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Aliyev admits Azerbaijan worked to boost number of Azeris in Artsakh

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February 1988: Protests in Stepanakert gather more people. People demand summoning of Meeting of Communist Party Regional Committee and review of Karabakh exit from Azerbaijan, unification with Armenia.

(Panarmenian) – Azerbaijani President **Ilham Aliyev** has admitted the fact of a deliberate change in the demography of **Nagorno Karabakh** aimed at increasing the number of Azeri residents.

“Under the great leader Heydar Aliyev (Ilham’s Father – Ed.), the percentage of the Azerbaijani population in Nagorno Karabakh increased sharply, doubled,” Aliyev was quoted as saying by Day.az.

Heydar Aliyev himself said in an interview in 2002: "I am talking of the time, when I was first secretary, and helped the development of Nagorno Karabakh a lot.

"At the same time I tried to change the demography there. Nagorno Karabakh raised the issue of founding a higher education institute there, a university. Everybody was against it. I had a think about it and decided to found it. However, with a proviso that there should be three sectors there — Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian. It was founded.

"We sent Azeris from the neighboring areas there, and not to Baku. We opened a large shoe factory there.

"By doing this and other things, I tried to increase the number of Azeris there, and reduce the number of the Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh.

Those who worked in Nagorno Karabakh at the time know about it".

Nearing the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, Artsakh had a population of 145,593 Armenians (76.4%), 42,871 Azeris (22.4%), and several thousand Kurds, Russians, Greeks, and Assyrians.