

# HOLIDAYS

EXCERPT FROM THE LABOR CODE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

## Article 105. Holidays

### 1. Holidays of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- New Year's Day (1 and 2 January);
- Women's Day (8 March);
- Day of Victory over fascism (9 May);
- Republic Day (28 May);
- Day of National Salvation of the Azerbaijani people (15 June);
- Armed Forces Day (26 June);
- National Independence Day (18 October);
- National Flag Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan (9 November);
- Constitution Day (12 November);
- National Revival Day (17 November);
- World Azerbaijanis Solidarity Day (31 December);
- Novruz - five days;
- Eid al-Adha (Gurban) - two days;
- Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan) - two days.

2. New Year's Day, Women's Day, Day of Victory over fascism, Republic Day, Day of National Salvation of the Azerbaijani people; Armed Forces Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan, National Flag Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan, World Azerbaijanis Solidarity Day, Novruz, Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr are considered as days off.

3. No employee shall work on days off except for occasions specified by the Labor Code.

4. Days to celebrate holidays like Novruz, Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr shall be determined and made public by relevant executive authorities until the end of every December.

5. If days off coincide with holidays, they shall be transferred to the next work day after the day off.

6. If Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr coincide with other holidays that are considered days off, the next workday shall be considered as a day off.

7. In case holidays and days off follow each other or vice versa, the following work days or days off can be changed on the basis of the decision of relevant executive authorities in order to ensure the succession of work days and days off.



## 1-2 January – New Year

Starting a new calendar year from January 1 dates back to the 46th year BC. According to sources, this initiative was put forward by the Roman ruler Julius Caesar.

According to the ancient belief, the first month of the year was named January in honor of Janus, the Roman god, who was considered the patron of each beginning. In the following stages, in many countries, the first day of the new year was mainly associated with agriculture and celebrated either in the beginning of spring or at the end of the autumn.

In the Middle Ages, most of the western European countries celebrated the beginning of the year on December 25, on March 1 and 25, while Eastern European countries marked it on September 1.

Starting a new calendar year from January 1 began to be applied in the majority of Western European countries in the 16th century, and in Russia in the 18th century. By the middle of the 20th century, other countries gradually joined the tradition (for example, Japan in 1873, China in 1912, Greece in 1923, and so on).

## 8 March – International Women's Day

On March 8, 1910, the Copenhagen conference of women socialists made a decision to celebrate the International Women's Day, but the exact date was not set.

In the International Women's Year in 1975, the United Nations decided to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8 every year.

The Azerbaijani woman, with her wisdom, diligence and purity, went down in the history of the nation and deserved great respect and reverence at all the times.

It is no coincidence that the first secular girls' school in the Muslim East was opened in Baku in 1901.

The United States granted women the right to vote in 1920, France in 1944, Italy in 1946, and Switzerland in 1971.

Founded in 1918, Azerbaijan Democratic Republic officially granted peoples of both sexes living in the country the right to vote. Azerbaijan was the first country in the East to grant women suffrage.

Adopted in 1995, the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan provided a legal framework for women's active involvement in the process of building a democratic state together with men.





Important steps have been taken to ensure gender equality in Azerbaijan after the adoption of the Constitution. The establishment of the State Committee on Women's Problems under the Decree signed by national leader Heydar Aliyev on January 14, 1998, marked a new stage in the implementation of gender policy.

In 2006, under the Order of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the State Committee for Women's Problems was restructured into the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs.

In 2006, the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted the Law on Gender Equality, defining the main priorities and tasks of the state policy to ensure gender equality.

Today, women in Azerbaijan are actively represented in the public administration system, closely involved in the ongoing public and political, socio-economic, and cultural processes in the society, and continue making significant contributions to the prosperity of the state and the people's welfare.

## NOVRUZ

Novruz is an ancient traditional holiday which reflects and promotes cultural, national and spiritual values, folklore, and nationality of the Azerbaijani people. For many centuries Novruz has been celebrated as a national holiday with various festivals and ceremonies in every part of Azerbaijan.

The preservation of the ancient traditions of this holiday, which is a vivid expression of eternal love for rich spiritual heritage and nature, with all its colorfulness is the manifestation of high respect of the Azerbaijani people for their historical and cultural past and deep commitment to their national and spiritual values.

Though Novruz is marked by many Eastern peoples, the most spectacular celebrations take place in Azerbaijan.

Since restoring its independence, Azerbaijan has developed its rich traditions and like other national holidays, Novruz started to be widely celebrated at the state level.

On November 30, 2009, Novruz was included into the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and on February 23, 2010, the 64th General Assembly of the United Nations declared March 21 as "International Day of Novruz".



## 9 MAY - DAY OF VICTORY OVER FASCISM

On the night of May 8 to 9 1945, German Instrument of Surrender was signed in Berlin. The Azerbaijani people who made a crucial contribution to victory over the fascism in the World War II sent about 700,000 sons and daughters to the front. Of them, more than 300,000 were killed in the battles. The Azerbaijani divisions made glorious frontline records from the Caucasus to far Berlin, many of our compatriots fought in guerilla battalions. 123 Azerbaijanis were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet

Azerbaijani oilmen made a particular contribution to victory as they supplied 75 million tons of oil, 22 million tons of gasoline and other oil products to the frontline and industry.

In the years of war, Azerbaijan accounted for three-quarters of the total volume of oil, and 85-90 per cent of aviation petrol and high-quality oils produced in the Soviet Union.

May 9 is marked as Victory Day at the state level in Azerbaijan.

## 28 MAY - REPUBLIC DAY

On May 28, 1918, the first democratic parliamentary republic in the Muslim East – Azerbaijan Democratic Republic – was proclaimed. The Declaration of Independence stated that the people of Azerbaijan are the bearers of sovereign rights and that the Republic of Azerbaijan is an independent state.

Although Azerbaijan Democratic Republic existed for only 23 months, it has left an indelible mark in the history of national statehood and laid a solid foundation for future independence of Azerbaijan by strengthening the sense of freedom and independence in the hearts of the people.

At the very time, democratic institutions were established, significant work was done in the field of army building, and women were granted the right to vote for the first time in the Muslim East.

Under the relevant order of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, 2018 was declared as a "Year of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic" in the country.

The founders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic are held in great respect.





## 15 JUNE - DAY OF NATIONAL SALVATION OF THE AZERBAIJANI PEOPLE



Despite the fact that Azerbaijan declared restoration of its independence in 1991, the political crisis caused by incompetence of the government, activities of internal and external destructive forces aimed at undermining the foundations of state, emergence of separatist tendencies in different regions, and severe socio-economic situation put the country face-to-face with a threat of civil war and the loss of independence. The situation was further exacerbated by Armenia's aggression and occupation of Azerbaijan's lands.

And in such a fateful moment, the Azerbaijani people trusted their future to outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev. After returning to Baku by popular demand, Heydar Aliyev was elected as chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Azerbaijan on June 15, 1993, and as President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 3 the same year.

It was thanks to Heydar Aliyev's salvation mission that the processes threatening the state independence of Azerbaijan were prevented and state-building issues were put in the focus of attention. Thus, 15 June went down in the history of Azerbaijan as the Day of National Salvation.

Key priorities of national leader Heydar Aliyev's policy included achieving a ceasefire with Armenia, establishing public and political stability, building a democratic system and liberal economy, ensuring national army building and security, implementing a new oil strategy in the country, ensuring Azerbaijan's integration into the international arena, and achieving fair settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

1995 marked the launch of radical reforms in all spheres of public life, a new Constitution was adopted, the multi-party political system was built, political pluralism became a norm of society, freedom of speech and press was ensured.

In parallel, significant steps were taken to build a market economy, the world's leading companies were involved in exploiting hydrocarbon resources in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea, routes for transportation of oil to the world market were defined and resources to ensure Azerbaijan's development was achieved in a short period of time.

Heydar Aliyev pursued a consistent and purposeful policy to transform Azerbaijan into a reliable partner in international relations system, raising the world community's awareness of material, spiritual and intellectual values of the country, and ensure the interests of the Azerbaijani state both in the region and in the world by taking into account the key aspects of national security and development.

The years 1993-2003 when Heydar Aliyev was in power and was promoted to the level of national leader for his unprecedented services to the Azerbaijani people and state, marked a historic stage when Azerbaijan was established as a state, formed and transformed into a full-fledged subject of the international community. These 10 years saw the implementation of the national development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the people of Azerbaijan benefited from a rare historic opportunity and at the cost of great sufferings made their independence everlasting and irreversible.



## JUNE 26 - DAY OF ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

In the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century – when Azerbaijan was part of the Tsarist Russian regime – ordinary Muslims were not conscripted into the army. Only descendants of noble families had the right to serve in the army and receive a military education. In the Tsarist Russia era, Azerbaijan produced many outstanding military figures such as General Samad bay Mehmandarov, General Aliagha Shikhlinski, General Faraj bay Aghayev, General Ehsan Khan Nakhchivanski and others.

After Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was established on May 28, 1918, one of its key tasks was army building. On June 26, Azerbaijan Democratic Republic established its first regular army - 5,000-strong Special Army Corps of Azerbaijan. Formation of the national army units together with the Caucasian Islamic Army of the Ottomans saved Baku and its surrounding provinces from Armenian-Bolshevik occupation, thus playing a crucial role in protecting national statehood, inviolability of borders and ensuring security. According to consequences of the WWI, when the Ottoman military unit had to leave Azerbaijan, the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution on November 1, 1918, under which military building was entrusted to the Azerbaijani government. On December 25 of the same year general of the artillery, Samad bay Mehmandarov became minister of the military, while lieutenant general Aliagha Shikhlinski became deputy minister on December 29. In a short span of time, they did great works in the military building. On March 1919, the army of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic staged a ceremonial military parade in Ganja.

Following the collapse of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the Bolsheviks abolished the national army and executed 15 out of 21 generals of the Azerbaijani armed forces.

Azerbaijanis were trying to master military professions even at times when they were not independent. During the WWII, Azerbaijan produced a new grand corps of servicemen, officers and generals. Heroes of the Soviet Union like Israfil Mammadov, Gafur Mammadov, Huseynbala Aliyev, Mehdi Huseynzade demonstrated great heroism in the fight against fascism. It was at that time when General Hazi Aslanov, General Akim Abbasov, General Mahmud Abilov, General Tarlan Aliyarbayov and many others went down in history.

Although the ministry of defense was established in Azerbaijan after the country restored its independence in 1991, it failed to properly fulfill its functions and protect people's interests until national leader Heydar Aliyev returned to power in 1993. This marked a new era in the history of the Azerbaijani armed forces. Officers who graduated from Jamshid Nakchivanski Military Lyceum, which was established by national leader Heydar Aliyev in 1971, were engaged in army building. Higher military schools were reorganized and new ones were established.

National leader Heydar Aliyev always attached great importance to the glorious history of the army of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. On May 22, 1998, the national leader signed an Order proclaiming June 26 as the Day of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan.

Nowadays the Azerbaijani army is experiencing the most glorious stage of its history. The military parades held in 2008, 2011, 2013 and 2018 were a clear demonstration of the power of the Azerbaijani Army.

The historic victory gained in April 2016 after a counter-offensive in response to the continued provocations of the Armenian armed forces on the line of contact was another testimony to the Azerbaijani army's power and determination to win.

In May of 2018, 11,000 hectares of Nakhchivani lands seized by Armenians in the early 1990s were liberated as a result of a successful operation conducted by the Nakhchivan Combined Arms Army.

On June 26, 2018, a solemn military parade was held at Azadlig Square in Baku to mark the centenary of the establishment of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Flags of Azerbaijan raised in the territories liberated in 2016 April battles and 2018 Nakhchivan operation were demonstrated in the parade. Addressing the parade, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev said the country's territorial integrity will surely be restored: "There will come a day when the Azerbaijani flag raised on the lands that still remain under occupation will be delivered to Azadlig Square and will be demonstrated in a military parade."





Under the leadership of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, the Azerbaijani armed forces have become one of the world's powerful armies meeting high professional standards, possessing state-of-the-art armory, discipline and combat capability. The Azerbaijani army is capable of fulfilling any task.

## 18 OCTOBER – NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY

Azerbaijan restored its state independence in the late 20th century after the collapse of the USSR. The Declaration on the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan was adopted at an extraordinary session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan on August 30, 1991. On October 18, 1991, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted the Constitutional Act "On the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan" which proclaimed the independent state of Azerbaijan as a legal successor of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The Constitutional Act consisted of 6 chapters and 32 articles.

On December 29, 1991, the people of Azerbaijan voted for the country's independence and sovereignty in a nationwide referendum.

The chaos and government crisis within the country, as well as Armenia's military aggression against Azerbaijan, seriously damaged the independent state-building process at that time. Only in 1993, when national leader Heydar Aliyev returned to power, the country managed to take purposeful steps to fulfill the ideas of national independence and to restore the traditions of statehood and sovereignty.

## 9 NOVEMBER – DAY OF NATIONAL FLAG OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

The national flag of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was adopted on November 9, 1918, and kept the status of a national flag until April 27, 1920, when Azerbaijan was occupied and lost its independence.

The aspect ratio (height to width ratio) of the national flag is 1:2. The national flag of the Republic of Azerbaijan consists of three-color and horizontal stripes of the same width. Upper stripe is blue, middle stripe is red, and the lower one is green; in the middle of the red stripe on both sides of the flag white crescent with an eight-pointed star is depicted. The sky blue symbolizes the country's Turkic origin, the red is for modernization of society, democracy, and green demonstrates the Islamic civilization.

In November 1990, at a session of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, which was initiated and chaired by national leader Heydar Aliyev, this flag was adopted as the national flag of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. On 5 February 1991, the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan Republic adopted a Law on "National Flag of the Republic of Azerbaijan", declaring the flag of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic as the national flag of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's Order "On the establishment of National Flag Square in the capital city of Baku of the Republic of Azerbaijan" signed on November 17, 2007, is a clear sign of special respect for the national flag.

The Day of National Flag of the Republic of Azerbaijan was instituted under the Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev signed on November 17, 2009.

November 9, the day of the adoption of the national flag by Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, is marked as the National Flag Day.



The national flag demonstrates the Azerbaijani people's commitment to freedom ideology, national and spiritual values and universal ideals.

## 12 NOVEMBER – CONSTITUTION DAY



The first Constitution of Azerbaijan was adopted on May 19, 1921, at the First All-Azerbaijan Congress of Soviets.

Amendments and additions were made to the Constitution on March 14, 1925, at the 4th All-Azerbaijan Congress of Soviets in connection with the establishment of the USSR.

Azerbaijan SSR's next Constitution was approved on March 26, 1927, at the 5th All-Azerbaijan Congress of Soviets.

On March 14, 1937, the new Constitution of Azerbaijan SSR came into force under a resolution adopted at the 9th All-Azerbaijan Congress of Soviets in connection with the adoption of a new Constitution of the USSR in 1936.

A new Constitution of Azerbaijan SSR was drafted after the adoption of a new Constitution of the USSR in 1977. Proposed by national leader Heydar Aliyev at the seventh session of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan SSR on April 2, 1978, article 73 of the Constitution read as follows: "The state language of Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic is Azerbaijani language." The final edition of the Constitution of Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic was adopted on April 21, 1978. The adoption of Azerbaijani language as the state language is one of the historic merits of national leader Heydar Aliyev.

A number of amendments and additions had been made to the Constitution starting from the second half of the 1980s. This considerably changed the Constitution, which was in effect in this edition until 1995, when the Constitution of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan was adopted.

The Constitution of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan was drafted by the Constitutional commission under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev. It was adopted in a nationwide referendum on November 12, 1995, and came into force on November 27, 1995.

In nationwide referendums, the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan was amended on August 24 2002, and further amendments and additions were made on March 18, 2009, and September 26, 2016.

The Constitution consists of 5 sections, 12 chapters and 158 Articles.

The 12th of November is celebrated as the Day of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Constitution, which is based on the principles of "a democratic, constitutional, secular, unitary republic", ensures the implementation of democratic and modern state-building, as well as fundamental socio-economic and political and legal reforms in Azerbaijan.





## 17 NOVEMBER – NATIONAL REVIVAL DAY

On November 17, 1988, the long-term protests started at the Azadlig Square (former Lenin Square) in Baku against the Soviet leadership's anti-Azerbaijani policy concerning the Karabakh problem and Armenia's open aggression against Azerbaijan. On November 22 of the same year, a large contingent of units of the Soviet army entered Baku, which was accompanied by the imposition of curfew in the city. But this did not put an end to the protests. Only on the night of December 5, the nationwide protests were brutally dispersed by the Soviet army using troops and armored vehicles.

Azərbaycanda xalq hərəkatının başlanğıcı olan və müstəqillik yolunda mühüm əhəmiyyətə malik bu tarixi hadisə Milli Dirçəliş Günü kimi tarixə düşüb.

## 31 DECEMBER – WORLD AZERBAIJANIS SOLIDARITY DAY



On December 16, 1991, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic Heydar Aliyev proposed celebrating December 31 as the Day of Solidarity and Unity of World Azerbaijanis. The six-article Decree of the Supreme Assembly of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic declared December 31 as the Day of Solidarity and Unity of World Azerbaijanis. It also featured a number of other issues such as annual celebration of the holiday, submission of a proposal on official celebration of the holiday in Azerbaijan to the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Azerbaijan, etc.

In 1993, the 31st of December was announced as the World Azerbaijanis Solidarity Day in accordance with the Presidential Decree. This is the holiday of all the Azerbaijanis who number 50 million worldwide.

The First Congress of World Azerbaijanis was held at the initiative of national leader Heydar Aliyev in 2001. In 2002, under an Order of Heydar Aliyev, the State Committee on Work with Azerbaijanis Living Abroad (currently the State Committee for Work with Diaspora) was established. The number of Azerbaijani diaspora organizations worldwide increased from more than 200 in 2002 to nearly 500.

In accordance with the relevant orders signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev, the second, third and fourth congresses of World Azerbaijanis were held in 2006, 2011 and 2016 respectively.



## EID AL-ADHA

Eid al-Adha is one of the most sacred holidays of the Islamic world. According to the Hijri (lunar) calendar, it is celebrated across the Muslim world every year on the tenth day of the month of Dhu'l-Hijjah.

Eid al-Adha, which embodies the completion of Islam as a religion and its divine revelation as a spiritual and moral way of salvation, is a holiday that encourages mercy, solidarity, and brotherhood in people. On this blessed day, Muslims get the opportunity to demonstrate their readiness for any self-sacrifice in the name of Allah and experience the joy of being close to the Almighty.

This holiday is celebrated in Azerbaijan as a triumph of national and spiritual solidarity, benevolent deeds, compassion and mercy. In all parts of the country, sacrifices are made in the name of Allah, prayers are made for the progress and prosperity of the state, tributes are paid to the martyrs who gave their lives for the independence and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, large-scale charity work is carried out.

Promoting humanity and universal ideas, Islam is an essential part of world civilization and has played an exceptional role in shaping the worldview of our people and in their national and moral development of our people. The people of Azerbaijan have always had great respect for Islamic values and traditions.

## EID AL-FITR

Ramadan, in which the holy book of all Muslims, the Holy Quran, was revealed, is a blessed month that illuminates the hearts and minds of people and promotes tranquility, unity and moral purity.

The month of Ramadan gives Muslims the chance to fulfill their obligations to God and religion and to experience the joy of benevolent deeds, feelings of compassion and mercy, as well as the triumph of spiritual perfection over temptation.

In Azerbaijan, which is an integral part of the Muslim world, Eid al-Fitr is solemnly marked every year. People in Azerbaijan fast with great enthusiasm and pride, which celebrates the triumph of solidarity, friendship and brotherhood in our society.

Azerbaijan is sparing no effort to strengthen Islamic solidarity worldwide, develop relations among Muslim countries and peoples based on mutual trust.

Declaration of 2017 as a year of "Islamic Solidarity in Azerbaijan", the organization of a series of related events both in the country and around the world, the holding of the fourth Islamic Solidarity Games are just a few of Azerbaijan's contributions to strengthening the Islamic solidarity.

A land of ethnic and religious tolerance, inter-faith solidarity and cooperation, Azerbaijan hosts forums on inter-civilizational dialogue, summits of world religious leaders and other high-profile international events. In 2008, Azerbaijan initiated the "Baku Process" in order to build an effective dialogue among all cultures and civilizations, which has become a global movement.

