

**PROCLAMATION**  
**January 20 – Azerbaijani "Black January" Memorial Day**  
**The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the brutal Soviet crackdown**

WHEREAS, the Azerbaijani-Americans are an ethnic community with a recognized presence in our state, actively contributing to regional diversity, intercultural understanding, peace and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of Azerbaijan has been an independent nation since 1918 and a constituent member of the Soviet Union between 1922 and 1991; and

WHEREAS, on the night of January 19-20, 1990, to crush a popular uprising for freedom, 26,000 Soviet special troops with support of tanks, helicopters and navy stormed Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, indiscriminately firing at unarmed inhabitants; and

WHEREAS, an investigation by Human Rights Watch found compelling evidence that in January 1990, Soviet forces used unjustified excessive force, including armored vehicles and weapons appropriate for sophisticated warfare, fired on clearly marked ambulances, residential neighborhoods and apartment buildings to intentionally crush innocent civilians in Azerbaijan; and

WHEREAS, the Black January in Azerbaijan was the most violent Soviet crackdown on dissent during the Gorbachev's glasnost era, with over 170 people killed and 714 reported wounded, and

WHEREAS, the tragedy of January 1990 reinforced Azerbaijanis' determination for freedom, resulting in Azerbaijan's independence less than two years later, and

WHEREAS, the modern Republic of Azerbaijan is located in the South Caucasus, includes Karabakh and Nakhchivan regions, and its territorial sovereignty and independence are unconditionally recognized by the United States since 1992; and

WHEREAS, Azerbaijan has been a steadfast regional ally and friend of the United States, an active contributor to the NATO and U.S. missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Iraq; and

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby proclaim January 20, 2014, as "Azerbaijani Black January Memorial Day" in \_\_\_\_\_, and call upon all residents to join members of Azerbaijani Society of America (ASA) in remembrance of the heroes of Azerbaijan's struggle for freedom.