



## **Public Rally to Mark the 17<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh**

***INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION GUARANTEES SECURITY***

***AZERBAIJAN SHOULD SIGN A LEGAL DOCUMENT NOT TO USE FORCE OR THE THREAT OF FORCE***



YEREVAN, 2 Sept. 2008, ARF Press Office -- The Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun rallied several thousand supporters in Yerevan on today to mark the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh.

The MC was Hrayr Karapetyan, member of the ARF-Dashnaktsutyun Supreme Body of Armenia and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia.

The first speaker was Arthur Aghabekyan, Chairman of the parliament's Standing Committee on Defense, National Security and Internal Affairs.

ARF-Dashnaktsutyun Bureau member and Leader of the ARF Parliamentary Faction Vahan Hovhannesyanyan spoke next.

He was followed by ARF-Dashnaktsutyun Bureau members Levon Mkrtchyan and Aghvan Vardanyan.

The concluding remarks were delivered by Armen Rustamyan, ARF-Dashnaktsutyun Supreme Body of Armenia Representative and Chairman of the parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Relations.

With the backdrop of the recent war and subsequent events in the South Caucasus, the speakers focused on the regional developments, Artsakh's right to self-determination, Turkish-Armenian relations and Armenia's internal situation.

At the end, the rally adopted a declaration (see below).

The rally was held at the footsteps of Yerevan's Matenadaran (museum of ancient Armenian manuscripts), in scorching weather.



## DECLARATION

On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Artsakh<sup>1</sup> movement and on the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh<sup>2</sup>, we, the participants of the public rally organized by the ARF-Dashnaktsutyun and held in Yerevan on 2 September 2008, assert:

- The recent war and developments in the South Caucasus have created a new situation in our region;
- It is evident that if from now on the international community is not able to prevent the use of force, then the unforeseen developments could be calamitous. What happened also demonstrated that how dangerous it is to apply double standards.
- The OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries<sup>3</sup> by recognizing, together or alone, the independence of Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia have underlined the primacy of the principle of peoples' right to self-determination in international law;
- The international community's respect of the right of the people of Artsakh to self-determination and freedom has no alternative. The people of Artsakh have repeatedly expressed their will to live independent of Azerbaijan. The people of Artsakh have exercised their right to self-determination based on the principles of international law and the Constitution of the Soviet Union. Mountainous Karabakh has never been part of independent Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani domination over Mountainous Karabakh ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- In the Karabakh-Azerbaijan war, Azerbaijan was the aggressor. Artsakh defended its right to live securely and was successful; Azerbaijan is responsible for launching the war and for its consequences;
- For seventeen years, the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh exists as a democratic state, with its relevant state structures and local self-government bodies;
- Azerbaijani ambitions to re-conquer Artsakh by force are doomed to failure and will lead the region to more unforeseen upheavals;
- Having *de facto* recognized the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh and having signed with it economic and other cooperation agreements, Armenia has refrained from *de jure* recognizing the RMK solely because of its stand to remain true to the spirit of resolving the conflict peacefully through negotiations;

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<sup>1</sup> *Artsakh*, the historical name of Karabakh

<sup>2</sup> RMK, internationally better known as Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, *Nagorno* is the Russian for Mountainous, a legacy of Soviet times. Its regional parliament declared its formation and independence on 2 September 1991. For more information visit the website of the MKR Office in Washington, DC <http://www.nkrusa.org/>

<sup>3</sup> The OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries are the USA, France and the Russian Federation



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**ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION-DASHNAKTSUTYUN**  
**(ARMENIAN SOCIALIST PARTY)**

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- Escalation of EU-RF-USA relations to a confrontational level can not be beneficial for the region; it is imperative to find ways to resolve all outstanding problems through dialogue. Armenia can and should contribute to these efforts.

Furthermore, we assert that:

- 1) The negotiations to resolve the Artsakh conflict can bear results and promote peace only when Azerbaijan signs a legal document with the Republics of Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh not to use force or the threat of force;
- 2) The Republic of Armenia should sign a treaty with the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh undertaking to act as the guarantor of the independence and security of the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh;
- 3) The authorities of the Republic of Armenia should anticipate the official recognition of the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh if Azerbaijan continues to consider the military route as an acceptable means to resolve the issue, or if through its actions endangers the negotiation process.

We declare:

- a) Armenia and Artsakh shall not relinquish their security guarantees;
- b) Regarding the security of Armenia and Artsakh, the Armenian people is unified and united; no internal political issue should threaten the existence and security of our statehood;
- c) The best guarantee to consolidate the Armenians and to be defended from external dangers is the irreversibility of internal reforms, the advancement of democracy and the establishment of justice.

**Participants of the Rally of  
2 September 2008  
Yerevan, Armenia**