

# National Army - our source of strength and pride

**Musa MARJANLI**  
Editor-in-Chief

The Azerbaijani Army is 100 years old. On 26 June 1918, by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the first regular military unit, a Special Azerbaijani Corps, was established. The Declaration of Independence adopted on 28 May of that year stated that Azerbaijan must have a regular army and create its own armed forces to defend itself from foreign interference and neutralize domestic enemy forces. The government aimed to create a 25,000-strong army. On 1 August, the Azerbaijani Ministry of War was established and Khosrov bay Sultanov was appointed as first defense minister. Significant steps were taken to establish a regular army, which is considered to be an important attribute of statehood because the interests of great powers converged on the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. In the 23-month period of the existence of the ADR, our people were able to create their own army. As a result of the great efforts of the talented generals of the time, such as Samad bay Mehmandarov and Aliaga Shikhlinski, important measures were taken to turn the Azerbaijani army into a professional military entity. There were many deficiencies in the army building during that period. The Republic experienced problems ranging from external pressure and difficulties in obtaining military equipment to the shortage of professional military personnel. But in spite of all this, the National Army and the Ottoman Empire's Caucasus Islamic Army quickly liberated Baku and its surrounding districts from Armenian-Bolshevik occupation. These military units showed great competence in crushing revolts against the national government in Mugan and Asgaran and defeated Armenian regular army units that trespassed the Azerbaijani border in Gazakh ... Following Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan in April 1920, the National Army was abolished.

After the restoration of the state independence of Azerbaijan, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan made a decision to establish the National Army on 9 October 1991. It was the time when aggression, territorial claims and threats against Azerbaijan reached their culminating point. Some neighboring states did not conceal their intentions to split the young Azerbaijani state and take over a part of its territory. Therefore, after Azerbaijan restored its state independence, the establishment of the National Army became the most important issue on the country's agenda. Thanks to our soldiers and officers who showed outstanding bravery in the First Karabakh War, the plan to split our state were nipped in the bud.

After Azerbaijan declared its state independence, our country was faced with a serious crisis in the military sphere. The main task facing Azerbaijan, which had no regular army, was to control the situation in the battles for Karabakh, a task that was very difficult to implement. The material and technical support of the army was extremely problematic. However, all of the country's capabilities were gradually mobilized for the building of a national army to prevent defeat in the war. First serious steps were taken





to set up voluntary battalions and a regular army. Partial military mobilization and army recruitment were implemented. The foundation of a professional army in our country was laid in late 1993. It was from that time that a scientific approach was adopted to army building, the armed forces were saved from disunity and an end was put to the politicization of the army. Under Heydar Aliyev as President and Commander-in-Chief, the main emphasis was placed on the strength of the army. According to a 22 May 1998 decree of President Heydar Aliyev, the day of the establishment of the Special Azerbaijani Corps, 26 June, was declared the Day of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and this date has been celebrated as an official state holiday ever since.

Today, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces are an example of the power of our state and a source of pride for the people. Under the leadership of Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, very important work has been being carried out to modernize the Armed Forces and bring their infrastructure to the latest standards. At the same time, our army acquires new technical capabilities and adopts modern, world-class warfare and combat tactics.

By increasing the number of its military partners, Azerbaijan also boosts its defensive power by buying

the most sophisticated military equipment and ammunition from many countries around the world. The growth in military spending has contributed to the continuous upgrade and improvement of our armored hardware, aircraft and ammunition. Taking into account the recent achievements of science and with the application of technological advancements, high-precision and destructive military hardware, ammunition and other military vehicles developed by the world's leading weapons manufacturers continue to be part of our Armed Forces.

The successful reforms, as well as the automated command and control centers that have been set up in the army using modern technologies have enabled all types of troops to operate steadily, flexibly and confidentially. The provision of military units, especially those on the frontline, with new types of weaponry, combat vehicles and other military equipment, modern missile complexes and fire control systems have significantly bolstered the combat capability of our troops and expanded their ability to destroy enemy personnel, combat technology and military infrastructure.

New state-of-the-art weaponry is consistently delivered and handed over to the army. Rules of their





effective use are taught in a short time prior to their deployment at appropriate locations. The new weaponry includes hundreds of armored vehicles, guard vessels, warships, air defense systems, fighter jets, combat and military vehicles, transport helicopters, most modern reconnaissance and unmanned aircraft, the most modern artillery installations, long-range missiles and operational tactical missile complexes.

Along with army building, the focus is also on the defense industry of Azerbaijan. There are about 30 military plants operating in the country, manufacturing military products to meet the demand of the Armed Forces. There are 58 manufacturing sites fitted with the latest technology and equipment from the world's leading companies. Today, Azerbaijan has managed to secure a worthy place in this field on a global scale. Domestic





production of military equipment in Azerbaijan has provided the army with arms, ammunition, military hardware and other resources and created conditions for the export of such products to foreign markets. The development of our military industry has allowed the country the opportunity to replenish its military arsenal with modern weapons and other military products manufactured domestically.

The destructive capacity and accuracy of the means of combat and ammunition our country has developed thanks to cooperation with other countries ensures the superiority of our troops over the enemy.





The military parade held in Azadlig Square in Baku on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces demonstrated once again that the Azerbaijani army is among the strongest armies in the world. The military equipment and personnel exhibited in the parade demonstrates that the Azerbaijani Armed Forces have sophisticated infrastructure and a high level of combat capability. Experts believe that the military parade was also an indicator of Azerbaijan's achievements in the field of army building. The Azerbaijani Armed Forces are the main guarantor of statehood and independence, as well as a factor of national development.

The military parade once again demonstrated the unity of the people and the army and the attitude towards the army in society. Today, every Azerbaijani citizen is proud of the power of the 100-year-old Azerbaijani Armed Forces, which is evidenced by the fact that thousands of Azerbaijanis serve in the army. Our National Army is a source of strength and pride. With such a strong army, we are ready to protect our homeland from the enemy and liberate our occupied territories. 🇦🇿