



12 November 2024

Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the
Baku Global Summit of Religious Leaders
On the Margins of COP29
Chairman of the Caucasus Muslims Board
Secretary-General of Baku International Centre for
Interfaith and Inter-Civilizational Cooperation
His Virtue
Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazedeh
Baku, Azerbaijan

Your Virtue:

Before leaving Baku and after experiencing a full week of your hospitality (and that of so many working closely with you), I am anxious to express my gratitude for your graciousness and for the remarkable events that I was able to join.

The Global Summit of Religious Leaders was particularly notable. I was honored to participate in the welcome dinner on Monday, November 4 and to make a presentation on the first day of the Global Summit. Sitting around the impressively large table with the remarkable gathering of religious leaders that you had assembled was a truly memorable experience. The sheer number of leaders meant that no single person could take too much time, but the succession of speeches was both impressive and remarkable.

Your Assistant Chair for International Relations, Gunduz Babayev, was a truly outstanding intermediary on your behalf. When hotel complications emerged due to the incredible complexities of managing hotels for everyone arriving in Baku for COP20, Gunduz went out of his way to make sure all of my needs were met. This included arranging for me to stay at his parents' apartment, which was an incredible blessing. He also arranged for me to pay an early visit to the House of Tolerance, where I was able to learn even more of your impressive role in promoting tolerance not only in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, but on a wider global scale.

I was also particularly glad to join the flight to the Karabakh region and to see at first hand what your countrymen have suffered. I had the benefit of an extensive conversation the following day with Ravan Hasanov, who was able to add further depth to my understanding of all that has transpired in the region.

Your incredible kindness as a host, and the efforts of those who work closely with you, has been deeply appreciated, and has left an indelible impression on my life. Thanks for all you have done, and for all you have helped me to learn. I look forward to continued cooperation in coming months and years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'W. Cole Durham Jr.'.

W. Cole Durham, Jr.
President, G20 Interfaith Forum Association