

BAKU 2017 ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY GAMES
CLOSING CEREMONY SPEECH

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First Vice President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Chair, Baku 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games Organising Committee

Your Excellency, Ilham Aliyev,
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan,

Your Excellency, Faisal Abdulaziz Al Nassar,
Secretary General of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation,

Distinguished members of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation,

Your Excellencies,
Athletes of the Islamic world,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear guests,

Welcome to the Closing Ceremony of the Baku 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games!

Fellow compatriots!

Azerbaijan celebrates another historic victory.

Holding the Fourth Islamic Solidarity Games in our country is a reflection of the the entire Islamic world's respect and support for Azerbaijan and her people.

I am confident that athletes representing over 50 countries and guests to our capital will keep the best memories of our country in their hearts.

Over the past days, the people of Azerbaijan have shown their hospitality and friendship once again.

Azerbaijan has proven itself a great sporting nation. Our national team came top of the medals table. I am proud of this historic victory and sincerely congratulate the people of Azerbaijan.

The true victory of these last days was the celebration of the Islamic world's solidarity and unity.

Let us all preserve this unity, and foster Islamic solidarity.

May Allah bless all Muslims!

Dear friends,

Over the past 10 days, athletes from across the Islamic world came together in an inspirational celebration of sport, friendship and unity. Their courage and dedication was truly moving, their performances wonderful to watch.

Athletes, I congratulate you on your achievements, and thank you for the joy you have brought spectators around the Islamic world. These were your Games, and your sporting victories made them great. I hope you will keep memories of Baku in your hearts for a lifetime.

The national team of Azerbaijan made us proud once again, winning 162 medals including 75 gold medals, and finishing first in the medals table. Athletes of Azerbaijan, your commitment and excellence continues to inspire your compatriots, and will serve as a magnificent example to the next generation.

For us and everyone here in Baku over the last 10 days, the solidarity of the Islamic world seen at these Games is another big victory. It is a source of great pride that Azerbaijan has supported the spirit of friendship between our nations. We must all work hard to continue this noble mission into the future.

I would like to thank the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation for the opportunity to welcome the athletes of the Islamic world to Baku, strengthening the bonds of solidarity among our peoples.

These Games and many other important international sporting, cultural and political events have sealed Baku's reputation as a centre for openness and tolerance. Our capital opened its arms to the Islamic sporting community, and the success of these Games is a tribute to the dedication and passion of all Azerbaijan.

Our guests from around the globe have experienced the rich culture and great hospitality of Azerbaijan, a country that honours its ancient heritage and traditions while looking to the future. It has been a pleasure having you here in Baku, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. We look forward to welcoming you back to Azerbaijan with open hearts.

Thank you, wonderful volunteers, for making our guests feel at home. You have played a big part in the success of these Games. If the athletes were the beating heart of Baku 2017, you were its shining soul. You have shown your warmth and spirit to the world. I am deeply grateful for everything you have done.

We will continue to welcome the world to Baku – at the Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix this summer, the Women's European Volleyball Championships in September, and in 2020 when European Championship football matches will be played here in the Baku Olympic Stadium.

As the Baku 2017 Games come to a close, I would again like to thank everyone who took part in this great event, as athletes and spectators, organisers and volunteers.

I am delighted to announce that the next Islamic Solidarity Games will be held in Istanbul in 2021. We wish our Turkish brothers and sisters every success.

With pride, I declare the Baku Fourth Islamic Solidarity Games closed.

Thank you Baku!

Thank you Azerbaijan!