

Azerbaijan National Day

A country renowned for tolerance

Multiculturalism occupies key national role

Kamal Abdullayev
STATE COUNSELLOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ON MULTICULTURALISM, INTERETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, FULL MEMBER OF THE AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Multiculturalism is an amalgam of the values that have taken shape in Azerbaijan over the centuries. In the early days of Azerbaijan's independence the then President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, national leader Heydar Aliyev chose this exact ideological goal for the sake of Azerbaijan's successful future development. Through his own policy he developed the Azerbaijani tradition of multiculturalism that had formed down through the centuries and moved it to a qualitatively new plane — the political plane.

The national leader rightly considered multiculturalism policy an integral part of the country's democratic development. He showed that protecting the rights and freedoms of the national minorities living in Azerbaijan, including ethnic and cultural values, arose from the important democratic principle of protecting human rights and freedoms. As an alternative to ethnic nationalism, he put forward as a national ideology the principle of Azerbaijanism, which was an essential condition for the flourishing of the Azerbaijani people and society as a whole and of Azerbaijani statehood too, and the main spiritual basis of multiculturalism. The national leader said that ethnic nationalism would eventually lead to ethnic separatism and conflict among peoples. The ideology of Azerbaijanism on the other hand, unites all citizens of the country, regardless of religion, language or race.

President Ilham Aliyev, a worthy successor to national leader Aliyev, is successfully developing a new stage in the policy of protecting and developing the Azerbaijani people's multicultural traditions. The president today considers multiculturalism to be Azerbaijan's state policy and our people's way of life. In implementing the above-mentioned policy, he lends special significance to cooperation with the U.N., OSCE, Council of Europe, European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other authoritative international organizations. He constantly notes the importance of our country joining the conventions on protecting the rights and



President of the Republic of Azerbaijan H.E. Ilham Aliyev speaks at an event with Muslim, Jewish and Orthodox Christian leaders in Azerbaijan. EMBASSY OF AZERBAIJAN

freedoms of national minorities adopted by these organizations. The International Humanitarian Forum, which has been held regularly in Baku since 2011 on the initiative of the president and with his participation, is an extremely important aspect of Azerbaijan's spiritual and political progress. In his opening speech to the last forum, already a traditional event, the president described multiculturalism as "the best option for future development to which there is no alternative" and said that it was especially important for multicultural trends to be strengthened not only in Azerbaijan, but in the modern world.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation, led by UNESCO and ISESCO Goodwill Ambassador and Milli Majlis (parliament) Deputy Mehriban Aliyeva, provides undeniable services in moving the president's political values of multiculturalism and tolerance to the academic, cultural and social planes on an international scale. Today, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation carries out major, important projects concerning the preservation, protection and promotion of Azerbaijan's multicultural traditions. These projects are not developing Azerbaijani multiculturalism in a closed fashion within just one country, but working with religious and cultural diversity worldwide.

The Baku International Multiculturalism Centre was created on May 15, 2014 by the decree of the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan and year 2016 was declared as the Year of Multiculturalism in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan will continue to make important contributions to the traditions of tolerance, intercultural and inter-civilization dialogue.

Gursel Ismayilzada
AMBASSADOR OF AZERBAIJAN

It is my great pleasure to address the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan and to extend my warmest greetings and sincere wishes to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and the friendly people of Japan, as well as the Azerbaijani community residing in Japan.

This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence. Azerbaijan first gained its independence in 1918, but regrettably it was short-lived until 1920. On August 30, 1991 Azerbaijan's Supreme Council adopted the Declaration on the Restoration of the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and on Oct. 18, 1991, the Constitutional Act on the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved.

Since then, Azerbaijan has developed into a thriving country with rapid growth and become an important player in the global energy market owing to the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan H.E. Ilham Aliyev. The path to independence for the people of Azerbaijan has not come without difficulties and sacrifice. Today Azerbaijan suffers from the aggression of neighboring Armenia that has occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories, resulting in the loss of life of more than 30,000 people and creating over 1 million refugees and internally displaced people.

The international community has consistently deplored and condemned the use of military force against Azerbaijan



Views of Azerbaijan EMBASSY OF AZERBAIJAN

and the resulting occupation of its territories. In 1993, the U.N. Security Council adopted resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), condemning the use of force against Azerbaijan and the occupation of its territories, reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. In those resolutions, the Security Council reaffirmed that the Nagorno-Karabakh region is part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from all the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has always demonstrated strong commitment to its energy policy, advocated free

market economy and competition. The country plays an important role in energy diversification and energy security. Very important steps in implementing the Southern Gas Corridor, a project for the energy security of Europe, have been taken.

In 2015, in the aftermath of a sharp decline in the oil price on world markets, oil-exporting countries encountered certain difficulties. Azerbaijan was able to get out of this crisis with minimum losses. Rapid and flexible policies, stimulus packages on banking services, easing customs tariffs and promoting investments have led to facilitation of maintaining of the sustainable economic development.

Azerbaijan asserted itself in the world as a very strong transit

country. These opportunities are created by investment in the transport infrastructure. Cargo not only from Central Asia, but also from East Asian countries is now passing through the territory of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is world renowned for its centuries-old ethnic diversity and religious tolerance. The year 2016 has been declared the Year of Multiculturalism in Azerbaijan. As the first secular democracy in the Muslim world since 1918, Azerbaijan is a model of peaceful coexistence of a number of different nations and confessions.

Bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Japan are successfully developing in various fields. The two countries enjoy high-level political ties through last year's mutual visits aiming to deepen a broad range of areas of mutual interest such as partnership in the field of energy and economic cooperation in non-oil industries. Azerbaijan is gradually becoming one of the popular tourism destinations for Japanese travelers. Another positive step forward is recent opening of direct cargo flights from

Azerbaijan to Japan operated by Azerbaijani Silk Way Cargo Company with the aim to foster trade between two countries and beyond.

The priority of Azerbaijan apart from energy-related business areas is to promote implementation of the best practices of Japanese technologies, attract direct investment to non-oil industries, in particular agriculture, information and high technology, tourism and service areas. The government of Azerbaijan is aspiring to see Japanese businesses more proactive in Azerbaijani market.

Over the past years the capital of Azerbaijan — Baku city has become a center of global sporting events. As the capital is preparing to host the Formula-1 Baku European Grand Prix in June, I invite the people of Japan to see this grandiose sporting event and enjoy reach diversity comprising of history and modernity in Baku city.

I take this opportunity to wish friendly people of Japan, as well as the Azerbaijani community residing in Japan peace, prosperity, happiness and well-being.



Heydar Aliyev Centre by Zaha Hadid EMBASSY OF AZERBAIJAN

Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

COKEY

Sanban-cho KS BLDG. 1F, 2, Sanban-cho,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 102-0075, Japan
Tel: 81-3-3263-2081 Fax: 81-3-3263-3441
<http://www.cokey.co.jp/>

Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

INPEX
INPEX CORPORATION

Akasaka Biz Tower,
5-3-1 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-6332 Japan

Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

Engineering for the Quality of Human Life

JGC JGC CORPORATION

Yokohama World Operations Center:
2-3-1, Minato Mirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-6001, Japan
Tel: 81-45-682-1111 Fax: 81-45-682-1112

<http://www.jgc.com/>

Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

KOSUGI

Kosugi Zohen Co., Ltd.

<http://kosugi-zohen.co.jp/>

Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

Mitsubishi Corporation

Tokyo Head Office: 3-1, Marunouchi 2-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Baku Office: Hyatt Tower II, 5th Floor, 1033 Izmir Ave., Baku,
Republic of Azerbaijan

Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day



MITSUI & CO.

Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Azerbaijan
on the Occasion of
Their National Day

Shinyei Group.
Your partner for prosperous society
SHINYEI SHINYEI KAISHA

<http://www.shinyei.co.jp/>

Head Office 77-1 Kyomachi, Chuo-ku, Kobe Tel. 078-392-6988