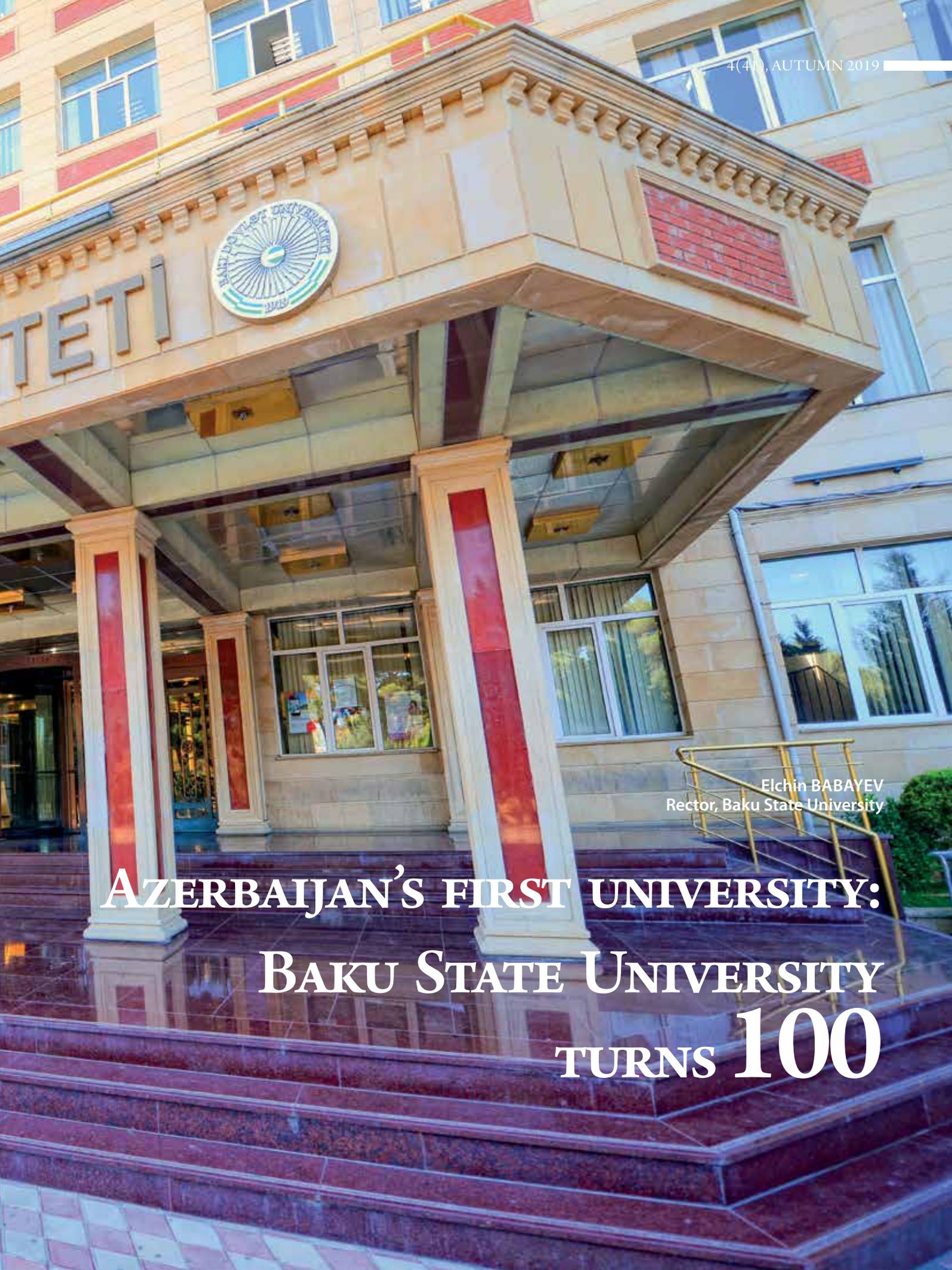


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Baku State University - 100





Elchin BABAYEV
Rector, Baku State University

**AZERBAIJAN'S FIRST UNIVERSITY:
BAKU STATE UNIVERSITY
TURNS 100**

Last year, the 100th anniversary of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), the first law-governed and democratic republic in the East and in the Turkic-Islamic world, was widely celebrated at state and international levels. Taking into account the exceptional importance of this historic event for our national statehood, 2018 was declared a “Year of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic” in the country. During these anniversary celebrations, it was repeatedly highlighted that in the 23 months of its existence the ADR left an indelible mark on the history of national statehood by achieving international recognition of the republic, adopting state attributes, creating the national parliament, the national army and other important public institutions, including the establishment of Baku State University.

Year 2019 marks the centennial anniversary of the establishment of Baku State University, which is widely regarded as the national center of science, education, culture and human resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The signing on 14 November 2017 of an executive order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On celebrating the 100th anniversary of Baku State University”, which was established in the most difficult times and has become a source of national pride ever since its emergence, has signaled the start of activities to mark this historic occasion. The executive order states that “ever since its inception as a new-type higher education institution of the Muslim East, Baku State University was established has covered a road filled with achievements. Always remaining faithful to the ideology of Azerbaijanism, has contributed extensively to establishing a higher education system in the country, conducting scientific research in accordance with up-to-date standards and with the use of cutting-edge technologies and accelerating the process of national self-consciousness.”

In general, it would be safe to say that the emergence of early universities in the Middle Ages was linked to urban development. Baku is an exception! The rapid development of the oil industry in the city since at least the second half of the 19th century turned Baku into one of the world’s leading population centers. The newspapers of those years often compared Baku to the cities of America ... But despite that, there was no university in Baku! Following its occupation of the Caucasus, the Russian Empire was not interested in increasing education in the region. This discrimination always worries the Azerbaijani intelligentsia receiving education in differ-



*First building of BSU.
Photo on a postcard of the early 20th century*

ent cities around the world. The famous Baku oil baron, Haji Zeynalabdin Tagiyev, who had no education of his own, generously allocated his own money on this area. However, his desire to open a school at his own expense was also rejected. In order to have a school for Muslim girls opened in Baku, the famous millionaire had to send an expensive gift to the Tsar’s wife... Those who wanted to open a higher school in Baku received a “no” as an answer ... The discussion of opening a higher school in the Caucasus resumed after the 1917 revolution in Russia and it was only allowed to open the Russian University in Tbilisi. The Tsarism did not show any interest in developing science and education in a Muslim Baku! And yet, there were Azerbaijanis who had graduated from universities of St. Petersburg, Kazan, Moscow, Sorbonne ... In fact, the Declaration of Independence of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in May 1918 was signed by such university graduates ...

The Parliament of the Republic began to operate on 7 December 1918, and just 10 days later the issue of establishing a European-type university in Baku was raised for the first time in parliament. The idea of setting up a European type university in the Eastern city where higher education had been banned for years was nothing short of a cultural revolution! Discussions on the establishment of the university started early next year. On 1 September 1919, the Azerbaijani parliament adopted the law “On establishing a state university in Baku”! First lessons in this institution began on 15 November 1919. Although the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was subjected to bolshevik occupation only after 23 months, the university continued to function as the nation’s scientific and cultural center. In 1922, a total of 30 young doctors were awarded the first university diplomas. First specialists who subsequently played an important part



Vasili Razumovski - first rector of the University

in the fate of the nation were educated in this university. Even Nobel Laureate Lev Landau was one of the first students of the University.

Starting out with just two faculties, the university gradually expanded and new faculties were opened within it. Then, new universities were established on its basis: a higher pedagogical institute, a medical institute and a higher institute of economics were set up in the following years.

But unlike the new higher education institutions, Baku University as a classical school with a focus on teaching fundamental sciences turned into the leading educational and research center in the country.

Over the years the university was headed by various prominent scientists. The first rector was famous surgeon Vasili Razumovski, while well-known writer Tagi Shahbazi was its first Azerbaijani rector. Later this post was held by Aziz Aliyev, Abdulla Garayev, Jafar Khandan and other renowned intellectuals.

Notable chemist Yusif Mammadaliyev, who contributed to the victory in World War II by inventing high-octane gasoline and non-freezing oils, headed the university in the late 1950s.



Tagi Shahbazi - first Azerbaijani rector of the University

Four rectors of this university have fallen victim to Stalin's repressions over the years. However, the difficult times and ordeals could not break the will of this daring nation. The university kept growing to eventually become a source of pride for the entire nation.

... In the late 1980s, a national liberation movement began in Azerbaijan. And the university remained committed to its status of the center of people's liberation movement.

In 1991, Azerbaijan regained its independence. However, in the early years of independence were fraught with intense political and economic difficulties. Azerbaijan's independence was faced with a serious threat. The country in transition was saved from chaos and fragmentation by an experienced leader and world-renowned graduate of Baku State University. He was Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev. Heydar Aliyev, who had contributed a great deal to the development and progress of the university both during the Soviet period and in the years of independence, highly appreciated its role and importance and described it as "a national treasure of the Azerbaijani people, national pride of the Republic of Azerbaijan".



Lecture at Baku State University. 1950

It is no coincidence that the list of honorary doctors of the university today includes such personalities as Heydar Aliyev, Ilham Aliyev, Turgut Ozal, Suleyman Demirel, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Lotfi Zadeh, Boutros Boutros Ghali, George Robertson, Koichiro Matsuura, Olzhas Suleimenov, Tadeusz Swietochowski.

The Baku State family has more than 23,000 students, about 1,300 faculty members, a branch in Gazakh, educational and leisure centers in Guba and Altıagaj, and a "Young talents" lyceum in Baku.

The University has a Russian center, an Abay center, an Azerbaijan-Korea information support center, Baku King Sejong Institute, the Confucius Institute, and the UNESCO Chair on Human Rights and Information. All these serve the goal of promoting mutual understanding among peoples and strengthening cultural ties.

In a nutshell, 100-year-old Baku State University:

- as the first institution of higher education in the Republic of Azerbaijan, provides great opportunities in the development of various fields of science;
- since the beginning of the 20th century, has played an invaluable role in educating the Azerbaijani people, in the formation of the intellectual class and in the enrichment of academic and scientific traditions;
- has played a major role in the declaration of independence of Azerbaijan at the end of the last century, in the revival of our national statehood, in the awakening and enlightenment of political and public consciousness;
- in addition to meeting the needs of the nation for science and education ever since its inception, has also served to strengthen national consciousness and independent statehood;
- has adequately fulfilled the tasks of integration into the world's educational system, training of qualified personnel and establishment of new scientific schools;
- develops universal science and modern education through technologies and scientific research;
- in addition to possessing academic infrastructure, has aspired to function as an educational institution capable of nurturing citizens cognizant of their national and spiritual values, receptive of global innovation, having strong social and public connections and yet attached to the country, society and humanity as a whole;
- has taken part in rating contests conducted by the most authoritative news agencies of the world and is currently ranked among top 800 elite universities;
- cooperates with hundreds of universities, science and education centers from dozens of countries;
- implements exchange programs as part of EU projects such as TEMPUS-TACIS, ERASMUS MUNDUS,



*First seal of BSU. 1919.
Azerbaijan Museum of National History*

1950: fifth-year students of Baku State University at Genetics and Darwinism Museum of the Biology Faculty



the Mevlana Exchange Program covering Turkic-speaking countries, as well as student-and-teacher exchanges in accordance with agreements signed with recognized universities around the world;

- trains dual diploma specialists with master's and doctor's degrees together with universities of France and Germany;
- organizes lectures of recognized statesmen, Nobel Laureates in various fields of science and heads of authoritative international organizations;
- provides comprehensive development of the younger generation in accordance with the requirements of modern times on the basis of ample material and technical resources.

Of course, countless more professionals, scientists,

researchers, inventors and creative people will enter different areas of life from the classrooms of this young 20th century university of the East. There is a saying from an Islamic prophet posted at the entrance to Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. It will never lose its



1958: Academician Yusif Mammadaliyev, Rector of the Baku State University, during an exam



Prof. Robert B. Laughlin, Nobel Laureate for Physics from the Stanford University giving a lecture to the academic staff of Baku State University

and science, in the preservation of our nation's tradition of statehood and national-spiritual purity, Heydar Aliyev said, "the emergence and development of the national liberation movement in Azerbaijan, the protection of our history from provocation and distortion, the promotion of the centuries-old history of our people, our culture, great moral values – all these became possible thanks to the activities of our scientists and teachers working in higher education institutions. The contribution of Baku State University to this has been enormous."

Baku State University is also known, recognized and highly valued internationally as a modern and efficient educational institution. The executive order on commemorating the 100th anniversary of Baku State University contains this phrase: "The formation of creative scientific thinking in the Republic of Azerbaijan on the basis of innovative ideas, the continuous improvement of human resources and further development of the scientific and intellectual environment, including the preservation of cultural and moral values of the Azerbaijani people, are the key directions of today's multifaceted and broad-based activities of the University towards integration into the educational space of the rest of the world."

As first rector of Baku State University V. I. Razumovskiy said, "... Long live and prosper, Baku University!" 🌟



relevance: "If you want to see the beauty of this world, become a merchant, if you want to see the beauty of the other world, be devout, but if you want to see the beauty of both worlds, then learn science and become a scientist..."

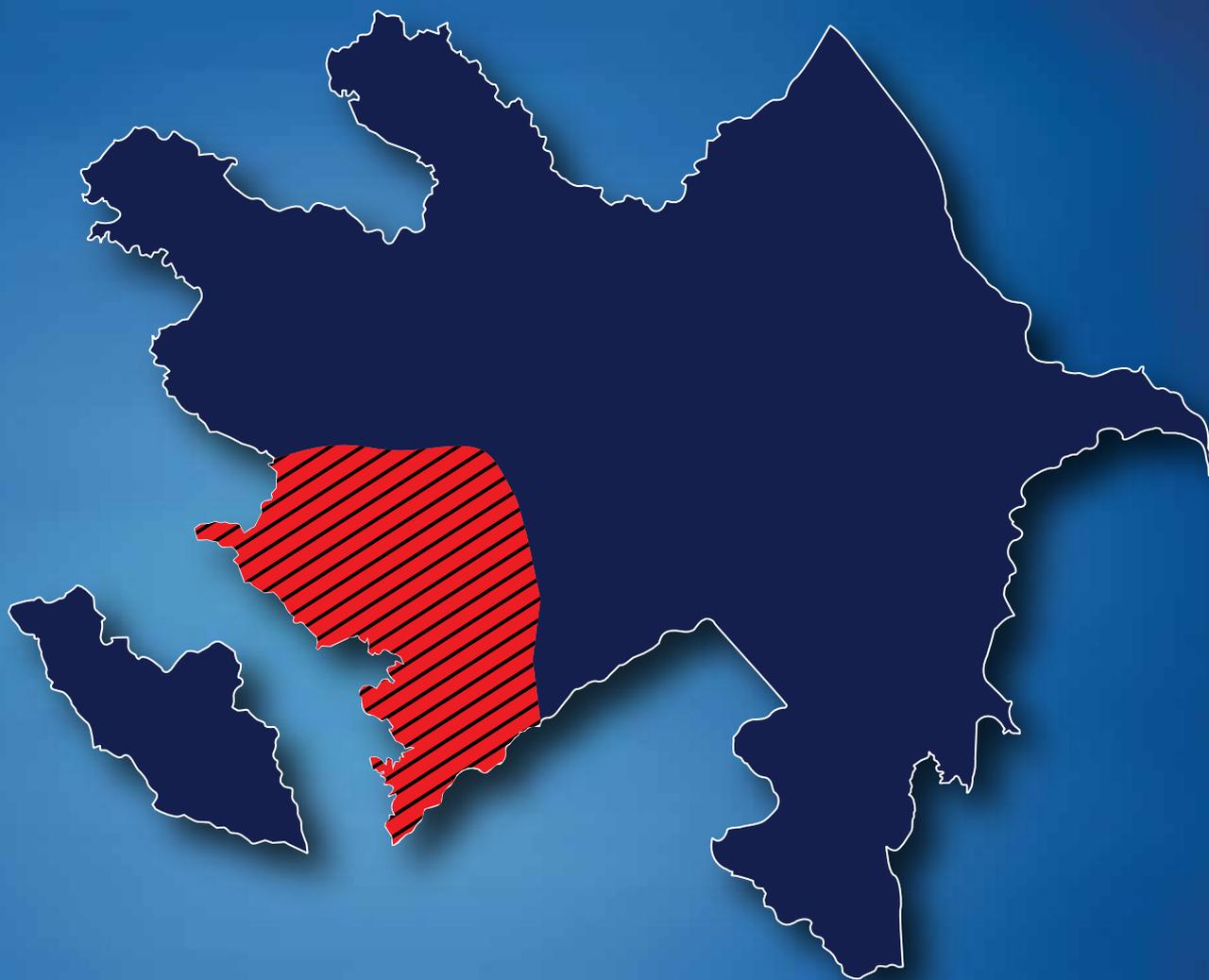
Speaking about the exceptional role of Baku State University in the development of modern education

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THERE IS NO AZERBAIJAN WITHOUT KARABAKH



AZERBAIJANI DISTRICTS

occupied by Armenia
and dates of their occupation

Asgaran – 1991

Khojaly – 26.02.1992

Agdam – 23.07.1993

Gubadli – 31.08.1993

Hadrut – 1991

Shusha – 08.05.1992

Kalbajar – 02.04.1993

Zangilan – 29.10.1993

Khojavand – 1991

Lachin – 18.05.1992

Fuzuli – 23.08.1993

Khankandi – 1991

Agdara – 07.07.1993

Jabrayil – 23.08.1993