a consistent action plan has been developed to implement important organizational and practical reforms and strengthen the necessary legal framework. The adoption of the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On National Security", "On Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence", "On State Secrets", "The National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan" and other legislative acts and regulatory legal documents are indicators of improvements in the legal framework of the security agencies' activities.

At a time when the global security architecture and the international order are under severe pressure and threats to regional peace are increasing, further improvements in the protection and strengthening of state independence and socio-political stability make it necessary to constantly enhance the work of security agencies and turn them into a special service that meets modern requirements.

By Decree No 706 of President Ilham Aliyev dated 14 December 2015, the State Security Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan were established on the basis of the Ministry of National Security of the Republic of Azerbaijan in order to increase the efficiency of special services and improve the public administration structure.

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The State Security Service, which plays an important role in maintaining and further strengthening state independence, which is the greatest achievement of the Azerbaijani people, attaches special importance to the purity of personnel, their loyalty to the motherland, people and state, as well as professional, physical and combat training. Now the main criteria are high professionalism and intellectual level, strict service and executive discipline.