

Remarks by

Robert F. Cekuta, Ambassador

Kish, Sheki Region, Azerbaijan

Remarks on Religious Tolerance

September 22, 2015

- I found the visit to this church to be very inspiring and interesting. It is really a success story for many people. The staff that restored and maintains the church are exceptional and I am very grateful for their giving us a tour today. It is impressive that Thor Hyerdahl and the Government of Norway joined in to help preserve this monument. The Government of Azerbaijan also deserves credit for helping restore and maintain this cultural treasure.
- I also want to recognize how this illustrates the Azerbaijani history and tradition of tolerance. It is very striking to realize that this is a church being lovingly maintained and cared for in a village of Muslims.
- Azerbaijan has been rightly recognized for a long history of tolerance and friendship to all races and creeds. I have visited the village of Krasnaya Sloboda and heard from the Mountain Jewish community about the home and support that they have found in Azerbaijan.
- But tolerance is sometimes a very fragile flower in this world. Many forces are opposed to the kind of respect for others that Azerbaijan has cultivated. In every nation, in every generation we have to keep strengthening those good tendencies and strive against the forces of intolerance.