

## Response to the article:

# « Haut Karabakh, un conflit encore trop peu connu »



[...] We were particularly pleased to see in the issue of May 2016 an article about the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and the ongoing Armenia-Azerbaijani conflict. In general, any attempt to draw international attention to unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is highly appreciated by us. We would like to share our comments regarding specific parts of this article and suggest certain additions accordingly.

We would like to draw your attention to the usage of a distorted map of Azerbaijan and its regions. Seven adjacent regions of Azerbaijan have unfortunately been shown as the Nagorno-Karabakh as whole, thus having direct border with Armenia. It would have been appropriate to use official map of Azerbaijan where borders of all regions are clearly defined. In fact, all four UN Security Council Resolutions that are mentioned in the article are related to those undisputed seven regions beyond the Nagorno-Karabakh.

Furthermore, there are imprecise references stated in the article referring to the so called "historical linkage of the Nagorno-Karabakh region to Armenia" which has never found any historical proof.

Another point mentioned in the article about "incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan in 1921 by Stalin" is completely unsubstantiated as this particular region inside Azerbaijan having no border with Armenia has always been the integral part of Azerbaijan and it was the Soviet Union leadership that artificially divided the Karabakh region into Plain and Mountainous (Nagorno) parts. The leadership of Soviet Azerbaijan was made to grant the status of autonomy to Armenians settling in the mountainous part of Karabakh later and that step was taken without considering the opinion of Azerbaijanis residing in Nagorno-Karabakh, their rights were violated and no referendum had ever been held. It was actually the western part of the Zangazur region of Azerbaijan that was incorporated in Armenia in 1920 and as a result, Nakhchivan region was cut off from the mainland of Azerbaijan.

Overall, the facts demonstrate that during the 70-years of the Soviet rule the Armenians succeeded in expanding their territory at the expense of Azerbaijan and expelling Azerbaijanis from their historical lands. As a result, the territory of Azerbaijan, which in 1918-1920 constituted 114,000 sq.km, later was reduced to 86,600 sq.km.

Regarding the last comment "Nagorno-Karabakh decided to secede from Azerbaijan and declared independence in 1991", we unfortunately found it quite speculative assertion used by the author. Following the collapse of Soviet Union "Nagorno Karabakh" ceased to exist as an Autonomous Oblast of Azerbaijan Republic and has been officially abolished by the Law of Supreme Council of Azerbaijan before the conflict turned into its military phase in the end of 1991 and beginning of 1992.

Understanding and valuing the importance of your publication and its valuable contents for the wider audience of UN diplomats and staff as well as other international civil servants, I believe that it would be of common benefit to share our comments. [...]"

Ambassador Vaqif Sadiqov is the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office in Geneva