

**ANTI-ARMENIAN
XENOPHOBIA
AND RACISM
IN AZERBAIJAN
2021**

YEREVAN-STEPANAKERT



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“Armenian people are again facing the threat of genocide.”

-Andrei Sakharov, 1988¹

*“For Azerbaijan, the issue of Karabakh is a matter of ambition,
but for the Armenians of Karabakh, it is a matter of life and death.”*

-Andrei Sakharov, 1989²

¹ “Armenians Facing Genocide in Dispute, Sakharov Says,” The Washington Post, November 26, 1988,
<https://wapo.st/2OGP0uF>.

² “Andrei Sakharov On Nagorno-Karabakh,” [in Russian], Noyan Tapan, 1996, <http://karabakhcenter.com/files/file/saxarov.pdf>.

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GLOSSARY

XENOPHOBIA is the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign.

RACISM is the systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another.

ETHNIC CLEANSING is the expulsion, imprisonment, or killing of an ethnic minority by a dominant majority in order to achieve ethnic homogeneity.

GENOCIDE is the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

ABBREVIATIONS

CAT	Committee Against Torture
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CPT	European Committee on the Prevention of Torture
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECRI	European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance
ESI	European Stability Initiative
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NKAO	Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PoW	Prisoner of War
RA	Republic of Armenia
SPT	Sub-Committee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
UAV	Unmanned aerial vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, “**Anti-Armenian Xenophobia and Racism in Azerbaijan 2021**”, was compiled through the joint effort of a number of human rights-oriented civil society organizations, including Transparency International Anticorruption Center, Open Society Foundations – Armenia, Protection of Rights Without Borders NGO, Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly - Vanadzor, Law Development and Protection Foundation, all based in the Republic of Armenia, along with Civic Hub, based in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).

It is the second installment of an earlier report on “**Xenophobia in Azerbaijan**” (published in February 2021), which covered the Anti-Armenian xenophobic environment and policies in Azerbaijan, war crimes committed during the 2020 Artsakh War of September-November 2020, as well as the offenses occurred in the immediate post-war period.³

“**Xenophobia in Azerbaijan**” report was intended as a one-time initiative, without plans for further monitoring. However, 2021 was marked by an unprecedented level of discriminatory rhetoric and continued attacks by Azerbaijan, revealing the broadened scope of the problem at hand and the serious existential threat for the Armenian people in Artsakh, as well as for the Republic of Armenia, which compelled the partnering civil society organizations to continue documenting new evidence of the ethnic cleansing intent by the Azerbaijani leadership.

Anti-Armenian Xenophobia and Racism in Azerbaijan 2021 report presents developments that have taken place throughout 2021 and January-February 2022 that generate an environment of fear, promote violence, and pose a threat of ethnic cleansing of Armenians.

The report was compiled with the use of publicly available reference sources from official channels, reliable media outlets and documented audiovisual evidence.

The document includes a brief history of the Artsakh conflict, which is rooted in the xenophobic attitudes and racist policies of different Azerbaijani governments over different times. It illustrates the discriminatory and belligerent rhetoric and acts of terror by the Azerbaijani leadership, aimed at removing indigenous Armenians from their historic lands.

The report refers to post-war cases of murder and torture, dehumanization of and state terror directed against Armenians, and the atmosphere of impunity in which they take place. It also describes ethnic cleansing efforts through the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage and the falsification of history aimed at removing the traces of Armenians in the region.

The document highlights some international reactions to Azerbaijan’s policies, as well as the outcome of international judicial processes. It also underlines the corrupt practices used by Azerbaijan in its foreign relations, such as “caviar diplomacy”, to mute international reaction to its human rights violations, including the military attack on Artsakh.

³ Transparency International Anticorruption Center et al, Report on Xenophobia in Azerbaijan, February 28, 2021, <https://transparency.am/files/publications/1614606896-0-994587.pdf>.

The findings of this report reveal the continued genocidal intent and intensified aggression of the Azerbaijani leadership against the indigenous Armenians of Artsakh, which precludes the possibility of reconciliation and a sustainable peace in the region.

We, the authors of the report, believe that the assertive jingoism of the Azerbaijani leadership is a consequence of the impunity for its previous war crimes and other offenses, as well as the double standards and false equivalence fallacies often employed by international actors, which reinforce the pattern of aggression.

We call on the international community to adopt a proactive position and take effective measures to protect the lives and freedoms of the Armenian people of Artsakh, and to create an environment of security and human rights-based governance to counter the authoritarian and racist policies of the corrupt Azerbaijani regime.

Based on various manifestations of Armenophobia and racism in Azerbaijan described in this report, we propose that the Government of Armenia:

- Use all multilateral and international human rights mechanisms, including the structures of the United Nations, Council of Europe, security- and cooperation-focused institutions and other relevant organizations, to shed light on the various manifestations and root causes of Armenophobia and racism demonstrated during and after the 44-day war, and demand concrete actions within the scope of their jurisdictions to stop and prevent further deterioration;
- Continue filing applications with the International Court of Justice, making maximal use of the legal mechanisms provided by UN Conventions, including at least the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), International Convention Against Taking of Hostages (1979), Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1985), and International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (1989);
- Take urgent measures to ensure the adoption and entry into force of an international, legal and long-term mandate for peacekeeping forces in Artsakh by the end of 2024, in order to guarantee the safety of Artsakh's people after the expiry of the five-year term of the peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation, as prescribed in the trilateral statement of November 10, 2020;
- Adopt a resolution condemning the violent attack on, occupation and ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, and work intensively with international actors to correct the false narrative and the distorted picture of Azerbaijan's human rights record, crafted over many years of "caviar diplomacy";
- Work effectively with the EU and other international organizations to establish and support a civilian monitoring mission along the border with Azerbaijan, given the impact of the current Azerbaijani intrusions into Armenian territory.

We propose that international actors engage urgently and more effectively to ensure a long-term and sustainable resolution to the Artsakh conflict, acknowledging:

- the xenophobic, aggressive and racist policies of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its intensive militarization that poses an existential threat to Artsakh's people;
- the torture and killing of Armenian captives, including PoWs and civilians;
- the danger posed to Armenian cultural heritage and the sensitivity of timing, given the speed of actions initiated by Azerbaijan;
- the occupation of certain Armenian territories of Artsakh that ensure the integrity of the region, safe communication, access to water, and other security guarantees;
- the impossibility of reconciliation between the conflicting parties in the near future and the sensitivity of timing remedial actions given the five-year term of the Russian peacekeeping forces.

The international organizations expected to act with respect to manifestations of anti-Armenian xenophobia and racism described in this report include:

- Various structures of the United Nations, such as the UN Secretary General; UN Security Council; UN Human Rights Council; UN Special Rapporteurs; Working Groups and Independent Experts (on issues related to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment; on the right to education; on cultural rights; on the right to development; on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; on human rights and international solidarity; on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights; on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence; on arbitrary detention; on enforced or involuntary disappearances; on the use of mercenaries), UN Agencies and offices (UNHCR, UNESCO, UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, UN Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide); Committees on the Oversight of UN Conventions (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR); UN Committee Against Torture (CAT); Committee on Enforced Disappearances; UN Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD));
- Council of Europe entities and institutions, such as the European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI); European Committee on the Prevention of Torture (CPT); Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape; Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL); The Conference of the Parties under the CoE Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism;

- Security- and cooperation-focused institutions, including NATO; OSCE; and its OSCE Minsk Group;
- Other international and professional organizations, including International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL); International Council of Museums (ICOM); International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

In addition to recommendations addressed to international structures, the report proposes actions to be taken by individual states as well as EU. These include measures to create a special procedure on Azerbaijan to investigate its systemic violations of human rights, to impose restrictions on military support and trade and adopt sanctions for human rights abuses and corruption.

International organizations and individual member states must condemn Azerbaijan's aggression, which poses a challenge to the world order and a threat to the human dimension of international politics.

They must exert effort to stop the isolation of Artsakh and ensure accessibility for all, without restrictions on actors providing humanitarian assistance and reporting on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, including international governmental and non-governmental organizations, diplomatic missions, development projects, as well as international journalists and visitors - in order to put into action the UN principle of "leaving no one behind."

International organizations and individual member states must refrain from false equivalence fallacies, unaddressed and "balanced" calls to both states in a context where there is an obvious aggressor. Such calls are seen as neglect and indifference to the situation and contribute to the current environment of impunity and gross violations of human rights violations, harming the prospects for solving the conflict peacefully.

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic discord between Armenian and Turkic populations on the periphery of the Russian Empire, including the current territories of Armenia and Azerbaijan, have a long history. During the Soviet period,⁴ these tensions were institutionalized in the “divide and rule” policies of Stalin, who drew discretionary boundaries between conflicting ethnic groups, such that both sides remained dependent on central authorities in Moscow.

One of these “problematic” territories was Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), an area with a majority Armenian population that was artificially severed from Armenia and squeezed into the boundaries of Soviet Azerbaijan. It was also split into pieces, including the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), Red Kurdistan Uyezd (with mere purpose of populating it with Kurds) and some regions (such as Shahumyanovsk and Getashen and the surrounding villages, which in early 1990 were cleaned from Armenians) integrated to Azerbaijan without a status of autonomy. Red Kurdistan Uyezd was quickly liquidated in 1929. As a result, the NKAO was deprived of its continuity with Soviet Armenia. Early maps show that Armenia and NKAO were divided by the river Aghavno. However, over years the border was expanded and grew into the so-called Lachin corridor.⁵

A similar fate befell the area of Nakhijevan (Nakhchivan in Azerbaijani), which was also separated from Armenia and granted to Soviet Azerbaijan under the status of an Autonomous Republic, as a result of negotiations between Kemalist and Bolshevik informal leaders of the time.⁶

Throughout 1921-1988, the governance of both these territories by Soviet Azerbaijan was marked with discrimination against Armenians, which significantly changed the demography of the regions. More specifically, according to the first Soviet census of 1926, Armenians composed 89.2% of the 125,159 people in the NKAO.⁷ But by 1989, their number had decreased to 76.9% (145,450) of the population of 189,085.⁸ The Armenian population of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan decreased from 5,643 (10.2% of the population of 55,520) in 1926⁹ to only 1,858 (0.6% of the population of 293,875) in 1989.¹⁰

4 Republic of Artsakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website, Karabakh: 1918-1921, <http://www.nkr.am/en/azerbaijan-karabakh-conflict-history>.

5 Republic of Artsakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website, Nagorno Karabakh: 1921-1988, <http://www.nkr.am/en/karabakh-in-soviet-period>.

6 EVN Report, The Calamitous 1921 Treaty of Moscow, May 2, 2021, <https://bit.ly/35ig6jS>; EVN Report, The Calamitous 1921 Treaty of Kars, October 26, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3vbY6CO>.

7 Demoscope Weekly, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1926 года. Национальный состав населения по регионам республик СССР: Закавказская СФСР/АО Нагорного Карабаха, 2013, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_26.php?req=2304.

8 Demoscope Weekly, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1989 года, Распределение городского и сельского населения областей республик СССР по полу и национальности: Нагорный Карабах, 2013, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/resp_nac_89.php?req=71.

9 Demoscope Weekly, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1926 года. Национальный состав населения по регионам республик СССР: Закавказская СФСР/Нахичеванская АССР, 2013, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_26.php?req=2294.

10 Demoscope Weekly, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1989 года, Распределение городского и сельского населения областей республик СССР по полу и национальности: /Нахичеванская АССР, 2013, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/resp_nac_89.php?req=70.

The ethnic policies of Azerbaijan threatened the Armenian people living in NKAO, who did not want to share the fate of Nakhchivan. Throughout the Soviet period, the Armenians of the NKAO raised the issue of “separation” from Soviet Azerbaijan and “unification” with Soviet Armenia before the central authorities of the Soviet Union. However, those efforts were not successful. During Gorbachev’s period of perestroika, the growing discontent led to open peaceful demonstrations.

On February 20, 1988, the elected representatives of the NKAO voted for “separation” from Soviet Azerbaijan. This decision was confirmed in a September 1991 declaration of independence and December 1991 referendum of NKAO residents, which proclaimed the creation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, also known as the Artsakh Republic. All these processes took place in compliance with Soviet legal norms of the time.¹¹

The democratic expression of will in February 1988 was met with violence: Armenians in the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait were hunted down and about three dozen persons were brutally murdered. Instead of re-establishing order, the pogrom had the tacit approval of Azerbaijani authorities and was met with inaction from Moscow.¹² The violence quickly spread throughout both Soviet republics, resulting in sporadic incidents on both sides. Additionally, there were two other large-scale massacres of Armenians - in Ganja (then named Kirovabad) in November 1988 and in Baku in January 1991. The lack of security eventually resulted in a flow of hundreds of thousands of refugees in different directions. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan eventually resulted in the removal of about 220,000 ethnic Armenians (out of 245,055 outside the NKAO)¹³ from Azerbaijan¹⁴ and almost all (~84,860)¹⁵ ethnic Azerbaijanis from Armenia.¹⁶

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the internal conflict became an official war (First Karabakh War, 1991-1994) launched by Azerbaijan against the new Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. It ended in a victory for the newly-formed Defense Army of Artsakh, supported by volunteers from Armenia. For the Artsakh people, it resulted in some territorial losses in the Shahumyan, Martuni and Martakert regions, but also advancements to the west and south, in seven adjacent territories beyond the NKAO’s former borders. On May 11, 1994, a ceasefire was signed in Bishkek by the three parties - Azerbaijan, Armenia and Artsakh - under the

11 Soghomonian V. (Herausgeber), Lösungsansätze für Berg-Karabach/Arzach: Selbstbestimmung und der Weg zur Anerkennung, 2010; Abstract in English at

https://www.academia.edu/43274241/Solutions_for_Nagorno_Karabakh_Artsakh_Self_determination_and_Recognition.

12 Official Journal of the European Communities, Resolution on the Situation in Soviet Armenia, July 7, 1988, http://www.nkr.am/sites/default/files/1988_07_07_european_parliament_resolution_on_the_situation_in_soviet_armenia.pdf; “Hate Runs High in Soviet Union’s Most Explosive Ethnic Feud,” The Washington Post, September 6, 1989, <https://wapo.st/3h9lebD>; UNHCR publication for CIS Conference (Displacement in the CIS) - Conflicts in the Caucasus, May 1, 1996, <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/refugeemag/3b5583fd4/unhcr-publication-cis-conference-displacement-cis-conflicts-caucasus.html>; Congressional Record Volume 167, Number 43, Monday, March 8, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3hbSfoA>.

13 Demoscope Weekly, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1989 года. Национальный состав населения по республикам СССР: Азербайджанская ССР, 2013, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_89.php?reg=7; Demoscope Weekly, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1989 года, Распределение городского и сельского населения областей республик СССР по полу и национальности: Нагорный Карабах, 2013, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/resp_nac_89.php?reg=71.

14 European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, Report on Azerbaijan, June 28, 2002, <https://rm.coe.int/first-report-on-azerbaijan/16808b5579>.

15 Demoscope Weekly, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1989 года. Национальный состав населения по республикам СССР: Армянская ССР, 2013, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_89.php?reg=13.

16 Council of Europe, Second Report Submitted by Armenia Pursuant to Article 25, Paragraph 1 of The Framework Convention for The Protection of National Minorities, ACFC/SR/II(2004) 010, November 24, 2004, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1052022/432_1163080631_pdf-2nd-sr-armenia.pdf.

mediation of the Russian Federation.¹⁷ The ceasefire agreement put an end to active military operations on the line of contact between the conflicting parties, paving the way for negotiations to resolve the conflict.

On March 24, 1992, under the auspices of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Minsk Group was established,¹⁸ consisting of Russia, USA, France, Belarus, Finland, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Turkey as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan, to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. For 26 years, the ceasefire held for the most part, though small-scale violations were common.¹⁹ In parallel, negotiations were in process - led by the Minsk Group co-chairs of Russia, USA and France.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijan was unwilling to negotiate meaningfully and refused to accept the different principles and proposals of the Minsk Group. Instead, it was spending its Caspian oil money to build up its military potential and “solve” the conflict through a war. At the same time, the Azerbaijani government worked intensely to entrench Armenophobic sentiment in the new generation, raising them “with a rhetoric of hate, hostility and victimhood,” which has been recorded in several international organizations’ reports.²⁰ While for Armenians the conflict was about the human rights and existential matters, for Azerbaijan it was about the territory.²¹

On September 27, 2020, when the world was largely isolated, international organizations were busy struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the UN leadership was calling on nations to avoid war,²² Azerbaijan started a large-scale attack on Artsakh.²³ The Azerbaijani Army used heavy artillery, tanks, aircraft, missiles, including cluster munitions, and unmanned air vehicles (UAVs) to target peaceful populations and civilian infrastructure, schools and hospitals, places of worship and cultural monuments in Artsakh. There were multiple cases of executing military and civilian captives and mutilating their bodies.²⁴ Azerbaijan banned the

17 The University of Edinburgh, Peace Agreements Database, Ceasefire Agreement between the Minister of Defense of Azerbaijan, Minister of Defense of Armenia, and Nagorno Karabakh Army Commander, May 1994, <https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/990>.

18 OSCE Minsk Group, <https://www.osce.org/mg>; Mandate of the Co-Chairmen of the Conference on Nagorno Karabakh under the auspices of the OSCE, March 1995, www.osce.org/files/f/documents/f/f/70125.pdf.

19 A major breakdown of the ceasefire was the 4-day war of April 2-5, 2016, when Azerbaijan launched a full assault. See Center for Eastern Studies, The Four Day War in Karabakh, April 6, 2016, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2016-04-06/four-day-war-nagorno-karabakh>.

20 ECRI, Report on Azerbaijan (fifth monitoring cycle), June 2016, <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-report-on-azerbaijan/16808b5581>; Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fourth Opinion on Azerbaijan, November 8, 2017, <https://bit.ly/3bVY8l>; US Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Azerbaijan, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/azerbaijan>.

21 The Washington Post, “Armenians Facing Genocide in Dispute, Sakharov Says,” November 26, 1988, <https://wapo.st/2OGP0uF>; “Andrei Sakharov on Nagorno-Karabakh” (Collection of articles and speeches) [in Russian], Noyan Tapan, 1996, <http://karabakhcenter.com/files/file/saxarov.pdf>.

22 UN News, COVID-19: UN chief calls for global ceasefire to focus on ‘the true fight of our lives’, March 23, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059972>; UN Press Release, Secretary-General Reiterates Appeal for Global Ceasefire, Warns ‘Worst Is Yet to Come’ as COVID-19 Threatens Conflict Zones, April 3, 2020; <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sgsm20032.doc.htm>.

23 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by CNN Turk TV channel, August 14, 2021; <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-cnn-turk-tv-channel-full-text-355814>; Aliyev Admits Azerbaijan Started the Nagorno-Karabakh War, August 16, 2021, <https://bit.ly/36EsaNf>; Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening of Vagif Poetry Days in Shusha, August 30, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3BLfJdL>; Human Rights Watch, Azerbaijan: Unlawful Strikes in Nagorno-Karabakh, December 11, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/11/azerbaijan-unlawful-strikes-nagorno-karabakh>.

24 Open Society Foundations-Armenia, Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly of Vanadzor, Law Development and Protection Foundation, Protection of Rights Without Borders NGO, Human Rights Violations during the 44-day War in Artsakh: Summary of Fact-Finding Report, December 2021, <https://bit.ly/352gldj>.

death penalty as part of the process to join the Council of Europe in 2001. However, the executions of unarmed men are a violation of the country's commitments.

The war during COVID-19 resulted in humanitarian catastrophe both in Artsakh, where most of civilians were concentrated in underground shelters, and in Armenia, which hosted 90,000 evacuees (60% of the Artsakh population).²⁵ Large congregations massed at designated locations set up to provide humanitarian assistance and lodging.²⁶ During and after the war, COVID-19 cases peaked both in Armenia and Artsakh, which stretched the capacities of health systems both in Armenia and Artsakh that were already having a hard time saving lives and providing care to wounded military personnel and civilians.²⁷

Throughout the war, Azerbaijan received direct support from Turkey, which has the second-largest army in NATO. Turkey contributed military instructors and weapons.²⁸ Additionally, it brought in several thousand mercenaries from the Middle East to fight in the war.²⁹

Azerbaijan presented the attack on Artsakh to the international community as a "compulsory" measure to restore "historical justice" and its territorial integrity.³⁰ It disregarded the ongoing negotiations under the umbrella of the OSCE Minsk Group and decided to resolve the issue of self-determination of Artsakh people through military intervention - to force Artsakh's people to surrender to the autocratic Azerbaijani regime or otherwise to vacate their indigenous lands.

For the Armenian side, the 2020 Artsakh War resulted in the death of 3,812 persons, including 3,736 military servicemen. There are 217 missing, of which 196 are servicemen and 21 are civilians.³¹

According to the Interim Report published by the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, "from September 27, 2020 to September 27 2021, 80 civilians had been killed by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, 42 of them as a result of targeted strikes and 38 in captivity. The Ombudsman also recorded a number of cases of torture and mutilation of corpses of civilians and 163 civilian injuries mostly resulting from strikes."³²

25 Armenpress, "Nearly 90,000 People Displaced, Lost Homes and Property in Nagorno Karabakh," October 24, 2020, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1032601.html>.

26 The Lancet, "War in the Time of COVID-19: Humanitarian Catastrophe in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia," November 27, 2020, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(20\)30510-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(20)30510-6/fulltext); "War in Nagorno-Karabakh highlights the vulnerability of displaced populations to COVID-19," BMJ Journals, <https://jech.bmj.com/content/75/7/605>.

27 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Public Report on the Azerbaijan's Crimes against Humanity in the Context of Human-Made Disaster During COVID-19 (The war against Artsakh and Armenia September-November 2020), 2021, <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/e632fe2219cb340fc05194d684d7206f.pdf>.

28 Kommersant, Принуждение к конфликту, October 16, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3p8ChQl>.

29 AsiaNews.it, "Turkey Sends 4,000 Syrian ISIS Mercenaries to Fight against the Armenians," September 28, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3LWg0z4>.

30 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Laid Foundation Stones for Fuzuli-Shusha Highway and Fuzuli Airport in Fuzuli District, Visited the City of Shusha, January 15, 2021, https://apa.az/en/xeber/nagorno_garabagh/President-Ilham-Aliyev-laid-foundation-stones-for-Fuzuli-Shusha-highway-and-Fuzuli-airport-in-Fuzuli-district-visited-the-city-of-Shush-coloredUPDATED-1color-340232; Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Met with Leadership and a Group of Military Personnel of Azerbaijani Army on Armed Forces Day, June 26, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-met-with-leadership-and-a-group-of-military-personnel-of-azerbaijani-army-on-armed-forces-day-updated-352641>; Apa.az, Victorious Commander-in-Chief, President Ilham Aliyev Addressed the Nation on the Occasion of the Remembrance Day, September 27, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/victorious-commander-in-chief-president-ilham-aliyev-addressed-the-nation-on-the-occasion-of-the-remembrance-day-video-updated-358654>.

31 First Channel News, According to Today's Adjusted Data, We Have 3,812 Victims, Whereabouts of 217 People Remain Unknown: Armenia's Prime Minister, February 9, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3lFhGxg>.

32 The Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, The Updated Edition of The Second Interim Report on The Azerbaijani Atrocities against the Artsakh Population in September-October 2020, October 18, 2020,

The number of wounded stands at about 9,000.³³ About 35,000-40,000 people from Artsakh have lost their homes, given the occupation of their settlements.³⁴ At least 249 persons, including civilians, were captured and detained in Azerbaijani jails in violation of the international law. In total, 45 Armenians were convicted and sentenced to various jail terms.³⁵

Azerbaijan took control of about ~30% of the former NKAO, including 111 settlements³⁶ in Shushi, Hadrut, Martuni and Martakert districts, in addition to the Kelbajar and Lachin regions, two disputed regions that had critical importance for the external communication and water security for Artsakh.³⁷

The war was stopped on November 10, 2020, through mediation by Russia, with a ceasefire statement signed by the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia (the “trilateral statement”).³⁸ The document included provisions regarding:

- the withdrawal of the Armenian Armed Forces from all areas surrounding the NKAO;
- deployment of Russian peacekeeping troops along the new line of contact in Artsakh for a minimum 5-year period;
- assurance of secure communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia through a 5 km-wide Lachin corridor;
- the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas, facilitated by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees;
- an exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons and bodies of the dead;
- unblocking transportation routes to connect the Republic of Azerbaijan with the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.³⁹

<https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/735>: The Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim Report on the Cases of the Killing of Civilians in Artsakh by The Armed Forces of Azerbaijan, January 29, 2021,

https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/785#_Toc59662502%20; Interim Report on the Cases of the Killing of Civilians in Artsakh by the Armed forces of Azerbaijan (updated on September 27, 2021), September 2021, <https://artsakhombuds.am/sites/default/files/2021-09/3.%2027.09.2021%20Open%20Report.pdf>.

33 Arevik Radio, During the War about 9,000 Persons Have Got Different Levels of Injuries (in Armenian), February 19, 2021, <https://arevik.armradio.am/2021/02/19/պատերազմի-նկարագրով-տարբեր-աստիճանի>.

34 Armenpress, “105-110 thousand People Now Live in Artsakh: Artak Beglaryan,” (in Armenian), February 15, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/1043433.html>.

35 Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Artsakh, “Interim Report on Malicious Prosecution by Azerbaijan of Captured Armenian Servicemen and Civilians,” November 23, 2021, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/879>.

36 Government of Armenia, Decision N 1820-L, Annex on Assistance to Citizens Registered in Communities of Republic of Artsakh Communities Passed under the Control of the Republic of Azerbaijan as a Result of War Launched on September 27, 2020 (in Armenian), November 21, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3vbmV1u>.

37 Caucasian Knot, Karabakh on the Map: What Azerbaijan Gains after War, November 12, 2020, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/nagorno-karabakh-conflict-visual-explainer>; International Crisis Group, The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Visual Explainer, February 15, 2022, <https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/52755>.

38 Statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the President of the Russian Federation, November 10, 2020, [https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release-item/2020/11/10/Announcement](https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2020/11/10/Announcement).

39 Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation, November 10, 2020, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384>.

In 2021, this trilateral statement of the Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders was followed by two additional meetings of leaders:

- On January 11, 2021, at a meeting in Moscow, the three countries agreed to facilitate implementation of Paragraph 9 of the November 10, 2020 statement regarding the unblocking of all economic and transport links in the region and setting up a tripartite working group to negotiate solutions to restoring or building new rail and road communications.⁴⁰
- On November 26, 2021, at a meeting in Sochi, the leaders agreed to take steps to increase the level of stability and security on the Azerbaijani-Armenian border and to push the process of establishing a bilateral commission with the advisory participation of the Russian Federation, on delimitation and demarcation of the state border between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan.⁴¹

In September 2021, Armenia instituted proceedings against Azerbaijan at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the basis of violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which addressed multiple manifestations of racial discrimination by Azerbaijan against Armenians.⁴² Within a few days, Azerbaijan launched its own case against Armenia, mostly mirroring some of the claims.

On December 7, 2021, the ICJ issued a decision indicating provisional measures both for Azerbaijan and for Armenia. The Court indicated that the Republic of Azerbaijan shall:

- (a) Protect from violence and bodily harm all persons captured in relation to the 2020 conflict who remain in detention, and ensure their security and equality before the law;
- (b) Take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred and discrimination, including by its officials and public institutions, targeted at persons of Armenian national or ethnic origin; and
- (c) Take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration affecting Armenian cultural heritage, including but not limited to churches and other places of worship, monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artefacts.⁴³

40 Joint Statement Issued Following Meeting between Nikol Pashinyan, Vladimir Putin and Ilham Aliyev, November 11, 2021, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2021/01/11/Nikol-Pashinyan-Moscow-meeting-Announcement>.

41 Armenian Prime Minister, Russian President, Azerbaijani President Adopt Joint Statement, November 26, 2021, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2021/11/26/Nikol-Pashinyan-Sochi>.

42 The International Court of Justice, The Republic of Armenia Institutes Proceedings against the Republic of Azerbaijan and Requests the Court to Indicate Provisional Measures, September 16, 2021, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/180/180-20210916-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>; The International Court of Justice, Application Instituting Proceedings and Request for Provisional Measures Republic of Armenia, Armenia vs Azerbaijan, September 16, 2021, Volume 1, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/180/180-20210916-APP-01-00-EN.pdf>, p.1.

43 UN Web TV, The Hague – The International Court of Justice delivers its Order on the Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures in the Case Armenia vs. Azerbaijan, December 7, 2021, <https://bit.ly/34WsOVR>.

The Court also indicated that the Republic of Armenia shall, in accordance with its obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:

- (a) take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred, including by organizations and private persons in its territory, targeted at persons of Azerbaijani national or ethnic origin.⁴⁴

In addition, the Court indicated that “both Parties shall refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve.”⁴⁵

PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV'S ANTI-ARMENIAN PROPAGANDA

Humiliation and Hate Rhetoric

In the post-Soviet era, after the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Artsakh people, Armenophobia was transformed into a state-run policy in Azerbaijan. It was taught in schools and regularly espoused at the highest levels of government, with Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev as a frontrunner. One of the three ICJ provisional measures imposed on Azerbaijan actually confirms that anti-Armenian hatred is propagated in Azerbaijan at the state level “by its officials and public institutions.” Armenophobic expressions by Aliyev and his leadership have been tracked at least since 2007.⁴⁶

Following the 44-day war, throughout 2021 and early 2022, the Azerbaijani leadership continued its anti-Armenian hate propaganda with renewed enthusiasm and belligerence. Though the former vocabulary of “diseases”⁴⁷ and “dogs”⁴⁸ in referring to Armenians was toned down, his speeches were full of arrogance and humiliation, continuing to root anti-Armenian hatred within the Azerbaijani people. Additionally, he tried to manipulate international opinion by making false statements and spreading disinformation and lies about Armenia and Armenians.

44 The International Court of Justice, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Azerbaijan v. Armenia), November 7, 2021, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/181/181-20211207-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>.

45 Ibid.; The International Court of Justice, Application Instituting Proceedings and Request for Provisional Measures Republic of Armenia, Armenia vs Azerbaijan, September 16, 2021, Volume 1, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/180/180-20210916-APP-01-00-EN.pdf>.

46 European Friends of Armenia, Collection of War Threat Statements by the President Ilham Aliyev and Other Azerbaijani Officials, July 31, 2018, https://eufoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/AliyevWarThreats_update_31.07.2018.pdf.

47 Ibid.

48 MK.ru, Алиев выступил с обращением к нации: "Выгоняем их как собак", October 4, 2020, <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2020/10/04/aliev-vystupil-s-obrashheniem-k-nacii-vygonyaem-ikh-kak-sobak.html>; Haqqin.az, Ильхам Алиев: “Азербайджанский солдат прогоняет их как собак”, October 4, 2020, <https://haqqin.az/oldage/190899>; Defence Defence.az, President Aliyev: Azerbaijani Soldiers Drive Them away Like Dogs, October 4, 2020, <https://bit.ly/38zhQV0>; Вечер с Владимиром Соловьевым on Youtube, October 5, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eAVs7fjUfM>, 04:18 minute; J. Nersessian, EVN Report, The Mixed Messaging of Ilham Aliyev, October 22, 2020, <https://evnreport.com/spotlight-karabakh/the-mixed-messaging-of-ilham-aliyev>.

Aliyev's messages, some excerpts of which are included in the **Annex**, can be categorized as:

- **Humiliating:** Along with encouraging fellow Azerbaijanis as “victorious people,” who managed to restore “justice” and the “territorial integrity” of Azerbaijan, Aliyev humiliates Armenians by calling them a “defeated nation” “with no army” and that they “smashed” the Armenian army. He portrays Armenian soldiers as “deserters and cowards,” and that Armenians “fell on their knees” and “bowed their head” before Azerbaijan, etc. Aliyev himself pompously opened the Military Trophy Park in Baku in April 2021, which—besides seized weaponry and equipment—exhibited and ridiculed wax Armenian soldiers presented with disgraceful and ugly appearances.
- **Demonizing:** Aliyev continuously makes statements that Armenia is a “fascist state” and stresses its mission of “defeating” and “destroying Armenian fascism,” that there should be no army in such a “fascist state,” etc. He states that “hatred against the Azerbaijanis has become an official ideology” in Armenia. Meanwhile, he does not have and does not provide any evidence for such claims. Throughout 30 years of Armenian independence, the state has never used racist rhetoric against Azerbaijan. This is also proven by the lack of facts presented to the ICJ, whose decision on Armenia, unlike that on Azerbaijan, does not confirm that there has been any state-level propaganda of hatred.⁴⁹
- **Terrorizing:** Aliyev talks about Azerbaijan's readiness for “peace,” but at the same time bullies Armenia with continued border incursions, threatening another war.⁵⁰ Aliyev keeps reminding that “their [Azerbaijani] fist is still in place” and that Azerbaijan continues to expand its military, supported by Turkey. In doing so, he calls up the historical trauma of the Armenian people who were subjected to genocide and ethnic cleansing in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of 20th century and tries to spread fear among them to prevent their desire to return to their indigenous lands.
- **Questioning Armenian statehood:** Aliyev claims that it is “completely unfounded to call Armenia an independent country. Because the absolute majority of the features of an independent country are not present in the Armenian state.” He warns Armenian officials that “their visits [to Artsakh] must stop,” otherwise next time their [Azerbaijani] “response will be very harsh.” He threatens: “Let them sit in their own country and thank God that they have a country of their own.”
- **Generating international hatred against Armenians:** Though the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict does not have a religious nature, Aliyev tries to emphasize it as such and generalize a few incidents, aiming to raise the hatred of Muslim nations against Armenians. He claims that Armenians kept cows and pigs in their mosques, destroyed “63 mosques” and “insulted the entire Muslim world,” stating that Azerbaijanophobia and Islamophobia are “rampant in Armenia” and “have reached the level of mental illness.”

49 The International Court of Justice, Press release No. 2021/34, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan), December 7, 2021, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/180/180-20211207-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>.

50 EVN Report, Baku Threatens Yerevan with “Peace Treaty”, August 19, 2021, <https://evnreport.com/politics/baku-threatens-yerevan-with-peace-treaty>.

Attempt to Seal Off the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Aliyev makes an effort to present the issue of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as closed. A common message in Aliyev's speeches is that the conflict is resolved.⁵¹ He even challenges the existence of Nagorno-Karabakh and the international formats (i.e. the OSCE Minsk Group) for resolving the conflict. Aliyev says "There is no Nagorno-Karabakh" and rejects any "other opinions" on the issue of status. He states:

"...The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been consigned to history. There is no administrative territory called "Nagorno-Karabakh" in Azerbaijan, and if someone wants to resurrect the dead entity called "Nagorno-Karabakh", let them resurrect it in their own territory, create an entity called "Nagorno-Karabakh" in their territory, create a republic or an association. And we recognize it, but not in Azerbaijan! This issue has been resolved. I say this as President of Azerbaijan and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Everyone must and will reckon with these words...."⁵²

"...There is no return to any kind of discussions about the so-called status of Nagorno-Karabakh, or something of that. We resolved it ourselves by force and by political means..."⁵³

He declares that statements that the conflict is not resolved "are not only inappropriate, but very dangerous." He actually threatens another war, but also conveys a message that, given Armenia does not consider the conflict as solved, it might have plans of "hostile actions" to resolve it.

It should be noted that, in his speeches, Aliyev exclusively refers to the territorial aspects of the Artsakh conflict, but never addresses the existence and the civil and political rights of the Armenians living in Artsakh or the need to engage with them—basing the relations on his own assertions that "Karabakh is Azerbaijan."

Territorial Claims against Armenia

Aliyev frequently makes territorial claims against Armenia in his speeches. He states:

"Our native land is Zangazur [the Syunik region of Armenia], our native land is Goycha district [the Vardenis community of Armenia], Iravan [Armenia's capital city Yerevan]. We will definitely return there."⁵⁴

51 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Gave Interview to Russian Influential "Natsionalnaya Oborona" Magazine, September 24, 2021, <https://apa.az/public/index.php/en/xeber/official-chronicle/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-russias-prestigious-magazine-natsionalnaya-oborona-358512>; Apa.az, Victorious Commander-in-Chief, President Ilham Aliyev Addressed the Nation on the Occasion of the Remembrance Day, September 27, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3JEKpQK>.

52 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev: If Someone Wants to Resurrect the Dead Entity Called "Nagorno-Karabakh", Let Them Resurrect It in Their Own Territory, We Recognize It, But Not in Azerbaijan, September 27, 2021, <https://bit.ly/33HKBiG>.

53 EIN News, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Spanish El Pais Newspaper, December 16, 2021, https://www.einnews.com/pr_news/558511386/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-spanish-el-pais-newspaper.

54 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Attended Ceremony to Give out Apartments and Cars to Families of Martyrs and War Disabled in Khojasan Settlement, July 14, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/social-news/president-ilham-aliyev-attended-ceremony-to-give-out-apartments-and-cars-to-families-of-martyrs-and-war-disabled-in-khojasan-settlement-updated-353855>.

Though the claimed areas did a significant number of Muslim populations in the past, the area have never been a part of any Azerbaijani state (the first state was the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918-1920) to claim the ownership. According to Aliyev's judgement, wherever Azerbaijani people (implying Turkic speaking or other Muslim populations in the South Caucasus) have ever lived can be claimed as a territory of Azerbaijan.

On May 12, 2021, Azerbaijan arranged a military attack and penetrated the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia for 3 km.⁵⁵ On this invasion, Aliyev commented:

"They [Armenians] shouldn't forget the Second Karabakh War. While in Yerevan, Charles Michel described the border territories as disputed. To be honest, I also disagree with this expression, because we believe that these territories are ours. I believe that this is the territory of Zangazur, and Zangazur is the land of our ancestors, so we are in our own territory."

"After the snow melted in May, we approached these borders, took our positions, settled in Zangazur and reinforced our positions there. This is our land. The opinions expressed in Armenia are completely unfounded. We are on our own land. Lake Garagol [Sev Lich] and other places are ours. We are here now."⁵⁶

Aliyev declares that the "entire Turkic world is proud" of Azerbaijan's victory. He markets the so-called "Zangazur corridor" as a way to remove the "geographical divide of the Turkic world" and "unite the whole Turkic world and create additional opportunities."

Reiteration of Aliyev's Rhetoric by Other High-Ranking Officials

President Aliyev's aggressive vocabulary resonates throughout Azerbaijani society, as well as throughout his government. The most notable expressions by high-ranking officials are described below:

- Member of the Milli Majlis (National Assembly) Rahim Mammedov, stated that Azerbaijan saved the region from Armenian fascism.⁵⁷
- Another Member of the Milli Majlis, Bakhtiyar Sadigov, reminds about the "iron fist" of Azerbaijan and Armenia's shameful defeat on the battlefield and in the field of diplomacy.⁵⁸
- Former MP and reserve colonel Eldar Sabiroglu states that they "crushed the enemy's head and taught him a lesson that he probably would never put an eye on other lands."⁵⁹

55 Intellinews, Azerbaijani Forces 'Advance 3 km into Armenia', May 12, 2021, <https://www.intellinews.com/azerbaijani-forces-advance-3-km-into-armenia-210421>.

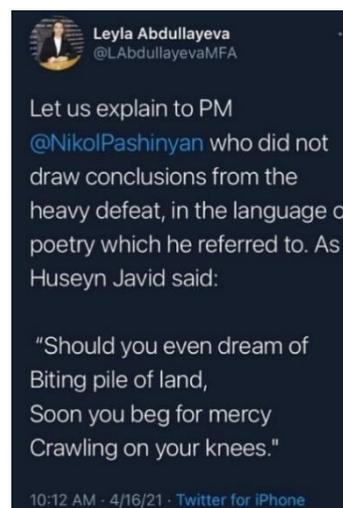
56 AzerNews, President Aliyev Gives Interview to Azerbaijan Television, July 22, 2021, <https://www.azernews.az/nation/181483.html>.

57 Milli.Az, Azərbaycan təkə öz ərazi bütövlüyünü bərpa etmədi, həm də bölgəni erməni faşizmindən xilas etdi – Deputat, February 3, 2021, <https://news.milli.az/politics/919354.html>.

58 Apa.az, President İlham Aliyev Attended Ceremony to Lay Foundation Stone for Restoration of Aghdam City, Met with Members of General Public, May 31, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3saVZgn>.

59 Moderator.az, "Ermənilərə elə bir dərs verdik ki, bir daha qələtlərini qırıb özgə torpağına göz dikməzlər...", September 26, 2021, <https://moderator.az/hadise/395266/ermenilere-ele-bir-ders-verdik-ki-bir-daha-qeletlerini-qirib-zge-torpaina-gz-dikmezler>.

- Spokesperson for the Azerbaijani MFA Leyla Abdullayeva goes further and “explains” to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan “who did not draw conclusions from heavy defeat,” in the language of poetry. She quotes Huseyn Javid [Azerbaijani poet and playwright]: “Should you even dream of biting pile of land, Soon you beg for mercy, crawling on your knees”.
- Azerbaijani General Huseynov Camal directly addressed Armenians as “you are dogs” in Armenian, also threatening that they are going to come and take Armenia after Karabakh and claiming that all Armenia belongs to Azerbaijan.⁶⁰



CELEBRATING “THE CLEANUP” FROM ARMENIANS

Postage Stamp

On December 30, 2020, the Ministry of Transport, Communication and High Technologies of Azerbaijan issued “Azerbaijan 2020” postage stamps, which depicted a man in a hazardous materials suit “disinfecting” the Artsakh area, visually depicting the act of ethnic cleansing the territory of Armenians.⁶¹

On June 3, 2021, the Ministry of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia learned that the Universal Postal Union (UPU) has decided not to register the “Azerbaijan 2020” postage stamps in their database, as they were deemed to contradict provisions of the Union Convention and Code of Conduct. The Union has asked Azerbaijan to reconsider issuing the stamps.⁶²



60 NAIL KEMERLININ KANALI, Bilsəydilər erməni dilini bilərəm dərimi soyardılar - General Camal (EN subtitles are available, translation from Armenian), November 13, 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YworvLKGyQ&t=800s>.

61 AzTV, Postage Stamps Dedicated to Azerbaijani Heroes Issued, January 6, 2021, <http://www.aztv.az/en/news/11015/postage-stamps-dedicated-to-azerbaijani-heroes-issued>; The Calvert Journal, Azerbaijani Postal Stamps Accused of Spreading Anti-Armenian Propaganda, January 12, 2021, <https://www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/12442/azerbaijan-stamps-nagorno-karabakh-war-anti-armenian-propaganda>.

62 Armenpress, “Universal Postal Union Cancels Azerbaijan’s Stamps Promoting Xenophobia against Armenians,” June 3, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1054330>; Stamp Community, Universal Postal Union Refuses to Register Azerbaijan Stamps, June 4, 2021, https://www.stampcommunity.org/forum.asp?FORUM_ID=20.

Military Trophy Park

On April 12, 2021, Azerbaijan opened an exhibition in Baku, called the “Military Trophy Park”, dedicated to the country’s victory in the Second Karabakh War. The Military Trophy Park displayed equipment captured from the Armenian side, including the helmets of dead soldiers. The exhibition included mannequins as Armenian soldiers, presented with disgraceful and ugly appearances (see the photos).⁶³ The exhibition specifically attracted children to play with the mannequins. The Military Trophy Park was widely advertised in tourism guides and by travel companies.⁶⁴

According to the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Armenia, the opening of such a “park” confirms the institutional hatred against Armenians in Azerbaijan and a state policy of propagandizing animosity.⁶⁵

According to Azerbaijani political activist Bahruz Samadov,

“Its [The park’s] dehumanization of the Armenian adversary reflects the logic that has dominated in Azerbaijan for decades: The enemy, internal or external, must be eliminated.”⁶⁶

In spite of criticism by international actors,⁶⁷ Azerbaijan continued the operation and promotion of the amusement park. Only following a complaint by Armenia against Azerbaijan at the ICJ did Azerbaijan say it had removed the displays mocking Armenian servicemen and the helmets of fallen soldiers from the park.⁶⁸

Military “Dog Chaser” Drones

At the height of the war, on October 22, 2020, Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Defense announced the production of military drones, named “Iti Qovan” or “dog chaser” in Azerbaijani, implying Armenians to be the “dogs.”⁶⁹ “Iti Qovan” UAVs were exhibited at Azerbaijan’s 2021 International Defence Industry Fair.⁷⁰

63 War Trophies Park, <https://herbiqenimetlerparki.az/en>; Apa.az, Military Trophies Park: Armenian Soldiers and Enemy Trenches in Center of Baku, April 14, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/nagorno-garabagh/Military-Trophies-Park-Armenian-soldiers-and-enemy-trenches-in-center-of-Baku-colorredREPORTAGEcolor-colorredPHOTOScolor-346769>.

64 BakuTravelGuide, Baku Military Trophy Park, April 14, 2021, <https://bakutragelguide.com/en/baku-war-trophy-park-military-trophy-park>; TripAdvisor, War Trophies Park, https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-q293934-d23717373-Reviews-War_Trophies_Park-Baku_Absheron_Region.html.

65 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Public Report “A Park of Killed Armenian Soldiers and Chained Prisoners of War opened in Baku: A Museum of Human Sufferings and Promotion of Racism,” Yerevan, 2021, <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/96e6d55d169a784b6424e4d565b29dba.pdf>, page 4.

66 Eurasianet, Samadov B., Perspectives | Azerbaijan’s Authoritarianism and Baku’s “Military Trophies Park”, April 16, 2021, <https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-azerbajians-authoritarianism-and-bakus-military-trophies-park>.

67 Council of Europe, The Letter of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović to I. Aliyev (April 20, 2021), April 27, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3JR16IK>.

68 OC Media, Azerbaijan Removes Mannequins and Helmets from Military Trophy Park, October 15, 2021, <https://oc-media.org/azerbaijan-removes-mannequins-and-helmets-from-military-trophy-park>.

69 Defence.az, Azerbaijan Starts Production of “Iti qovan” UAVs, October 22, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3lwzf00>.

70 Real Tv on YouTube, “İTİ QOVAN” PUA-ları “İDEF-2021” Müdafiə Sənayesi Sərgisində, August 18, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWDBTbRjghM>.

Anti-Armenian Xenophobia and Racism in Azerbaijan



Needless to say, state-sponsored propaganda fuels the racist sentiments and actions within Azerbaijani society.

- In April 2021, a video appeared on Facebook of an Armenian flag burning during a ceremony in front of children while a song mentioned “We chased the Armenians from the territories. See what has happened Pashinyan [repeating 3 times]. Like rabbits, they run from us, they fell on their knees in front of us.” Text on the video read, “See and help to share how the heirs of martyrs (shehids) are burning the dishonored flag.”⁷¹
- In July 2021, a video was disseminated stating “Our soldiers chase Armenians like fleeing dogs.”⁷²
- In November 2021, a video was disseminated that included song lyrics stating “We chased you like dogs,” depicting [fake] handicapped Armenian soldiers running away from Azerbaijanis.⁷³

TERROR POLICIES AGAINST ARMENIANS IN ARTSAKH AND ARMENIA

Throughout 2021, the deployment and presence of Russian peacekeepers along the new line of contact with Azerbaijan mostly helped to maintain the ceasefire and security in Artsakh-controlled territories. Thousands of Armenians displaced during the war were able to return to their homes or to the adjacent areas of their lost homeland. Nevertheless, there have been a number of provocations that reveal the ethnic cleansing intent of the Azerbaijani government against the Armenian population of Artsakh.

Atrocities and Intimidation in Artsakh

In spite of the presence of Russia peacekeepers, several killings did take place. Specifically:

- **On October 9, 2021, Aram Tepnunts, 55,** was killed in the town of Martakert, while he was cultivating farmland, sitting next to a Russian peacekeeper on a tractor. Though official Baku denied this information,⁷⁴ the Russian Defense Ministry confirmed the incident.⁷⁵ Armenia’s Prosecutor General’s Office issued a statement noting that Russian peacekeepers arrived at the field where agricultural work was being carried out, to ensure the security of local farmers given the area’s proximity to the line of contact. Tepnunts, fearing for his safety, was reluctant to drive the tractor. However, one of the peacekeepers offered to sit in his cab as an additional guarantee. Together,

71 Armenian Breaking News on Facebook, April 29, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=142576934514372>.

72 Yurdsevgisi on Youtube, Esgerlermiz ermenileri iti qovan kimi qovur 2021, July 25, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gp_lxPFXjrk.

73 Sultan ibrahimzade on YouTube, İTİ QOVAN KİMİ QOVDUQ, November 9, 2021, [youtube.com/watch?v=todps-1Y0-8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=todps-1Y0-8).

74 TASS, Баку опроверг сообщение о гибели жителя в Карабахе от выстрела со стороны ВС Азербайджана, October 9, 2021, <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/12620399>.

75 Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Информационный бюллетень Министерства обороны Российской Федерации о деятельности российского миротворческого контингента в зоне нагорно-карабахского конфликта (на 10 октября 2021 г.), October 10, 2021, https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/news/more.htm?id=12387866@egNews.

they made several turns driving the tractor before an Azerbaijani sniper killed the Armenian farmer.⁷⁶

- **On November 8, 2021, Martik Yeremyan, 22**, was killed near the city of Shushi. Together with a number of specialists, he was carrying out construction work on water supply pipes near a road intersection in the vicinity of Shushi, in order to provide water to Russian peacekeepers. The Azerbaijani military approached the workers and set fire to them. As a result, Yeremyan was killed and three others (41-year-old S.A., 31-year-old M.G., 43-year-old D.G.) were injured.⁷⁷
- **On December 3, 2021, Seyran Sargsyan, 65**, a resident of Chartar village in the Martuni district of Artsakh, got lost near the border and was captured and killed by the Azerbaijani military.⁷⁸

Apart from these deliberate killings, there were cases of aggression against the peaceful population with an intention to create an environment of constant fear and insecurity.

Terror on Roads and Blocking Access

- On March 25, 2021, Armenians cars passing through a joint-use Karmir Shuka-Stepanakert road had stones thrown at them by Azerbaijanis.⁷⁹
- During April 28 - July 8, 2021, the Azerbaijani military blocked access to the Dadivank Monastery, creating obstacles for Armenian pilgrims. With this action, they also tried to portray the monastery as Azerbaijani-Albanian, signaling that they intend to permanently block access to Armenians if peacekeepers leave the territory.⁸⁰
- On January 2, 2022, on the Stepanakert-Shushi road, Azerbaijani armed servicemen aimed a gun and threw a large stone at the car of a citizen of Armenia, with his wife and a 3-year-old child in the car.⁸¹

Targeting Civilians and Settlements

- On July 29 and August 2, 2021, four livestock animals owned by the residents of the Hin Shen community of Shushi were stolen by Azerbaijani servicemen.⁸² On October 3, 2021, a group of Azerbaijanis conspired and stole more than 30 cows and 13 calves

76 Prosecutor General of the Republic of Armenia, The RA Prosecutor's Office will be Consistent in the Issue of an Objective Investigation of the Case of Gross Violation of the Ceasefire and the Murder of a Martakert Resident by the Azerbaijani Republic Armed Forces, October 10, 2021, <https://www.prosecutor.am/en/mn/8304>.

77 Human Rights Defender of Artsakh, Statement of the Human Rights Defender on the Killing of a Civilian by Azerbaijan, November 8, 2021, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/news/598>.

78 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, The Violence against and the Killing of a Peaceful Civilian in Artsakh is an Evidence that Azerbaijani Armed Servicemen Should Not Be Deployed in the Vicinity of Civilian Communities in Artsakh and Armenia, December 3, 2021, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2034; Armenpress, Resident of Artsakh Captured and Killed by Azerbaijani Soldiers – MFA, December 3, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1069833.html>.

79 First Channel News, Proper Investigation Needed Karmir Shuka-Stepanakert Road Incident: Artsakh Ombudsman, March 26, 2021, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2021/03/26/Proper-investigation-needed-Karmir-Shuka-Stepanakert-road-incident-Artsakh-Ombudsman/442528>.

80 Forum 18, Azerbaijan: "They Hold Services and Pray There, But without a Congregation", July 8, 2021, https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2671.

81 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, On the Stepanakert-Shushi Road Azerbaijani Armed Servicemen Directed the Gun and Threw a Big Stone at the Car of a Citizen of Armenia, with His Wife and a 3-year-old Child in the Car, January 11, 2022, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2081.

82 Panorama.am, Artsakh Ombudsman: Azerbaijani Servicemen Stole 4 Animals Owned by Hin Shen Residents, August 7, 2021, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2021/08/07/Artsakh-ombudsman/2546804>.

from a resident of the town of Chartar in the Martuni district, causing him 12.3 million drams in material damage.⁸³

- On August 25, 2021, Jamil Babayev, a serviceman of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, entered an apartment on Teryan Street in the town of Martakert.⁸⁴ According to the report of the Prosecutor's Office of Artsakh, he was found by twin teenagers inside their own house. Babayev threatened them, demanding food and cigarettes. He was fed, after which one of the teenagers promised to go to the store to buy him cigarettes. He left the house and called the police.⁸⁵ The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry issued a statement saying that Babayev had voluntarily left the psychiatric ward of a hospital in Ganja,⁸⁶ which is more than 150 km away. Babayev was returned to Azerbaijan in exchange for two Armenian captives.⁸⁷
- On February 11, 2022, Azerbaijani forces opened fire at civilian houses in the village of Taghavard, damaging walls and roofs of the buildings. Women and children were inside the houses at the time of the shooting. The bullets hit the window of one of the houses, where young children were asleep.⁸⁸
- Multiple cases of farmers, civilians and workers being targeted by Azerbaijani forces have also been recorded. e.g. on April 12, 2021 - in Sarushen,⁸⁹ on May 20 - in Shosh,⁹⁰ on November 2⁹¹ and December 2⁹² - in Karmir Shuka, on November 13 - in Mkhitarashen,⁹³ on January 10, 2022 - in Askeran,⁹⁴ Karmir Shuka and Taghavard,⁹⁵ and on February 16, 2022 - in Khramort.⁹⁶
- According to residents of Stepanakert, they periodically hear shootings coming from the direction of Shushi, located on the highland immediately above Stepanakert, which creates anxiety among the population, fears and associations with the active war

83 Artsakh Press, Azerbaijanis Steal Dozens of Cattle from Artsakh Resident, October 27, 2021, <https://www.artsakhpress.am/eng/news/152695/azerbaijanis-steal-dozens-of-cattle-from-artsakh-resident.html>.

84 Masis Post, Azerbaijani Soldier Captured in Martakert After Threatening to Kill Children, August 26, 2021, <https://massispost.com/2021/08/azerbaijani-soldier-captured-in-martakert-after-threatening-to-kill-children>.

85 Ibid.

86 JAM News, Azerbaijani Soldier Detained in Karabakh on Several Charges Including Espionage, August 26, 2021, <https://jam-news.net/azerbaijani-soldier-detained-in-karabakh-on-several-charges-including-espionage>.

87 Armenpress, Two Armenian Captives Return from Azerbaijan in Exchange of an Azerbaijani Servicemen-Border Trespasser, September 7, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1062597>.

88 Panorama.am, Armenian Ombudsman: School in Artsakh's Taghavard Also Targeted by Azerbaijani Forces, February 17, 2022, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2022/02/17/Armenian-ombudsman/2642259>.

89 Panorama.am, Azerbaijanis Use Machine Gun to Fire Shots at Armenian Farmers in Artsakh, April 12, 2021, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2021/04/12/Azerbaijanis-fire-farmers-Artsakh/2484497>.

90 News.am, Azerbaijanis Fire at Resident Carrying out Engineering Work near Artsakh Village, May 20, 2021, <https://news.am/eng/news/644673.html>.

91 Hetq, The Foe Opened Irregular Fire in the Direction of Karmir Shuka (in Armenian), November 2, 2021, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/137383>.

92 Hetq, Artsakh: Azerbaijani Troops Fire on Karmir Shouka Village, December 2, 2021, <https://hetq.am/en/article/138477>.

93 Factor, Artsakh Investigation Committee Launches Criminal Case in Connection with Azeri Troops' Shooting at Residential House in Mkhitarashen, December 7, 2021, <https://factor.am/en/7277.html>.

94 Public Radio of Armenia, Farmers in Artsakh Targeted by Azerbaijani Forces, January 10, 2022, <https://en.armradio.am/2022/01/10/farmers-in-artsakh-targeted-by-azerbaijani-forces>.

95 CivilNet, Karmir Shuka, Artsakh: Tracing Azerbaijani Shootings (in Armenian), January 12, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSjiaP2SQYM>.

96 Panorama.am, Azerbaijani Forces Targeted Artsakh Farmer, Police Say, February 16, 2022, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2022/02/16/Azerbaijani-forces-Artsakh-farmer/2641725>; Panorama.am, Three Armenian Workers Come under Azerbaijani Fire in Artsakh's Askeran Region, February 8, 2022; <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2022/02/08/Azerbaijani-fire-Artsakh/2638162>.

period. Particularly, shootings were heard on April 20, 2021,⁹⁷ July 13, 2021⁹⁸, and September 2, 2021.⁹⁹

- On February 25, 2022, next to the village of Khramort in Askeran, Azerbaijani authorities broadcasted announcement that the village is Azerbaijani, that the agricultural activities of the farmers are illegal, and they should leave the area or their lives will be in danger and they will bear responsibility.¹⁰⁰

Information Terror

- In March 2021, the Artsakh Prosecutor's Office revealed attempts to silence or jam the radio frequencies used by the Mix Media company near Askeran.¹⁰¹ Such techniques of "information war" are not new to the people of Artsakh. They were actively employed to interfere with the newly-established Armenian television of NKAO as far back as 1988-1991. Thus, the renewed attempts at silencing or inhibiting information reminds the local people of the discrimination under the Soviet Azerbaijani government.¹⁰²
- On June 30, 2021, the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh issued a statement referring to various means of information terror applied against the Artsakh people. Particularly, he mentioned an organized series of calls from Azerbaijan to Stepanakert residents, offering to buy their shops and apartments. He pointed to the "Khankendi" (the Azerbaijani name for Stepanakert) Facebook Page, that is likely coordinated by the Azerbaijani authorities and exerts psychological pressure on the people of Artsakh, trying to generate anxiety through its messaging. One example given was the declaration by an Azerbaijani "deputy elected from Stepanakert" about his office in Stepanakert, giving out its contact information and expecting Artsakh residents to apply to him for assistance.¹⁰³

On December 23, 2021, Azerbaijan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially requested Google Corporation to leave only Azerbaijani place names (toponyms) on its Google Maps site. This created anxieties among the Armenian people. A petition was compiled and signed by more than 3,000 people in two days, stating that this is a form of destroying Armenian cultural heritage in Artsakh and Google should not comply with Azerbaijan's request.¹⁰⁴ According to

97 First Channel News, Artsakh Police Provided Details on Shooting at a House in Stepanakert, April 22, 2021, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2021/04/22/Artsakh-Police-provided-details-on-shooting-at-a-house-in-Stepanakert/459983>.

98 Caucasian Knot, Stepanakert Residents Alarmed by Machine Gun Shooting near Shusha, July 14, 2021, <https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/56128>.

99 ArtsakhLive on Facebook, September 3, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=826364458068201>

100 News.am, Near Khramort Village Azerbaijanis Make Announcement with a Loudspeaker Demanding the Residents to Leave the Village: Mayor, February 26, 2022, <https://news.am/arm/news/688731.html>: https://www.facebook.com/messenger_media?thread_id=4221115824631242&attachment_id=654971625714654&message_id=mid.%24qAA7_FR1lbcqFZlqzF_NRFkleD7T.

101 The Prosecutor General of Artsakh, There is an Attempt to Violate the Right to Be Informed (in Armenian), <https://prosecutor.nk.am/հորձ-Է-արվում-հայրնոսնոնել-տեղեկացված>.

102 CivilNet, Artsakh: Information War Continues (in Armenian), <https://bit.ly/33Qhx8X>.

103 Human Rights Defender of Artsakh, The Ombudsman's Statement on Information Terrorism by Azerbaijan, June 30, 2021, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/news/551>; <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1029722600898492>.

104 Вестник Кавказа, "Азеркосмос": Google может удалить азербайджанские топонимы на армянском языке со своих карт, January 11, 2022, <https://vestikavkaza.ru/news/azerkosmos-google-mozet-udalit-azerbajdzanskie-toponimy-na-armanskom-azyke-so-svoih-kart.html>; Caucasian Knot, Petition in Defence of Karabakh Place Names Gains over 3000 Signatures, January 5, 2022, <https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/57834>; Monument Watch, Google May Remove the Armenian Toponyms of Artsakh from Its Maps at Request of Azerbaijan, January 20, 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/alerts/google-may-remove-the-armenian-toponyms-of-artsakh-from-its-maps-at-request-of-azerbaijan>.

the Head of the Space Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Azercosmos), they are actively cooperating with Google to change the *toponyms on its maps, and some have already been changed*.¹⁰⁵

Other Intimidation

- Military posts throughout Artsakh fly the flags of Artsakh, Azerbaijan or Russia to indicate which forces control the area. Amaras Monastery, a centuries-old Armenian spiritual and educational centers, which appeared next to the line of contact, flew the Russian flag and was later replaced with the Artsakh flag. On September 21, 2021, Armenia's Independence Day, following some tension on the line of contact, Russian peacekeepers mediated and advised that the Armenian side remove the Artsakh flag to "resolve the conflict". It was taken down. This generated anxiety among local residents over the control and security of the given area or potential plans about its future status.¹⁰⁶

It is needless to say that such incidents are having a cumulative psychological effect on the Armenian population living in Artsakh, who are constantly made aware of their precarious security in the region. This often causes local residents to leave their ancestral homeland for the sake of their children's future, which seems to be the intention of Aliyev's regime.

Isolation of Artsakh

Aside from terrorizing the people of Artsakh in their homeland, the Azerbaijani leadership exerts effort to deepen the isolation of Artsakh through creating obstacles for visitors, including accessibility for high-ranking Armenian officials as well as international actors. The latter are included in a blacklist of foreign nationals as "personae non gratae" for their "illegal entry" to the territory.¹⁰⁷

Upon the visit of Armenia's Foreign Affairs Minister Ara Ayvazyan to Artsakh in January 2021, Aliyev said:

"The whole world recognizes this territory as an integral part of Azerbaijan. Armenian foreign minister, who are you to go there? We warn you. If a similar step is repeated, our response will be very harsh. We first warned them through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further warnings will be given differently. Their visits there must stop. Let them

105 Caucasian Knot, Stepanakert Residents Alarmed by Machine Gun Shooting near Shusha, July 14, 2021, <https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/56128>.

106 NEWS.am, Machkalashen Village Mayor: Russia Peacekeepers Removed Artsakh Flag on Amaras Monastery, September 22, 2021, <https://news.am/eng/news/663944.html>; Monument Watch, The Flag of Republic of Artsakh Was Removed from the Monastery of Amaras after Demand of Azerbaijanis, October 3, 2021, <https://monumentwatch.org/alerts/the-flag-of-republic-of-artsakh-was-removed-from-the-monastery-of-amarash-after-demand-of-azerbaijanis>.

107 Wikipedia, List of People Declared Personae Non Gratae in Azerbaijan, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_people_declared_personae_non_gratae_in_Azerbaijan; LIST OF FOREIGN: Citizens Illegally Visited Occupied Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, September 10, 2020, https://web.archive.org/web/20201004094059/https://mfa.gov.az/files/shares/illegally_visited.pdf.

sit in their own country and thank God that they have a country of their own. No-one should have any business in our territory.”¹⁰⁸

Aliyev was rather furious about the visit of French politician and presidential candidate Valerie Pecesse to Artsakh in December 2020.¹⁰⁹ He threatened:

“The same steps were taken in connection with the recent illegal visit of Valerie Pecesse. We were told that they did not see it, did not know of it, that it fell out of focus, that she went there in an ordinary car, and so on. However, this doesn’t sound very convincing. I have to state everything the way it is – both positive and negative things. It was an organized trip, because Valerie Pecesse could not go there with the escort she wanted and went with a very limited number of people. She was accompanied by France’s former foreign minister, EU Commissioner Barnier, and an MP. They went there secretly and returned. The news came out only when they had returned. They were probably afraid that we would have stopped them in the Lachin corridor. Because if we knew they were there, we wouldn’t have let them back, clearly.”¹¹⁰

Throughout 2021, there have been a number of cases when international journalists had difficulty in getting access to Artsakh, often denied by Russian peacekeepers. Reporters without Borders (RSF) issued a call to Russia “to stop denying entry to foreign reporters as well as urged the UN and Council of Europe to ensure respect for the right to the freedom to inform.”¹¹¹

Azerbaijan continuously denies access to international organizations that wish to enter Artsakh. The only entities that are allowed to work there are the International Red Cross and HALO Trust – to work on demining. UN structures, such as UNHCR or UNESCO, which would work on the issue of returning displaced persons as mentioned in the trilateral statement or ensure the protection of cultural monuments, are not allowed by the Azerbaijani authorities to visit the area. Thus, the UN fails to implement its universal values and its main promise for 2030 on “leaving no one behind.”¹¹²

The issue of Artsakh’s isolation has been reflected in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) report on “Humanitarian Consequences of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.” The report states the following:

108 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting in a Video Format on Results of 2020, January 8, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/President-Ilham-Aliyev-chaired-meeting-in-a-video-format-on-results-of-2020-coloredUPDATEDcolor-339614>.

109 CivilNet, French Presidential Frontrunner Blacklisted by Azerbaijan for Visiting Karabakh, December 24, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=js_IzBb7DIM, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31661551.html>.

110 Trend News Agency, President Ilham Aliyev Interviewed by Local TV Channels, January 12, 2022, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3539946.html>.

111 Reporters Without Borders, Russian Peacekeepers Deny Foreign Reporters Access to Nagorno-Karabakh, April 9, 2021, <https://rsf.org/en/news/russian-peacekeepers-deny-foreign-reporters-access-nagorno-karabakh>.

112 UN, 2030-Agenda, Universal Values, <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values>; UN, 2030-Agenda, Universal Values, Principle Two: Leave No One Behind, <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>.

12.1 strongly regrets the international community's absence from the region due to ongoing disagreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the issue of access; in this sense, having in mind its Resolution 2240 (2018) "Unlimited access to member States, including 'grey zones', by Council of Europe and United Nations human rights monitoring bodies" and recalls the legal obligations on Council of Europe member States to co-operate fully and in good faith with international human rights monitoring mechanisms, including those of the Council of Europe and the United Nations;

12.5 calls on all involved States to ensure unimpeded access of representatives of international independent humanitarian organizations and mass-media to the Nagorno-Karabakh region.¹¹³

On August 31, 2021, at a joint press conference with the Foreign Affairs Minister of Russia, Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister Ararat Mirzoyan emphasized the human dimension of the isolation. He stated that:

"...humanitarian access to Artsakh should not be politicized. It is about the protection of human rights. The issue of protection of several cultural, including Armenian religious monuments under the control of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces is extremely urgent."¹¹⁴

At a press conference held on January 18, 2022, Artsakh State Minister Artak Beglaryan said that the international isolation of Artsakh has deepened after the war. He said:

"So far, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group have not visited Nagorno-Karabakh because of Azerbaijan. The same is with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, which had earlier stated their willingness to visit Artsakh." He added that it is regretful that international organizations are exposed to illegal, inhuman actions of Azerbaijan, "especially that their function is to protect human rights and help solve humanitarian issues..."
"...Human rights should be a priority. International organizations should take a bolder stance..."¹¹⁵

113 PACE, Humanitarian Consequences of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan / Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Report, September 13, 2021, <https://pace.coe.int/pdf/a61ff5e0981ae42e02f02336c51f639d66ae587b74fd95634b36e68c4bcbe7a6/doc.%2015363.pdf>; PACE, Humanitarian Consequences of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan / Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Documents, September 27, 2021; <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29483#trace-4>.

114 Hetq, Armenian FM Says No Current Peace Negotiations with Baku; Any Future Deal Must Include Karabakh Status Issue, August 31, 2021, <https://hetq.am/en/article/135188>.

115 Arka News Agency, Azerbaijan Deepens International Isolation of Artsakh, While International Organizations Lack Courage - State Minister, January 18, 2022, <http://arka.am/en/news/politics/azerbaijan-deepens-international-isolation-of-artsakh-while-international-organizations-lack-courage>.

Closing the Issue and Impeding the Minsk Group Mission

In spite of the fact that many international organizations keep stating that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not resolved, and a long-term and comprehensive solution is needed,¹¹⁶ Ilham Aliyev attempts to close the issue of the conflict, taking any opportunity to discredit the work of the OSCE Minsk Group – the political structure charged with mediating a peaceful resolution to the conflict. On January 12, 2022, he said the following in an interview with local television channels:

“- Mr. President, during the conflict, there was a group called the OSCE Minsk Group, and you have just mentioned it. This OSCE Minsk Group made virtually no progress in 30 years, and Azerbaijan has both restored international law and implemented the well-known UN resolutions on its own. After the conflict was resolved, the Minsk Group issued several statements and then disappeared. There is no news from them. Do you have any information? What are they doing?

- No, I do not have information. I think they are now preparing for the anniversary events. Because, as you know, the Minsk Group was established in 1992, and this year it will celebrate its 30th anniversary. They are probably busy preparing for these events. But if we put these jokes aside, I think they should formulate an agenda for themselves. This is not our job. However, I have an idea of what they should be doing and what they should not be doing. I can say what they should not be doing. They should not be dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, because it has been resolved. We have resolved this issue instead of them. I think this is the reason for their absence.”¹¹⁷

In September 2021, the Minsk Group Co-chairs came to an agreement with the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides to visit Artsakh, which has been mentioned by Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov¹¹⁸ and Russian MFA Spokesperson Maria Zakharova.¹¹⁹ However, the Azerbaijani side failed to allow the visit. According to Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ararat Mirzoyan,

116 US Embassy in Armenia, Joint Statement by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries, December 8, 2021, <https://am.usembassy.gov/co-chairs-statement-2-2/>; EEAS, Armenia/Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Ceasefire Anniversary, November 10, 2021, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/107059/armeniaazerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-ceasefire-anniversary_en; European Parliament, February 17, 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0039_EN.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0XIZLSYF9E-AMfVU7R0McJJW6G3XRTf-9movlif7PH6dycMhyUI0qOh2M.

117 Trend News Agency, President Ilham Aliyev Interviewed by Local TV Channels, January 12, 2022, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3539946.html>.

118 TASS, Лавров: главный результат договоренности 2020 года по Карабаху заключается в стабильности, September 28, 2021, <https://tass.ru/politika/12523905>.

119 Novosti-Armenia, Zakharova. RF Supports Continuation of the Work of OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. Zakharova about Aliyev's Statement (in Armenian), January 20, 2022, <https://newsarmenia.am/am/news/politics/Zakharova-RD-n-ajakcum-e/>.

“Supposedly there is strong pressure from the Azerbaijani side – to prevent that visit, while we believe that Co-Chairs and Co-Chairing states should not give in to Azerbaijani pressure. That visit shall take place. You also know that a meeting in the 3+2 format was planned – with the three Co-Chairs and Armenian and Azerbaijani Ministers of Foreign Affairs. At the last minute, literally 1-2 hours before the meeting, we received information that Azerbaijan had refused to participate in the meeting.”¹²⁰

Blocking the Goris-Kapan Road

As mentioned earlier, the trilateral statement of November 10, 2020, laid the ground to open the roads in the region to facilitate communication and, supposedly, peacebuilding. While most of the debates throughout 2021 related to the so-called “corridor” between Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through Armenian territory (that Azerbaijan tried to claim it should receive sovereignty over), Azerbaijan took active measures to close existing communications. More specifically, it blocked the major highway through Armenia’s southern Syunik region that passed very close to the non-demarcated border between the two countries, paralyzing the major transportation artery that connects the centre of Armenia with the south of the country, including toward Iran.

More specifically, 20 kilometres of the Goris-Kapan highway was claimed by Azerbaijan to be under its title, according to latest Soviet maps. The claimed section of the road did not provide connections with Azerbaijani settlements, and the costs for its maintenance had been included in Soviet Armenia’s budgets. Given the uncertainties with the Russia-controlled Soviet maps of different times and Azerbaijani aggressive claims for ownership, in late 2020, Russia took on the responsibility to secure safe passage for cars through the disputed section of the road. On May 15, 2021, Azerbaijan established a customs checkpoint and passport control at the road. On August 25, 2021, its armed forces briefly blocked the road, only re-opening it after negotiations mediated by Russia. On November 10, 2021, the anniversary of the trilateral statement, the road was completely passed over to Azerbaijani control¹²¹ to avoid provocations of war, under the understanding that the issue would be dealt with as part of the final delimitation and demarcation of borders.

Throughout the year, there have been several incidents confirming Azerbaijan’s intent to terrorize local residents.

120 RFE/RL’s Armenian Service, Armenian Side Expects That in the Near Future the Co-Chairs Finally Will Visit the Region (in Armenian), January 19, 2022, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31661555.html>.

121 Asbarez, Goris-Kapan Stretch of Highway Completely Under Azerbaijani Control, November 11, 2021, <https://asbarez.com/goris-kapan-stretch-of-highway-completely-under-azerbaijani-control>.



On September 17, 2021, masked and armed Azerbaijani servicemen stopped a civilian bus carrying a group of Armenian children from Artsakh, on the road near Vorotan. A video, shot and disseminated by the Azerbaijani side, shows that an Azerbaijani serviceman said arrogantly to the intimidated children “Karabakh is Azerbaijan, do you understand it?”¹²² The Azerbaijani soldiers, wearing masks and weapons, checked the children’s phones under the pretext of finding some videos. They kept the bus for 10-15 minutes. Meanwhile, one of them scraped the Artsakh flag off the side of the bus with a knife.¹²³

Toghrl Mammadli, Head of Department of the Council (Agency) for State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations under the President of Azerbaijan, tweeted about this incident, stating that it was a lesson to the Armenians.¹²⁴

There were also cases where Armenian civilian cars were pelted with stones on this section of road.¹²⁵

These cases are indicative as warning signals of what would happen to Armenians passing through the disputed section of the road.

Given the aggressive actions of Azerbaijani servicemen, Armenian passengers refrained from taking the road and prefer to travel through the alternative Tatev-Kapan route, but cargo trucks traveling from Iran cannot use the detour, given its mountainous landscape. Instead, they are being checked and paying customs duties to Azerbaijan to pass through.

It should be noted that the blockage of the main north-south artery resulted in the isolation of 9 border villages in Armenia - Bardzraavan, Shurnukh, Vorotan, Chakaten, Srashen, Shikahogh, Nerkin Hand, Tsav and Shishkert. It disrupted the daily life of thousands of citizens, including children, their safety, physical and mental health, free movement, as well as violating their rights to education, access to food and medical care, and the right to earn an income. The alternative Tatev-Kapan road has become overloaded, disrupting the movement and other rights of tens of thousands of more people, including foreign nationals.

122 Panorama.am, Ombudsman: Masked and Armed Azerbaijani Soldiers Illegally Stopped Bus Carrying Armenian Children to Intimidate Them, September 18, 2021, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2021/09/18/ombudsman-Azerbaijani-soldiers-children/2567615>.

123 Ibid.

124 Toghrl Mammadli on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/toghrul.mammadli.714>.

125 ArmDaily, Azerbaijanis Have Thrown Stones in the Direction of the Car Belonging to an Armenian: Kapan Mayor (in Armenian), April 6, 2021, <https://www.armdaily.am/?p=132648&l=am>.

Aggression on the Territory of Armenia

Throughout 2021, Aliyev has been assertively pushing forward the concept of a corridor through Armenia to connect Nakhchivan with the rest of Azerbaijan. Simultaneously, he kept stating that Syunik, Vardenis and Yerevan are Azerbaijani lands where their ancestors lived, and they are going to return to those areas.¹²⁶ This idea was also emphasized in the context of connecting the Turkic World and providing new opportunities for its development.¹²⁷ Azerbaijan generally refers to the Zangezur (Zangazur) “corridor” as something already decided and realized.¹²⁸

Besides verbal announcements, the Azerbaijani leadership actually undertook a military operation to invade some parts of Armenian territory, threatening to “open” the “corridor” by force. Such advancements were named by Armenian experts as “creeping annexation.”¹²⁹

On May 12, 2021, 17 days after Prime Minister Pashinyan submitted his formal resignation to begin the early parliamentary election process, and two days after the 7th National Assembly of Armenia dissolved ahead of the June 20 election date, the Azerbaijani military advanced into the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia in the area of Ishkhanasar, in the Gegharkunik region, and Sev Lich in Syunik, advancing 3 km inside the territory of Armenia in the direction toward Nakhchivan.¹³⁰

Only two days earlier, Aliyev had given an interview to Azerbaijani Television, where he stated:

“Our next historical achievement will be to connect Zangilan, located in the Eastern Zangezur region, with our ancient land, Western Zangezur, and then to Nakhchivan and Turkey through Ordubad. I’m sure it will, I have no doubt. I want to say again that Azerbaijan will fulfill its responsibilities and do its best to ensure that there are no problems in the implementation of this project.”

This incident opened a new round of tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan.¹³¹

On November 16, 2021, on the same territory near Sev Lich, tensions were rising for several days, aimed at continuing the progress into Armenian territory. However, a serious defense operation stopped the advancement of the Azerbaijani military. This was the biggest tension

126 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Attended Ceremony to Give out Apartments and Cars to Families of Martyrs and War Disabled in Khojasan Settlement, July 14, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/social-news/president-ilham-aliyev-attended-ceremony-to-give-out-apartments-and-cars-to-families-of-martyrs-and-war-disabled-in-khojasan-settlement-updated-353855>.

127 Apa.az, Informal Summit of Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States Was Held in Video Conference Format, April 1, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/foreign-politics/Informal-Summit-of-Cooperation-Council-of-Turkic-Speaking-States-was-held-in-video-conference-format-colorredUPDATEDcolor-345741>.

128 EVN Report, Hayrapetyan T., Unblocking the South Caucasus or Blocking Armenia’s Chances? December 7, 2021 <https://evnreport.com/politics/unblocking-the-south-caucasus-or-blocking-armenia-s-chances>.

129 EVN Report, How to Avoid a Deadlock or the Use of Force During the Delimitation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Border?, December 13, 2021, <https://evnreport.com/politics/how-to-avoid-a-deadlock-or-the-use-of-force-during-the-delimitation-of-the-armenian-azerbaijani-border-2>; OSF Armenia, Statement on the Actions of the Authorities of the Republic of Armenia under the Aggression of Azerbaijan, November 19, 2021, <https://www.osf.am/2021/11/statement-on-the-actions-of-the-authorities-of-the-republic-of-armenia-in-the-conditions-of-aggression-by-azerbaijan>.

130 Intellinews, Azerbaijani Forces 'Advance 3 km into Armenia', May 12, 2021, <https://www.intellinews.com/azerbaijani-forces-advance-3-km-into-armenia-210421>.

131 EVN Report, Hayrapetyan T., Baku Threatens Yerevan with “Peace Treaty”, August 19, 2021, <https://evnreport.com/politics/baku-threatens-yerevan-with-peace-treaty>.

on the border since the ceasefire of November 10, 2020, and was condemned by international observers.¹³²

Many experts believe that these offenses are meant to force Armenia to agree to Azerbaijani terms of the intended delimitation and demarcation, and/or sign a peace agreement that favors Azerbaijan's interests and recognizes its territorial integrity, which will actually mean abandoning the rights of the Armenian people of Artsakh.

Terrorizing the Residents of Border Areas in Armenia

Residents of communities located on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, particularly in the Syunik and Gegharkunik regions, have become victims and witnesses of persistent provocations, threats and other gross violations of human rights instigated by the Azerbaijani military. Additionally, Azerbaijan keeps the village of Yeraskh, in the Ararat region on the border with Nakhchivan, as a "hotspot" through a variety of human rights violations.¹³³

A cumulative assessment reveals an organized state policy of terror by Azerbaijan to force Armenian residents to flee those areas, given the daily security threats they and their families encounter.

- Azerbaijani armed forces, positioned in close proximity to human settlements along the border, cause regular threats against local residents, by periodic shooting near the settlements,¹³⁴ directing their weapons at residents,¹³⁵ depriving residents from safe access to their agricultural lands and pastures,¹³⁶ etc.
- Several shootings by the Azerbaijani military targeting communities and civilian houses were recorded in the immediate vicinity of communities in the Syunik and Gegharkunik regions of Armenia. Namely, since December 2020, civilians and municipal authorities of the Syunik region communities of Tchakaten, Nerkin Hand, Shikahogh, Yeghvard, Agarak, and Uzhanis have reported regular shootings.¹³⁷ Similar cases were reported in the communities of Gegharkunik region as well. On June 5, 2021, the Azerbaijani

132 RFE/RL, Armenia, Azerbaijan Report Casualties After Renewed Fighting on Border, November 17, 2021, <https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-azerbaijan-border-clashes-casualties/31565567.html>; Reuters, Armenia and Azerbaijan Agree Ceasefire after Border Clash – Armenia, November 16, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/armenia-asks-russia-help-defend-it-against-azerbaijan-amid-reported-border-clash-2021-11-16/>.

133 Public Radio of Armenia, Head of Yeraskh Community Wounded in Azerbaijani Shooting, July 20, 2021, <https://en.armradio.am/2021/07/20/head-of-yeraskh-community-wounded-in-azerbaijani-shooting>; Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Report on Violations of the Armenia's Yeraskh Community Residents' Rights by Shooting of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces: The Results of the Fact-Finding Activities, July 14-21, 2021, <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/5611c2aeb64c7532ebbb5a800c61c9a4.pdf>.

134 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Public Report on Urgent Necessity for a Demilitarized Security Zone in the Areas of Contact with the Azerbaijani Military Forces as a Fundamental Safeguard to Protect the Rights of Population in Armenia, November 2021, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/4f4d3319548889e2900530457ae24bad.pdf>.

135 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, The Azerbaijani Servicemen Illegally Present in the Territory of the Republic of Armenia Threatened to Capture the Shepherds by Showing Their Weapons: May 18, 2021, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/1694.

136 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Report Violations of the Armenia's Yeraskh Community Residents' Rights by Shootings of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces: the Results of the Fact-Finding Activities, July 14-21 2021, <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/5611c2aeb64c7532ebbb5a800c61c9a4.pdf>, page 11.

137 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Public Report on Urgent Necessity for a Demilitarized Security Zone in the Areas of Contact with the Azerbaijani Military Forces As a Fundamental Safeguard to Protect the Rights of Population in Armenia, November 2021, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/4f4d3319548889e2900530457ae24bad.pdf>.

Armed Forces opened fire in the direction of a shepherd from the village of Kut while he was grazing his small and large cattle in a pasture within close proximity to the village.¹³⁸ Other cases are detailed in the Ad Hoc Public Report by the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, covering evidence-based analysis in the context of the ongoing situation in the Gegharkunik and Syunik regions.¹³⁹

- A number of villages in the Gegharkunik region of Armenia (Norabak, Sotk, Geghamabak) have been deprived of water due to incursions by Azerbaijan.¹⁴⁰
- The Azerbaijani military has set fires to the pastures close to the border, aiming to deprive the Armenian citizens of border areas from their means of subsistence and threaten their security. According to the Armenian Ombudsman's report, on September 1, 2021, "270 hectares of pastures and 150 hectares of grasslands have been burnt in 4 villages [in Gegharkunik region]..."¹⁴¹ On September 4, 2021, on the road from Norabak to Azat, "about 40 hectares of pastures have been burned down, the grass from which the villagers used as animal feed."¹⁴² On October 16, 2021, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces opened targeted fire at civilian houses in the village of Yeraskh in Armenia's Ararat region. Immediately after the shooting, 3000-4000 haystacks belonging to a resident of Yeraskh were set on fire.¹⁴³
- Azerbaijani servicemen target the citizens working on their farms located close to the border with Azerbaijan. On November 9, 2021, a farmer from the village of Khachik in the Vayots Dzor region was targeted while he was carrying out agricultural work on his tractor. He survived the shooting, but the window of his vehicle was damaged. A criminal case was opened by Armenia's Prosecutor-General over the attempted murder of an Armenian farmer by Azerbaijani troops.¹⁴⁴
- On April 18, 2021, a shepherd from Aravus village in the Syunik region was threatened and beaten by Azerbaijani military servicemen.¹⁴⁵ On January 13, 2022, 4 Azerbaijani servicemen abducted a resident of Tegh village, also in the Syunik region, and took 400-450 heads of his sheep.¹⁴⁶ Although the shepherd was returned on the same day

138 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Azerbaijani Armed Forces Opened Fire in the Direction of the Shepherd of Kut Village While He Was Grazing Small and Large Cattle in the Village Pasture, June 6, 2021, https://www.ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/1731.

139 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Public Report on Urgent Necessity for a Demilitarized Security Zone in the Areas of Contact with the Azerbaijani Military Forces As a Fundamental Safeguard to Protect the Rights of Population in Armenia, November 2021, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/4f4d3319548889e2900530457ae24bad.pdf>.

140 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, A Number of Villages in Gegharkunik Province of Armenia Have Been Deprived of Water, People Suffer Because of Criminal Incursions by Azerbaijan. Details of Fact-Finding Activities, February 10, 2022, <https://ombuds.am/am/site/ViewNews/2126?fbclid=IwAR1PWAw6gWIECPI01TPjiNCRiDfK31c6No8exLqiErYW8pLbDm3UmAs1-Nw>.

141 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, 270 Hectares of Pastures and 150 Hectares of Grasslands Have Been Burnt in 4 Villages As a Result of the Fires Set by the Azerbaijani Servicemen, September 1, 2021, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/VideoGalleryView/588.

142 News.am, Ombudsman: Azerbaijanis Burned Section of Road from Norabak Village to Azat, September 5, 2021, <https://news.am/eng/news/661292.html>.

143 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, The Azerbaijani Armed Forces Opened Targeted Fire at the Yeraskh Community of the Armenia's Ararat Region, October 17, 2021, https://www.ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/1954.

144 Armenpress, Azerbaijani Military Opens Fire at Armenian farmer, November 10, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1067796>.

145 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, The Criminal Attack of Dragging and Beating the Aravus village Shepard by Azerbaijani Military Servicemen Confirms Urgent Need for a Security Zone around Syunik, April 26, 2021, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/1653.

146 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, The Statement of the Human Rights Defender on the Azerbaijani Criminal Abduction in Tegh Village of Tegh Community Located in Syunik Province of Armenia, January 13, 2022, https://www.ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2089.

through the mediation of Russian peacekeepers, the Azerbaijani forces refused to return the sheep that belonged to him.

- Travel between the settlements of Goris, Votran, Shurnukh, Bardzravan and others in Syunik region is complicated due to the obstruction of traffic. Consequently, access to food and basic needs, medical care and services is seriously limited, which risks a humanitarian crisis that continues to worsen after the establishment of the Azerbaijani border and customs checkpoints between November 11-15, 2021, on the Goris-Kapan and Kapan-Chakaten roads.¹⁴⁷
- On April 6, 2021, Azerbaijani military servicemen stationed on the section of the Kapan Yerevan highway between Davit Bek and Shurnukh villages threw stones at a civilian car.¹⁴⁸

Military Build-up with Engagement of Turkey

Following the 44-day war, along with Armenophobic and racist policies, Azerbaijan intensifies its military build-up in the gained territories. This is largely done in close cooperation with Turkey that officially entered into the region as a party to the Russian-Turkish joint monitoring centre,¹⁴⁹ which occupies 4 hectares in Aghdam and hosts 65 offices, working rooms and living rooms,¹⁵⁰ while its mission is yet unclear.

Still before the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922 and the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the unauthorized leaders of Bolsheviks and Kemalists undertook negotiations to divide the spheres of influence within territories of their broken Russian and Ottoman empires, respectively, and tailor the borders of neighbouring countries. This resulted in splitting historical Armenia and annexing some pieces to Azerbaijan and its exclave - Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. This took place in the aftermath of the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Ottoman Empire during World War I, resulting in the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians along with hundreds of thousands of Christian Greeks and Assyrians.

In reaction to U.S. President Joe Biden's recognition of the Armenian Genocide in April 2020, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan retorted, "The U.S. President has made comments that are groundless and unfair" and expressed a hope that he will "turn back from this wrong step as soon as possible."¹⁵¹ Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, in turn, called Biden's remarks "unacceptable" and a "historical mistake" that would "seriously damage cooperation in the region."¹⁵²

147 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Violations of the Rights of the Residents of Votran, Shurnukh and Bardzravan Due to the Closure of the Goris-Kapan Road: The Information Gathered through the Fact-Finding Activities, December 2, 2021, https://www.ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2032; Uncertainty Prevails in 6 Villages of Syunik Province, and Humanitarian Issues Are Aggravated: Our Fact-Finding Information on the Azerbaijani Unlawful Actions on the Kapan-Chakaten Road (in details), November 19, 2021, https://www.ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2011.

148 Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Azerbaijani Military Throwing Stones at Civilian Car in Syunik Confirms the Urgent Need for a Security Zone, April 6, 2021, https://www.ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/1613.

149 Reuters, Russia and Turkey Open Monitoring Centre for Nagorno-Karabakh, January 30, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-armenia-azerbaijan-monitoring-centre-idUSKBN29Z0FL>.

150 Wikipedia, The Joint Russian-Turkish Monitoring Centre, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_joint_Russian-Turkish_Monitoring_Centre.

151 AlJazeera, Erdogan Slams Biden's Recognition of Armenian 'Genocide', April 26, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/26/erdogan-slams-bidens-armenian-genocide-recognition>; VOA, Erdogan Demands Biden Reverse Armenian Genocide Declaration, April 26, 2021, https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_erdogan-demands-biden-reverse-armenian-genocide-declaration/6205093.html.

152 Daily Sabah, Biden's Remarks Unacceptable, Historical Mistake: Azerbaijan's Aliyev, April 24, 2021, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/bidens-remarks-unacceptable-historical-mistake-azerbajians-aliyev>;

In July 2020, Erdogan stated that they are going “to continue to fulfil the mission of their grandfathers, which was carried out a century ago in the Caucasus,”¹⁵³ which was an explicit reference to the genocide and a message for the survivors.

On several occasions, both Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan have indicated that the 44-day war was conducted with Turkey’s support.¹⁵⁴ NATO affiliated Turkish instructors and weapons were brought into the region under the name of taking part in a joint Azerbaijan-Turkey military drill held in July-August 2020.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, Turkey deployed several thousands of mercenaries from the Middle East¹⁵⁶ who, on the top of their monthly payments of about 2,000 USD per month, were promised additional 100 USD as a “reward” for each beheaded Armenian.¹⁵⁷

Azerbaijanis’ actually credit both their own authorities and Turkey with the victory in the war. Azerbaijani Mayor General Huseyn Mahmudov said, “Turkey played an indispensable role and gave us leverage and courage to battle all enemy attempts to [maintain the] capture of our lands. It gave us additional courage to be ready to go into operation and liberate the occupied lands.”¹⁵⁸

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- AlJazeera, Reactions to Biden’s Recognition of Armenian ‘Genocide’, April 24, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/24/reactions-to-biden-recognition-of-armenian-genocide>.
- 153 Abdulla Bozkurt on Twitter, July 15, 2020, <https://twitter.com/abdbozkurt/status/1283302470572220417?lang=en>;
The Armenian Weekly, Turkey’s Escalations Pose an Existential Threat to Armenia, September 30, 2020, <https://armenianweekly.com/2020/09/30/turkeys-escalations-pose-an-existential-threat-to-armenia>.
- 154 Apa.az, Azerbaijani, Turkish Presidents Made Press Statements, May 15, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/azerbaijani-turkish-presidents-made-press-statements-updated-351731>.
- 155 Jamestown Foundation, Azerbaijan, Turkey Hold Large-Scale Military Drills amidst Escalation of Tensions with Armenia, August 14, 2020, <https://jamestown.org/program/azerbaijan-turkey-hold-large-scale-military-drills-amidst-escalation-of-tensions-with-armenia>.
- 156 AsiaNews.it, Turkey Sends 4,000 Syrian ISIS Mercenaries to Fight against the Armenians, September 28, 2020, [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Turkey-sends-4,000-Syrian-ISIS-mercenaries-to-fight-against-the-Armenians-\(VIDEO\)-51151.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Turkey-sends-4,000-Syrian-ISIS-mercenaries-to-fight-against-the-Armenians-(VIDEO)-51151.html); First Channel News, Syrian Mercenaries Deprived of Pay for Participation in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: RFI Report, May 27, 2021, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2021/05/27/Syrian-mercenaries-deprived-of-pay-for-participation-in-Nagorno-Karabakh-conflict-RFI-report/483650>; RFE/RL’s Armenian service, ‘Syrian Mercenaries’ Sentenced to Life in Prison, May 4, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31237788.html>; Armenpress, Syrian Mercenaries Must Leave Nagorno-Karabakh, CSTO Secretary General Says, February 2, 2021, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1042156>; France 24, Syrian Mercenaries Robbed of Their Wages: Report, May 27, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210527-syrian-mercenaries-robbed-of-their-wages-report>; Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, Mercenarism in Syria: Predatory Recruitment and the Enrichment of Criminal Militias, May 2021, <https://syriaaccountability.org/wp-content/uploads/ENG-Mercenaries.pdf>; European Parliament Resolution of 11 March 2021 on the Syrian Conflict – 10 Years after the Uprising, March 11, 2021, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0088_EN.html?fbclid=IwAR0KEtN_mcxS0g6vQWmZodgXwi15NZKpaFCb5OcAWCDZThi9ARoQM7-y17w; Alarabiya News, Two Syrians Sentenced to Life by Armenia for Fighting with Azerbaijan in Karabakh War, May 4, 2021, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2021/05/04/Two-Syrians-sentenced-to-life-by-Armenia-for-fighting-with-Azerbaijan-in-Karabakh-war>; The Wall Street Journal, Turkish-Backed Syrian Fighters Join Armenian-Azeri Conflict, October 14, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/turkish-backed-syrian-fighters-join-armenian-azeri-conflict-11602625885>; UN Convention Against Corruption, December 13-17, 2021, https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session9/CAC-COSP-2021-CRP.17_E.pdf; Forbes, A Year after Unleashing War Crimes against Indigenous Armenians, Azerbaijan’s Threats and Violations Continue, September 27, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackieabramian/2021/09/27/a-year-after-unleashing-war-crimes-against-indigenous-armenians-azerbaijans-threats-and-violations-continue/?sh=4d364758cc12>; Foreign Policy, The U.N. Must Investigate Nagorno-Karabakh War Crimes, October 7, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/10/07/the-u-n-must-investigate-nagorno-karabakh-war-crimes>; PACE, Humanitarian Consequences of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, September 13, 2021, <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=29401&lang=en>; CEPS, Thomas de Waal, September 2021, https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/WD2021-02_The-Nagorny-Karabakh-Conflict-in-its-Fourth-Decade.pdf.
- 157 Public Radio of Armenia, Artsakh Forces Capture Syrian Mercenary, October 30, 2020, <https://en.armradio.am/2020/10/30/artsakh-forces-capture-syrian-mercenary-video>; Hetq, Artsakh Army Captures Another Syrian Mercenary, November 1, 2020, <https://hetq.am/en/article/123824>; Greek City Times, Reward of \$100 Dollars for Each Beheaded Infidel: Testimony of Captured Syrian Mercenary in Artsakh, November 1, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3piPLGQ>.
- 158 Hurriyet Daily News, One Nation Two States, Turkey and Azerbaijan: Op-ed, November 8, 2021, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/one-nation-two-states-turkey-and-azerbaijan-op-ed-169194>.

On December 10, 2020, during a military parade in Baku, Erdogan glorified the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide and the mass atrocities against Armenians committed in Baku in September 1918.¹⁵⁹ He said:

“Today, may the souls of Nuri Pasha, Enver Pasha, and the brave soldiers of the Caucasus Islam Army be happy,” he said.¹⁶⁰ He continued, “The fact that Azerbaijan saved their territory from occupation does not mean that the struggle is over. The struggle, which has been carried out in political and military arenas so far, will now continue in various different fronts.”

In response to Erdogan’s comments, President Aliyev said:

“My brother said that Azerbaijan was right in this war! Turkey’s political and moral support for Azerbaijan makes every Azerbaijani citizen proud and happy.”¹⁶¹

On November 12, 2021, during the 8th Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, upon the proposal of the President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Ilham Aliyev was conferred the “Supreme Order of the Turkic World”... “in recognition of the historic victory that ensured the liberation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the restoration of its territorial integrity,”... “which significantly contributed to Turkic unity and paved the way to achieving enduring peace and stability in the region.”¹⁶²

Observations show that, since the end of war in 2020, Azerbaijan is actively militarizing, buying new weapons, establishing military units (already around 20) throughout all the territory that came under their control, rather close to the line of contact with Artsakh and Armenia,¹⁶³ building communications and infrastructure to get ready for another military operation in the future.

Since the ceasefire in November 2020, Azerbaijan and Turkey have carried out about 50 joint military exercises, trainings and consultations, most of them near the border with Artsakh and Armenia, including in Kars in Turkey and Nakhchivan. In September 2021 alone, seven joint military exercises took place, one of them in Berdzor (Lachin), close to the Russian peacekeepers.¹⁶⁴

159 France 24, 'One Nation, Two States' on Display as Erdogan Visits Azerbaijan for Karabakh Victory Parade, December 10, 2020, <https://www.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20201210-one-nation-two-states-on-display-as-erdogan-visits-azerbaijan-for-karabakh-victory-parade>.

160 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, At Baku Victory Parade, Aliyev Calls Yerevan, Zangezur, Sevan Historical Azerbaijani Lands, Erdogan Praises Enver Pasha, December 11, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2ZkKDay>.

161 The Hindu, Azerbaijan's 'Struggle' with Armenia Not over: Erdogan, December 10, 2020, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/azerbaijans-struggle-with-armenia-not-over-erdogan/article33299188.ece>.

162 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Was Awarded Supreme Order of Turkic World, November 12, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/foreign-politics/president-ilham-aliyev-was-awarded-supreme-order-of-turkic-world-361777>.

163 Turkey and Azerbaijan Launch Joint Military Drill, September 9, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-and-azerbaijan-launch-joint-military-drill-/2369947>; Anadolu Agency, Turkey, Azerbaijan Joint Military Drill in Azerbaijan's Lachin Ends, September 11, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/turkey-azerbaijan-joint-military-drill-in-azerbaijan-s-lachin-ends/2362107>.

164 EVN Report, Hayrapetyan T., Who Is Armenia's Peace Partner? October 10, 2021, <https://evnreport.com/politics/who-is-armenia-s-peace-partner>.

On June 15, 2021, in Shushi, Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed “The Shusha Declaration” – a wide-ranging cooperation agreement between Azerbaijan and Turkey, addressing political, economic, trade, cultural, educational, sports, youth, energy security as well as military affairs.¹⁶⁵ The document states:

“If, in the opinion of one of the parties, there is a threat or an act of aggression from a third state or states against their independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, the inviolability or security of their internationally recognized borders, the parties will hold joint consultations and, in order to eliminate this threat or acts of aggression, carry out initiatives in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and provide each other with the necessary assistance in accordance with the UN Charter.”¹⁶⁶

Erdogan also expressed an interest in opening a consulate in Shushi (Shusha).¹⁶⁷

The Shusha Declaration, also named by media a “security pact” between two nations,¹⁶⁸ is considered to cement and culminate the concept of “One nation, two states” pronounced by Azerbaijan’s former president Heydar Aliyev some decades ago.¹⁶⁹

The above-mentioned developments and Turkey’s military presence in the region creates fears for the local population. Both Turkey and Azerbaijan openly deny the Armenian Genocide, yet have demonstrated their readiness to go down that road again in order to advance their political agenda.

It should be noted that Turkey and Azerbaijan continued to reject that they deployed Syrian mercenaries during the 44-day war, despite irrefutable evidence. In 2021, additional video testimonies were circulated of mercenaries speaking about their engagement and complaining about not getting the pay they were promised.¹⁷⁰ Unfortunately, revelations about the use of mercenaries¹⁷¹ have not been duly assessed or followed up on by the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, hence opening the door for the tactic to be used again in the future with impunity.

165 Aze.media, The Full Text of the Shusha Declaration on Allied Relations, [June 18, 2021, https://aze.media/the-full-text-of-the-shusha-declaration](https://aze.media/the-full-text-of-the-shusha-declaration).

166 Hurriyet Daily News, One Nation Two States, Turkey and Azerbaijan: Op-ed, November 8, 2021, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/one-nation-two-states-turkey-and-azerbaijan-op-ed-169194>.

167 OC Media, The ‘Shusha Declaration’: Strategic Realignment or Business as Usual?, June 24, 2021, <https://oc-media.org/features/the-shusha-declaration-strategic-realignment-or-business-as-usual>.

168 Hurriyet Daily News, One Nation Two States, Turkey and Azerbaijan: Op-ed, November 8, 2021, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/one-nation-two-states-turkey-and-azerbaijan-op-ed-169194>.

169 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, <https://mfa.gov.az/en/content/151/turkey>; BBC News, Armenia-Azerbaijan: Why Did Nagorno-Karabakh Spark a Conflict?, November 12, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54324772>.

170 Lindsey Snell on Twitter, Turkish-Backed SNA Fighters from Sultan Suleiman Shah complain That Commander Abu Amsha, Never Paid Them for Fighting in Karabakh, April 9, 2020, https://twitter.com/LindseySnell/status/1380451580412096512?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1380451580412096512%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=; France24, Syrian Mercenaries Robbed of Their Wages: Report, May 27, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210527-syrian-mercenaries-robbed-of-their-wages-report>.

171 OHCHR, The UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries, Mercenaries in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Zone Must be Withdrawn – UN Experts, November 11, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26494&LangID=E>.

CAPTURE, KILLING, TORTURE AND SHAM TRIALS OF ARMENIAN POWS

Capture of PoWs

Paragraph 8 of the November 10, 2020 trilateral ceasefire statement highlights: “An exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons, and bodies of the dead is to be carried out.”¹⁷² Though the statement does not mention a timeframe, following the active phase of war, the prolonged detention of captives is illegal in accordance with Geneva Convention (III) Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War¹⁷³ and Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.¹⁷⁴ That is, all PoWs and captured civilians must be repatriated without delay. However, more than a year after the end of the 2020 Artsakh War, many Armenian PoWs and captives still cannot return back to Armenia.

During and immediately after the war, Azerbaijan captured at least 249 Armenian military servicemen and civilians, whose capture has often been corroborated by video evidence disseminated by the Azerbaijani captors themselves or oral testimonies of survived and returned Armenian servicemen. Their cases have been appealed with the ECHR.¹⁷⁵ Yet, the Azerbaijani government has consistently refused to provide the actual number of Armenian captives. It has acknowledged the captivity and detention of only 72 persons, and said that it has not been able to identify 112 at all.¹⁷⁶

Notably, 62 servicemen have been taken after the ceasefire of November 10, 2020, attacked and captured on territory under Artsakh control on December 12, 2020. They have been declared as “terrorists,” some of them were tried with criminal charges in Azerbaijani court and denied the right-of-return.

The ECHR had taken 78 decisions between October 13, 2020 and March 5, 2021 with regard to requests for interim measures relating to 249 Armenians captured by Azerbaijan. Interim measures have been applied with respect to 229 of the 249 Armenians, and the Government of Azerbaijan has been invited to provide specific information on the individuals concerned, including the conditions of their detention, any medical examinations they have undergone and details of the measures that have been taken or are planned to be taken to repatriate them. Due to the failure of the Government of Azerbaijan to respect the time limits set by the ECHR and to provide the requested information, on March 9, 2021, the Court decided to notify the Committee of Ministers.¹⁷⁷

172 Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation, November 10, 2020, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384>.

173 UN, Geneva Convention (III) Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Geneva, 1949, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.32_GC-III-EN.pdf.

174 UN, Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, 1949, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf.

175 ECHR, *Armenia v. Azerbaijan and Alleged Captives: Notification to the Committee of Ministers of Interim Measures Indicated*, March 16, 2021, <http://www.echr.caselaw.com/en/echr-decisions/armenia-v-azerbaijan-and-alleged-captives-notification-to-the-committee-of-ministers-of-interim-measures-indicated>.

176 *Ibid.*

177 *Ibid.* It should be noted that the decisions were dropped in relation to 41 persons as 40 of them have already been repatriated by that time and 1 was found in search operation. Rule 39 measures thus remain in force with respect to 188 Armenians allegedly captured by Azerbaijan.

On May 3, 2021, Armenian media outlets published the names of 19 PoWs (including 4 women), who have been tortured and killed in Azerbaijan.¹⁷⁸ On September 8, 2021, one of the attorneys of PoWs informed that a complaint on the murder of 38 PoWs has been filed with the ECHR, and some other instances of violation of the right to life are still being examined.¹⁷⁹

In addition to PoWs captured during the war and in December 2020, Azerbaijan arrested 38 Armenian military servicemen during its invasion operations on May 27, 2021 (6 persons) and November 16, 2021 (32 persons).

On June 2, 2021, Azerbaijani MFA spokesperson Leyla Abdullayeva stated, "The Azerbaijani side has always taken the position of exchanging all prisoners of war on the basis of the 'all for all' principle. As we have repeatedly stated, there are no Armenian prisoners of war in Azerbaijan." Abdullayeva stated that those taken captive from Nagorno-Karabakh later last year, as well as those captured on May 27 following an Azerbaijani incursion into Armenia's territory, "are not prisoners of war."¹⁸⁰

It should be noted that Azerbaijan keeps Armenian PoWs and civilian detainees as hostages, subject to bargaining in exchange for certain benefits, as well as to impose political pressure on Armenia to comply with its demands. For a long time, Aliyev was "trading" the PoWs for landmine maps of the areas that had come under its control.

On June 15, 2021, on the way to occupied Shushi, Aliyev had the following conversation with the wife of Turkish President Erdogan. He said: "We'd have a great advantage if we get the maps. It could take 10 years to clear all the mines because there are mines everywhere." Emine Erdogan asked him whether there are any more PoWs, and Aliyev answered: "Yes, yes, there are many." Emine Erdogan laughed and added: "Great, return them portion by portion..."¹⁸¹

In December 2021, Armenia transferred the remaining landmine maps to Azerbaijan. However, Aliyev held on to the PoWs and other captives, leaving them for future "portion by portion" bargains for certain benefits.

In its "Resolution on Humanitarian Consequences of the Conflict Between Armenia and Azerbaijan," issued in September 2021, PACE noted the failure of Azerbaijan to return all the PoWs and captives, and expressed its concern over the fate of "around 30 Armenians allegedly seen, filmed or photographed in captivity, with no indication as to their current whereabouts" and over allegations "that these persons have been subjected to enforced

178 Asbarez, Names of 19 Armenians POWs, Tortured and Killed by Azerbaijan, Publicized, May 3, 2021, <https://asbarez.com/names-of-19-armenians-pows-tortured-and-killed-by-azerbaijan-publicized>.

179 Panorama, Siranush Sahakyan: Complaint on murder of 38 Armenian POWs filed with ECHR, September 8, 2022, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2021/09/08/Siranush-Sahakyan/2561813?fr=operanews>

180 OC-media, New Convictions as Trials of Armenian Captives Continues in Azerbaijan, July 30, 2021, <https://oc-media.org/new-convictions-as-trials-of-armenian-captives-continues-in-azerbaijan>.

181 Arman Tatoyan Sends Video of Conversation between Aliyev and Erdogan's Wife to EU Leaders, June 15, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/100017676420633/videos/874047149861158/?t=0>.

disappearances and possibly killed.” The PACE resolution called on the Azerbaijani authorities to release all remaining captives and return them to Armenia without further delay.¹⁸²

On November 8, 2021, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted the situation of the prisoners, called on the Azerbaijani authorities to “disclose a full list and locations of Armenian captives” who remain in custody there, and that “these captives should be released without delay.”¹⁸³

As of the end of February 2022, Azerbaijan has returned 149 POWs.¹⁸⁴ It still continues to hold 38 officially confirmed detainees,¹⁸⁵ while the fate of 80 POWs and detainees is not known.¹⁸⁶

Torture and Killing of Captives

A Human Rights Watch report, published in March 2021, documented a number of cases of torture of Armenian captives. It stated:

“Azerbaijani forces abused Armenian prisoners of war (PoWs) from the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, subjecting them to cruel and degrading treatment and torture either when they were captured, during their transfer, or while in custody at various detention facilities.”¹⁸⁷

As mentioned, out of the identified PoWs 19 (including 4 women) were tortured and killed by Azerbaijan as of May 3, 2021.¹⁸⁸

According to the report published by Armenia’s Human Rights Defender in September 2021,

“POWs were also systematically subjected to humiliation and violence publicly - in front of forces and civilians of Azerbaijan. Moreover, Azerbaijani military forces allowed civilians to participate in the inhumane treatment of certain prisoners. There is also enough evidence to conclude that captives were used as blatant propaganda material by the Azerbaijani government. These illegal propaganda efforts involved the participation of high-level politicians, the ombudswoman, and the head of the POW

182 PACE, Humanitarian Consequences of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, September 13, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3lfVGXu>.

183 CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, Memorandum on the Humanitarian and Human Rights Consequences Following the 2020 Outbreak of Hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, <https://rm.coe.int/commdh-2021-29-memorandum-on-the-humanitarian-and-human-rights-consequ/1680a46e1c>.

184 Arka News Agency, NATO Welcomes Return of 8 Armenian POWs by Azerbaijan, February 8, 2022, http://arka.am/en/news/politics/nato_welcomes_return_of_8_armenian_pows_by_azerbaijan.

185 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement of the Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan at the High-level Segment of the 49th session of the Human Rights Council, February 28, https://www.mfa.am/en/speeches/2022/02/28/Armenia_UNHRC/11318

186 EVN Report, 2021: The Post-War Year, January 2, 2022, <https://evnreport.com/politics/2021-the-post-war-year>; Radio Liberty, How Many PoWs Are There in Azerbaijan? The Official Data is Different from Those Mentioned by the Attorneys, November 1, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31551071.html>

187 Azerbaijan: Armenian POWs Abused in Custody, March 19, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/19/azerbaijan-armenian-pows-abused-custody>; <https://asbarez.com/names-of-19-armenians-pows-tortured-and-killed-by-azerbaijan-publicized>.

188 Nineteen Armenians ‘Killed in Azerbaijani Captivity’, May 4 2021, <https://oc-media.org/nineteen-armenians-killed-in-azerbaijani-captivity>; Asbarez, Names of 19 Armenians POWs, Tortured and Killed by Azerbaijan, Publicized, May 3, 2021, <https://asbarez.com/names-of-19-armenians-pows-tortured-and-killed-by-azerbaijan-publicized>.

unit of the Azerbaijani army. In between their public appearances, POWs were abused, beaten, and tortured. These acts constitute gross and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, being direct breaches of GC III.”¹⁸⁹

Evidence of inhuman treatment of Armenian PoWs has been revealed through videos disseminated by the Azerbaijani side. These materials depict aggressive and euphoric Azerbaijanis slapping, kicking, and prodding Armenian POWs, and compelling them, under obvious duress and with the apparent intent to humiliate, to kiss the Azerbaijani flag, praise Azerbaijani President Aliyev, denounce Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan, and declare that “Nagorno-Karabakh is Azerbaijan.” In most of the videos, the captors’ faces are visible and joyful, suggesting that they did not fear being held accountable.



Even a year after the war, when the tension and animosity should have begun to subside, Armenian soldiers captured during the Azerbaijani invasion operation of November 16, 2021, have been hit and berated.¹⁹⁰

In its December 7, 2021 decision, the ICJ decreed that the Republic of Azerbaijan must protect from violence and bodily harm all persons captured in relation to the 2020 conflict who remain in detention, and ensure their security and equality before the law.¹⁹¹

Needless to say, the illegal detention of captives in Azerbaijani jails, even without brutal treatment and frequent concealing of the whereabouts of detainees, constitute torture for not only for them, but also their families and relatives. They too have been going through psychological stress and suffering while waiting in anxiety and witnessing their beloved ones being hurt, humiliated and have their lives threatened.

Sham Trials Against PoWs and Detainees

Azerbaijan has launched criminal proceedings and held a series of trials against some Armenian PoWs. The biased nature of the court, as well as absence of fair trial guarantees and lack of transparency, were demonstrated in a number of cases.

189 The Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Public Report Responsibility of Azerbaijan for Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Armenian Captives: Evidence-Based Analysis (the 2020 Nagorno Karabakh war), September, 2021, <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/8f33e8ccaac978faac7f4cf10442f835.pdf>.

190 Simon Maghakyan on Twitter, “Glorious Soldiers of Ilham Aliyev Abusing Armenian POWs. This is not from the 2020 war, this is from yesterday,” November 18, 2021, <https://twitter.com/simonforco/status/1461429321667465216>

191 Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan), December 7, 2021, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/180/180-20211207-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>.

On June 3, 2021, a sham trial of two Armenian PoWs was held in Baku, with state prosecutors charging them for allegedly torturing “Azerbaijani captives” during the First Karabakh War in the 1990s.¹⁹²

On July 2, 2021, the trial of 14 Armenian military was held, who were accused of terrorism,



sabotage and other grave crimes. Journalists were not admitted to the trial.¹⁹³ On June 25, 2021, at the Baku Grave Crimes Court, Judge Afgan Hajiyev announced that the prisoners would face 14-20 years in prison or life imprisonment for charges of “terrorism, acquisition and keeping of weapons and explosive substances, creation of illegal armed groups, and trespassing the state border.”¹⁹⁴

On the same day, a separate decision was issued for Vicken Euljekjian, a Lebanese citizen of Armenian origin who had moved to Armenia. He was captured in Shushi, together with his fiancée Maral Najarian, on the day following the signing of the trilateral statement. Najarian, also a Lebanese-Armenian, was released in March 2021, while Euljekjian was sentenced to 20 years in prison on charges of “mercenary activity, terrorism, and illegal border crossing.”¹⁹⁵

In total, 45 Armenians were convicted and sentenced to various jail terms, including:

- 2 Armenian servicemen were convicted to 20 years imprisonment;
- 23 servicemen were convicted to 6 years imprisonment;
- 2 servicemen were convicted to 4 years imprisonment;
- 13 servicemen were convicted to 6 months imprisonment;
- 2 more servicemen are still waiting for judgement;
- 1 civilian was convicted to 20 years imprisonment;
- 2 civilians were convicted to 15 years imprisonment.

Five servicemen have been subsequently released after conviction, while 40 more Armenians remain under Azerbaijani custody.¹⁹⁶

192 Asbarez, Azerbaijan Stages Trial of Armenian POWs, June 3, 2021, <https://asbarez.com/azerbaijan-stages-trial-of-armenian-pows>.

193 Turan.az, Armenian Terrorists Turned out to Be Border Violators, June 2, 2021, https://turaz.az/ext/news/2021/7/free/politics_news/en/5557.htm.

194 Ibid.; CivilNet, In POW Trial, Baku Says “Armenian Terrorists Turned out to be Border Violators”, June 3, 2021, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/625059/in-pow-trial-baku-says-armenian-terrorists-turned-out-to-be-border-violators/?lang=en>.

195 CivilNet, In POW Trial, Baku Says “Armenian Terrorists Turned out to be Border Violators”, June 3, 2021, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/625059/in-pow-trial-baku-says-armenian-terrorists-turned-out-to-be-border-violators/?lang=en>.

196 The Republic of Artsakh Human Rights Defender, Interim Report on Malicious Prosecution by Azerbaijan of Captured Armenian Servicemen and Civilians, November 23, 2021, <https://artsakhombuds.am/sites/default/files/2021-11/Illegal%20Prosecution%20report.pdf>.

ELIMINATION OF ARMENIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE REGION

Cultural heritage is subject to protection under a number of international legal acts, including the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its Second Protocol (1999),¹⁹⁷ UNESCO's Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), as well as the relevant documents of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

Azerbaijan's policy of deliberately removing traces of Armenian culture in the region has a history of at least two decades. After ethnically cleansing Armenians, Azerbaijan is still faced with artifacts that attest to Armenian presence in the region, especially engraved Armenian script. Hence, following the 2020 Artsakh War, Azerbaijan's antagonism toward Armenian cultural heritage quickly became extremely aggressive - growing to a new type of "cultural war", also considered as "cultural genocide" in international law.¹⁹⁸

On January 26, 2021, the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Artsakh published a report describing the 1,456 Armenian historical objects and cultural monuments that had passed under Azerbaijani control, including 161 Armenian churches, 591 khachkars (engraved cross-stones), the archaeological site of Tigranakert, the Azokh Paleolithic cave, the Nor Karmiravan tombs, Mirik, Keren, and architectural monuments such as palaces, bridges, and historic quarters. Additionally, Azerbaijan took control over 8 state and 2 private museums and galleries with 19,311 items in their collections.¹⁹⁹ Artsakh authorities were not able to return the collections, even with the mediation of Russian peacekeepers. It is obvious, that, under the aggressive policies of Azerbaijan against Armenian cultural heritage, all of these items are in danger.

Observations show that Azerbaijan's policy of eliminating traces of Armenian cultural heritage in the region is generally taking place via two major approaches - the destruction or damage of monuments; and their appropriation under the concept of "Albanization," i.e. falsifying their history to disassociate them from Armenians.

Destruction and Damage to Monuments

Azerbaijan is notorious for destroying and damaging Armenian cultural monuments. Prior to the war, the most notable act was the destruction of a medieval Armenian cemetery near the town of Julfa (known as Jugha in Armenian) in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, which was known as the biggest and the most precious repository of about 2,000 masterpiece cross-stones - "khachkars."²⁰⁰ This act of vandalism in Nakhchivan was acknowledged and criticized

197 Duvar English, Aliyev Admits Azerbaijan Started the Nagorno-Karabakh War, August 16, 2021, Article 9, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/590>.

198 Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor, Cultural Genocide in International Law: A Case Study of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), August 2021, <https://bit.ly/3t3e3sg>.

199 Ad Hoc Public Report the Armenian Cultural Heritage in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh): Cases of Vandalism and at Risk of Destruction by Azerbaijan, January 26, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3s9xOiy>.

200 Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Azerbaijan: Famous Medieval Cemetery Vanishes, 27 April, 2006, <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/azerbaijan-famous-medieval-cemetery-vanishes>; History Today, Sacred Stones Silenced in Azerbaijan, November 2007, <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/sacred-stones-silenced-azerbaijan>; Heritage at Risk, Azerbaijan: Destruction of the Armenian Cemetery at Djulfa – Continued, 2006/2007, https://www.icomos.org/risk/world_report/2006-2007/pdf/H@R_2006-2007_09_National_Report_Azerbaijan.pdf

by UNESCO²⁰¹ and ICOMOS.²⁰² Generally, throughout 1997-2005, Azerbaijan has managed to completely erase millennia of Armenian history in Nakhchivan, represented by about 28,000 monuments, including 89 medieval churches, 5,840 unique khachkars and 22,000 ancient tombstones.²⁰³

Since the fall of 2020, the territory that came under Azerbaijani control after the war has been subject to a similar campaign. Following vandalism caused during and immediately after the war, the destruction of monuments continued throughout 2021.²⁰⁴ Some of the cases of vandalism are described below:

- During the war, the Azerbaijani Air Force deliberately and twice shelled Holy Savior Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi, the religious center for Artsakh Armenians.²⁰⁵ Immediately after the war, the church was openly desecrated by Azerbaijani servicemen.²⁰⁶ Subsequently, in 2021, Azerbaijan launched a “renovation” of the church to “return it to its original form,” by removing the steeple.²⁰⁷



 Toghru Mammadi @toghru... · Dec 29, 2021 · ...
The cultural spirit of our native #Karabakh is returning!

All religious heritages & monuments in our liberated territories are getting special attention & restoration of #Gazanchy Church is going on the basis of historical documents (19th century) as well #heritage #Azerbaijan



201 UNESCO Response Is Not Available, But There Are Some References to UNESCO’s Ordering “An End to All Destructive Activity” in Djulfa, June 30, 2006, <https://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/djulfa>.

202 International Council on Monuments and Sites, Resolutions of the General Assembly (October 2008), https://www.icomos.org/quebec2008/resolutions/pdf/GA16_Resolutions_final_EN.pdf.

203 Hyperallergic, A Regime Conceals Its Erasure of Indigenous Armenian Culture, February 18, 2019, <https://hyperallergic.com/482353/a-regime-conceals-its-erasure-of-indigenous-armenian-culture>; ICOMOS, Azerbaijan Destruction of the Armenian Cemetery at Djulfa – Continued, Heritage at Risk 2006/2007 <https://bit.ly/3LXgMfu>

204 Monument Watch <https://monumentwatch.org>.

205 Ruptly Channel, Nagorno-Karabakh: Drone Captures aftermath of Shelling Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi, October 14, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmF23hoETyI> ; Human Rights Watch, Azerbaijan: Attack on Church Possible War Crime, December 16, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3jXyLF4>.

206 1News, The Azeris Who Entered Shushi Desecrated the Ghazanchetsots Church, November 14, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2Lifcug>; Panorama.am, Azerbaijanis Vandalize Shushi’s Ghazanchetsots Cathedral, November 14, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3gHmNxn>.

207 Kucera J., Azerbaijan Begins Controversial Renovation of Armenian Church, May 7, 2021, <https://eurasianet.org/azerbaijan-begins-controversial-renovation-of-armenian-church>; Humans of Artsakh: From Celebration to Mourning, May 24, 2021, <https://www.persecution.org/2021/05/24/humans-artsakh-celebration-mourning>.

In a tweet, NGO member Togrul Mammadli claimed: “the cultural spirit of our native Karabakh is returning!” in reference to the removal of the church steeple. However, photos from the early 20th century show that the cathedral originally had an Armenian-style steeple (see the photo).²⁰⁸ It had been removed during Soviet times. Needless to say, the “renovation” of the Armenian religious center and architectural masterpiece was undertaken without consultation with the Armenian Church.

- Immediately after the war, Azerbaijanis destroyed the 18th century St. John the Baptist Church (Kanach Zham - Green Church) in Shushi.²⁰⁹ In 2021, one of Kanach Zham’s support buildings, the Clergymen’s House, was turned into a cafe.²¹⁰
- During the war, the Holy Mother of God church in Jabrail region (Mekhakavan) was desecrated by Azerbaijani servicemen.²¹¹ Later, in March 2021, BBC alerted the complete disappearance of the church and the clearing of the area (see the photo).²¹²
- Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced the construction of a mosque in Hadrut, an area that was populated by Armenians and for centuries had maintained its unique culture and dialect. Aliyev symbolically laid the foundation of the building on October 9, 2021, to mark one year after the occupation of the town. He also stated that the historical center of the town of Hadrut will be demolished and Hadrut will turn to an “international center of culture and tourism.”²¹³
- Aliyev announced the construction of one more mosque in another historically Armenian-populated settlement, the village of Karin Tak. Similarly, the date the foundation was laid was symbolic: November 7, 2021, the anniversary of the occupation of the village.²¹⁴ A video shows the interior of the Holy Mother Church in Karin Tak, which was damaged. In the video, the Muslim call to prayer is sung inside the church, symbolizing the conquest of the Christian site.²¹⁵



208 Wikimedia Commons, Shushi Surb Ghazanchetsots, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shushi_Surb_Ghazanchetsots.jpg; Wikipedia, Ghazanchetsots Cathedral https://thereaderwiki.com/en/Ghazanchetsots_Cathedral.

209 Zartonk Media, Report: Azerbaijanis Have Destroyed the Bell Tower & Dome of Shushi’s Armenian “Kanach Zham” Church, Built in 1818, November 19, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3iaSLmv>.

210 Telegram Channel, Talish_vestnik, January 16, 2022, https://t.me/Talish_vestnik/20973.

211 Thinking Humanity on Facebook, Video Shows Islamist Pulling down Cross from Church Roof in Artsakh as He Shouts 'Allahu Akbar', November 17, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2Lr6Xfh>; YouTube channel: Azeri War Crimes, An Azeri Soldier Desecrating an Armenian Church in Artsakh, November 25, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuAyr-7quY>.

212 BBC, Nagorno-Karabakh: The Mystery of the Missing Church, March 25, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-56517835>; Eurasianet, Joshua Kucera, What Happened to the Church? March 26, 2021, <https://bit.ly/36DIZZF>

213 Haqqin.az, Ильхам Алиев строит мечеть в Гадруте, October 10, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3BKl5ox>.

214 Trend news agency, Президент Ильхам Алиев и Первая леди Мехрибан Алиева заложили фундамент мечети в селе Дашалты, November 7, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3M00Hp9>.

215 YouTube channel: Karabakh Hnor, Şuşada kilsədə əhli sünne qardaşimla vəhdət azanı verərkən, March 23, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/IRHHnTHIRwg>.

- The Park of Royal Springs of the ancient city of Tigranakert was turned into a barbecue area.²¹⁶ The barbecue grill was placed on the edge of a pool excavated by the archaeological expedition of Tigranakert.²¹⁷
- The Azerbaijani military vandalized the 19th century St. Yeghishe Church in Mataghis. Again, by performing namaz in the church, they symbolized its conquest.²¹⁸
- The Azerbaijani Armed Forces broke the cross-stone in Arakel village, near Hadrut.²¹⁹
- In Aknaghbyur village, near Askeran, the Azerbaijani military vandalized the monument to the victims of war by painting the stones red.²²⁰
- In Mets Tagher village, the entire cemetery has been destroyed and disappeared as seen on the satellite image (see the photo).²²¹



By December 2021, Caucasus Heritage Watch – a research initiative by archaeologists from Cornell and Purdue universities - through satellite imagery, observed the impact on 21 cultural sites in the territories occupied by Azerbaijan, of which 6 were destroyed (the Fine Arts Museum Sculpture Garden, Makun Bridge, Aygek Mosque, Ghazanchetsots Inscribed Stone, Sghnakh Cemetery, Mets Tagher Cemetery), 8 were threatened, and 7 were damaged.²²²

Alongside the official reports of Azerbaijani authorities on “restructuring,” the acts of vandalism by individual perpetrators have been openly and pompously shared via social media channels, obviously without any fear of being held liable. In many cases, these acts are accompanied with anti-Armenian expressions – in alignment with state-sponsored anti-Armenian propaganda.

It is apparent that Aliyev is trying to change the cultural landscape and environment in the occupied territories, in order to detach and alienate Armenians from their historical homeland and hence prevent their return or even aspirations to return.

216 Monument Watch, Azerbaijanis Turned the Park of Royal Springs of Tigranakert into a Barbeque Restaurant, November 11, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3vl2S0y>; YouTube channel: Seadet Memmedova, Ağdam, Şahbulaqdan ən təzə görüntülər (31.10.2021), November 1, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=0E6mp5Z_jUl&feature=youtu.be.

217 Monument Watch, Azerbaijanis Turned the Park of Royal Springs of Tigranakert into a Barbeque Restaurant, November 11, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3vl2S0y>.

218 Asbarez, Azerbaijanis Continue Vandalizing Armenian Churches in Artsakh, March 29, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3t2tpgG>.

219 Public Radio of Armenia, Azerbaijanis Destroy Armenian Cross-Stone in Occupied Artsakh Village, January 12, 2021, <https://en.armradio.am/2021/01/12/azerbaijanis-destroy-armenian-cross-stone-in-occupied-artsakh-village>.

220 Karabakh Records on Twitter, Aknaghbyur village, Askeran, Artsakh-Before and After Azerbaijani Occupation, March 18, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3haTLHB>.

221 Azerbaijan Accused of Destroying Karabakh Cemeteries, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31249978.html>.

222 Caucasus Heritage Watch, Monitoring Report #3, December 2021, <https://caucasusheritage.cornell.edu/index.php/report>.

Appropriation or “Albanization”

The term “Albanization” of Armenian monuments implies the falsification of history to disassociate the Christian heritage in Artsakh from Armenians and attribute it instead to the Caucasian Albanians.

The history of an ancient state of Caucasian Albania (Aghwank, Aluank) is a major instrument of Azerbaijan’s revisionist theories, which started in early 1960s, mainly by Ziya Bunyatov, a Soviet-era Azerbaijani academic.²²³ His theories have been questioned by a number of international scholars and experts, including Soviet Russian historians Victor Schnirelmann²²⁴ and Igor Diakonoff,²²⁵ and journalist Thomas de Waal.²²⁶ According to Schnirelmann, this narrative is directed toward “ripping the population of early medieval Nagorno-Karabakh off from their Armenian heritage” and “cleansing Azerbaijan of Armenian history.”²²⁷ This practice of appropriation of others’ cultures continued later and accelerated after the 2020 war.

The Kingdom of Caucasian Albania existed on the territory within the boundaries of the current state of Azerbaijan – to the northeast of Artsakh. Caucasian Albanians, who were Christians, have mostly assimilated throughout the centuries. Their only descendants are the Udi (sometimes, Uti) people. Belonging to the Armenian branch of Christianity, though with different saints, Udis too have suffered from massacres committed by the 1918-1920 Azerbaijani Republic against Armenians. Currently, there are small Udi communities in Russia, Ukraine, and in smaller numbers in Georgia and Armenia.²²⁸

The Udis of Azerbaijan are under threat. Their numbers have declined from more than 50,000 in the 19th century (almost all living on the territory of Azerbaijan) to 6,125 in 1989,²²⁹ to 4,200 in the early 2000s²³⁰ and 3,800 in 2018.²³¹ Udis are concentrated in the settlements of Nijh (Nizh) and Oghuz (formerly called Vardashen). As a vulnerable group, they are being used by the Azerbaijani authorities to take part in the “Albanization” process, in order to challenge the Armenianness of the churches in Artsakh.

In 2021, Azerbaijan ramped up its efforts at “Albanizing” Armenian monuments. One example is the Dadivank Monastery – one of the jewels of Armenian architecture – lying just beyond the line of contact and controlled by Russian peacekeepers.

223 Wikipedia, Ziya Bunyatov, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziya_Bunyatov; Eurasianet, Perspectives | Who were the Caucasian Albanians? June 7, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3HkndWi>.

224 Wikipedia, Victor Schnirelmann, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Schnirelmann.

225 Wikipedia, Igor M. Diakonoff, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igor_M._Diakonoff.

226 Wikipedia, Thomas de Waal, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_de_Waal.

227 Schnirelmann, Albanian Myth: Albanization of the Armenian Heritage, 2006, <http://www.vehi.net/istoriya/armenia/albanskymif.html>.

228 OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding, The Problems of Ethnic Survival of National Minorities in Azerbaijan, June 6, 2007, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/b/25591.pdf>.

229 Demoscope Weekly, Всесоюзная перепись населения 1989 года. Национальный состав населения по республикам СССР: Азербайджанская ССР, 2013, http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_89.php?reg=7.

230 OSCE Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding, The Problems of Ethnic Survival of National Minorities in Azerbaijan, June 6, 2007, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/b/25591.pdf>.

231 World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Azerbaijan, March 2018; <https://minorityrights.org/country/azerbaijan>.

- Immediately after the ceasefire, on November 11, 2020, Azerbaijan's First Deputy Minister of Culture Anar Karimov declared that the Armenian monastery of Dadivank (which he calls “Khudavang”) is “one of the best testimonies of ancient Caucasian Albanian civilization.”²³²
- A month later, the Azerbaijani government performed a visit of Udi community representatives to Dadivank Monastery. The religious service was conducted by Udi community representative Robert Mobili.²³³
- From April 28 through July 8, 2021, the Azerbaijani military blocked access to Dadivank Monastery to Armenian worshippers²³⁴ - intending to affirm the monument's Azerbaijani-Albanian ownership and attempting to establish control over access to the monument.
- On February 8, 2022, it became known that Russian peacekeepers have removed the section on the Armenian history of Dadivank Monastery²³⁵ from the earlier version²³⁶ of the website of their mission (see the photo). The act is a clear signal of the effective influence of Azerbaijani authorities on the peacekeeping forces and the complicity of the latter in the falsification of the Armenian history in Artsakh.



232 Anar Kerimov on Twitter, November 11, 2020, https://twitter.com/Anar_Karim/status/1326437397270310912?s=20.

233 Monument Watch, Udi Propaganda as an Expression of Azerbaijani Politics, October 8, 2021, <https://monumentwatch.org/alerts/udi-propaganda-as-an-expression-of-azerbaijani-politics>.

234 Forum 18, Azerbaijan: "They Hold Services and Pray There, But without a Congregation", July 8, 2021, https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2671.

235 Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, Russian Peacekeeping Forces Visit Dadivank, February 8, 2022, https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/news/more.htm?id=12407657@egNews.

201 Internet Archive WayBack Machine, Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, February 8, 2022, by 03:00, https://web.archive.org/web/20220208091119/https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/news/more.htm?id=12407657@egNews.

Other activities by the Azerbaijani leadership to revise history and remove traces of Armenian heritage include the following:

- On March 15, 2021, Aliyev visited a 12th-century Armenian church, in the village of Tsakuri (Hunarli in Azerbaijani), near the occupied town of Hadrut. While TV cameras were rolling, Aliyev pointed at the Armenian inscriptions on the wall of the church and said: “This is an ancient Albanian temple, an Albanian church. It is located in the village of Hunarli. The Armenians wanted to Armenianize this church and wrote inscriptions in Armenian here, but they failed. If this were an Armenian church, would they leave it in such a state? It looks like a stable or as if it were a garbage dump. It is our ancient historical site, a temple of our Udi brothers. They will come here, too. Just as the Armenians desecrated our mosques, they have also desecrated this ancient Albanian temple. But we will restore. All these inscriptions are fake – they were written later. They have created a false history for themselves in our ancient lands. But they failed because we exposed them. The fact that this church – the Albanian temple – is in this condition again shows Armenian fraud. If it were an Armenian church, they would have renovated it. Some criticize us for not taking good care of Christian sites. It is Armenians who brought it to this condition.”²³⁷
- On May 15, 2021, Mehriban Aliyeva tweeted about her visit to the Albanian Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, located in the Nij settlement of Gabala district, to reinforce the “Albanian” narrative.²³⁸ In accordance with Steinar Gil, the former Dutch Ambassador in Azerbaijan, during the restoration of the church, its Armenian inscriptions were erased.²³⁹
- Being “authorized” by the Azerbaijani leadership to act as the religious leader of the Udi community of Azerbaijan, Robert Mobili started playing an active role in the “Albanization” operation, making claims that the cross-stones in nearby Hadrut belong to Caucasian Albanians.²⁴⁰

On February 3, 2022, Azerbaijani Minister of Culture Anar Karimov said during a press briefing that a working group of both local and international experts had been established, which would be responsible for removing “the fictitious traces written by Armenians on Albanian religious temples.”²⁴¹ This measure signals an aggressive promotion of the “Albanization” agenda, which was condemned both by the Armenian government²⁴² as well as the civil society of Armenia.²⁴³

237 Website of The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/50893>.

238 Tweet by Mehriban Aliyeva, May 15, 2021, <https://twitter.com/1VicePresident/status/1393571286488649730>.

239 BBC News, Azeri Church Sparks Political Row, March 10, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4336733.stm>; Armenian Mirror Spectator, Former Dutch Envoy Exposes Azeri Vandalism on Armenian Church, November 28, 2020, <https://mirrorspectator.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Armenian-Mirror-Spectator-November-28-2020.pdf>.

240 Robert Mobili on Facebook, November 4, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/robert.mobili/posts/4294590627324509>; Monument Watch, Mobili “The Inventor” Decided to Declare the Armenian Cross Compositions of the 17-19th Centuries of Occupied Hadrut Albanian, November 23, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3sec8le>.

241 Report.az, Ermənilərin saxtalaşdırdıqları alban dini məbədlərinin bərpası üçün işçi qrup yaradılıb, February 3, 2022, <https://report.az/medeniyyet-siyaseti/alban-dini-mebedlerinin-berpasi-ucun-isci-grup-yaradilib>; Report.az, Working Group Set up to Restore Armenianized Albanian Temples, February 3, 2022, <https://report.az/en/cultural-policy/working-group-set-up-to-restore-armenianized-temples-of-ancient-albania>.

242 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Comment by the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson on the Statement of the Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan, February 8, 2022, https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2022/02/08/spox_comment_culturalheritage/11289.

243 Statement of Armenian NGOs, On the Destruction of the Armenian Cultural Heritage in Artsakh, February 7, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3lj1dMG>.

One major explanation for the drive to appropriate Armenian culture is Azerbaijan's national identity - considered to be grounded not on ethnic, but on territorial grounds.²⁴⁴ In the post-Soviet era, Azerbaijan's President Heydar Aliyev²⁴⁵ - "the father of the nation" - adopted a nation-building formula based on "Azerbaijanism" – "trying to portray Azerbaijanis as a nation with ancient history and authentic national identity."²⁴⁶ Hence, political elites tried to connect contemporary Azerbaijanis with the ancient peoples who inhabited the territory of present-day Azerbaijan (including Karabakh) – including Armenians, Caucasian Albanians, Iranians. Along these lines, to resolve the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh in favor of Azerbaijan, in one of his speeches, H. Aliyev proposed to develop the historical background for strengthening the nation and "to create such works that constantly and consistently prove the Azerbaijani ownership of the lands where Armenia is located nowadays. We have to do that. We have to open the road to the future generations."²⁴⁷

International Reaction

The issue of the elimination of Armenian heritage has been reflected in the PACE Report on "Humanitarian Consequences of the Conflict Between Armenia and Azerbaijan," issued in September 2021. The rapporteur, Paul Gavan, expressed his concerns:

"about the current narrative being developed in Azerbaijan promoting a "Caucasian Albanian" cultural narrative while seeking to negate an "Armenian" cultural narrative. While the whole region was certainly under the influence of different religions and people over history, steps to create such a new narrative, negating Armenian cultural heritage, in particular in the light of and in response to a long running 30-year conflict, should be avoided. This is a matter which UNESCO should look at to avoid manipulation by one side, or the other."²⁴⁸

After the November 10, 2020 ceasefire, UNESCO has proposed both to Armenia and Azerbaijan to send an independent mission of experts to draw a preliminary inventory of significant historical and cultural heritage sites in and around Nagorno-Karabakh - as a first step toward the effective safeguarding of the region's heritage.²⁴⁹

244 Tabachnik, M. Citizenship, Territoriality, and Post-Soviet Nationhood: The Politics of Birthright Citizenship in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova, 2019, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 142-164, referred in G.Meneshian, Exploring the Azerbaijani National Identity: a historical analysis, February 21, 2021, <https://mecacs.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/2021/exploring-the-azerbaijani-national-identity-a-historical-analysis>.

245 Wikipedia, Heydar Aliyev, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heydar_Aliyev.

246 Abbasov, I. et al, Ethnic Groups and Conflicts in the South Caucasus and Turkey. The Caucasus Edition – Journal of Conflict Transformation, 2016, referred in G.Meneshian, Exploring the Azerbaijani National Identity: A Historical Analysis, February 21, 2021, <https://mecacs.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/2021/exploring-the-azerbaijani-national-identity-a-historical-analysis>.

247 "Heydar Aliyev Heritage" International Online Library, Opening Remarks and Closing Speech of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev at the Meeting of the State Commission on the 75th Anniversary of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, February 9, 1999 <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/ru/5091911.html>.

248 PACE, Humanitarian Consequences of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, September 13, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3lfVGXu>.

249 Nagorno-Karabakh: Reaffirming the Obligation to Protect Cultural Goods, UNESCO Proposes Sending a Mission to the Field to All Parties, November 20, 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/news/nagorno-karabakh-reaffirming-obligation-protect-cultural-goods-unesco-proposes-sending-mission>.

For the same purpose, the members of the intergovernmental Committee of the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Second Protocol (1999), adopted a declaration on December 11, 2020, and welcomed UNESCO's initiative, confirming the need for an independent assessment mission to Nagorno-Karabakh to take stock of the situation regarding cultural properties in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. The Committee requested each of the parties to render the mission possible.²⁵⁰

Despite the described efforts and the urgency of the matter as acknowledged by UNESCO throughout 2021, the Azerbaijani Government has not duly responded to the request - thus creating obstacles and hindering access by UNESCO to the region.²⁵¹ This problem was reflected in the speech of Ararat Mirzoyan, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the 41st Session of the UNESCO General Conference on November 11, 2021 – one year after the conflict was supposed to have ended.²⁵²

On December 7, 2021, the International Court of Justice indicated provisional measures in the case of Armenia v. Azerbaijan, ruling that Azerbaijan must “take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration affecting Armenian cultural heritage, including but not limited to churches and other places of worship, monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artifacts.”²⁵³

In response to this measure indicated by the international court, Azerbaijan took a course of rapid “Albanization” and initiated the “protection” of monuments under the name of “Albanian heritage”, in this way preventing intervention from external parties.

Following the news on the establishment of a working group by Minister Anar Karimov responsible for removing “the fictitious traces” on February 8, 2022, the Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Nadine Maenza, made a statement on the federal government agency's Twitter page. She wrote “We are deeply concerned by Azerbaijan's plans to remove Armenian Apostolic inscriptions from churches. We urge the government to preserve and protect places of worship and other religious and cultural sites.”²⁵⁴

At the same time, on February 8, 2022, Azerbaijani media published a “petition by Azerbaijani NGOs” to “alarm” international organizations about “the cultural genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” of the Azerbaijani people.²⁵⁵ Azerbaijani NGOs complained about Armenia “destroying,” “appropriating,” “forging the origins” of the cultural heritage of Azerbaijani people, using Armenian toponyms of geographic locations, “disregarding human values”, etc. They

250 Declaration of the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of the Second Protocol to The Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict – Ensuring Cultural Property Protection in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and Setting-up an Independent Technical Mission, 11 December 2020, https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/en_15_com_declaration_haut-karabakh_final_1.pdf.

251 UNESCO is awaiting Azerbaijan's Response regarding Nagorno-Karabakh Mission, December 21, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3LWTPZO>; Commonsplace.eu, UNESCO Hoping to Send Mission to Nagorno-Karabakh, February 5, 2021, <https://www.commonspace.eu/index.php/news/unesco-hoping-send-mission-nagorno-karabakh>; Newsweek, Christian Heritage at Risk as U.N. Watches in Silence, February 22, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3heuo82>.

252 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Armenia, Remarks of the Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan at the 41st Session of the UNESCO General Conference, November 11, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3t7VG5z>.

253 International Court of Justice, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan, December 7, 2021, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/180/180-20211207-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf>.

254 Azatutyun, U.S. Agency 'Deeply Concerned' About Karabakh Churches, February 8, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3vbR80m>.

255 Haqqin.az, НПО Азербайджана обратились к гендиректору ЮНЕСКО, February 8, 2022, https://haqqin.az/news/234034?fbclid=IwAR3-CLVlivNEDNQs_Hs5oaldRucJ50A_kIHSRX2Zz5bFHPsSXeNS3UyMKew.

declare that they have demanded that UNESCO send an expert mission to Armenia to assess Azerbaijani heritage, but Armenia has refused it.

To create false equivalence fallacies within the international community and prevent the protection of Armenian heritage, Azerbaijan has also made a “counter claim,” stating that Armenia has destroyed “63 mosques out of 67 existing in the occupied territories.” In the found 2 online sources for such a claim there is only one evidence of vandalism and one destruction mentioned, while there is no any information (name, location, history, photo) of the other 62 “destroyed.”²⁵⁶

CORRUPTION AS A TOOL TO SPREAD OR COVER UP ARMENOPHOBIC POLICIES

Azerbaijan is one of few “champions” in the world that uses corruption as a “statecraft” - an instrument that is used “consciously and intentionally” to help achieve foreign policy goals.²⁵⁷ President Ilham Aliyev has been using Caspian oil money to enrich his family and maintain his political and economic influence, but also to bribe Western politicians to get their “buy-in” in promoting Azerbaijani interests. Aliyev’s and his family members’ names have appeared in virtually all corruption-related exposes, including the Panama Papers (2016), Paradise Papers (2017), Pandora Papers (2021), Swiss Secrets (2022) and multiple money laundering schemes.

The most popular “signature” policy used by Azerbaijan is named “caviar diplomacy” (sometimes called “Caviargate” by some media).²⁵⁸ “Caviar diplomacy” is a lobbying strategy that uses bribery to influence international politicians to use their leverage and voting capacities to promote and improve the image of Azerbaijan and acquire favorable attitudes and decisions (such as resolutions, statements, possible measures concerning the violations of human rights issues and actions of the authoritarian regime). Often, the “caviar diplomacy” was aimed at distorting the human rights record of Aliyev’s regime and silencing due reactions to its gross violations, particularly the imprisonment of journalists and political opponents. According to Andre Walker, a British political commentator, the Azerbaijani government has been bribing foreign politicians with anticipation of their support in the possible new war.²⁵⁹

256 AzStudies Collective, НПО Азербайджана обратились к гендиректору ЮНЕСКО, December 19, 2020, <https://azstudies-editor.medium.com/documenting-destruction-of-azerbaijani-cultural-heritage-16cff8f3648b>; YouTube Channel Rahal News, Azerbaijani Soldiers Recover an Old Mosque that Armenians Converted into a Pig Pen in Zangwylan, October 22, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8-7wthTYwg>.

257 Transparency International Defence and Security (TI-DS), Corruption as Statecraft: Using Corrupt Practices as Foreign Policy Tools, November 18, 2019, https://ti-defence.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/DSP_CorruptionasStatecraft_251119.pdf.

258 France 24, 'Strong Suspicion' of Corruption in 'Caviargate' at Council of Europe, April 23, 2018, <https://www.france24.com/en/20180423-suspicion-corruption-caviargate-council-europe-azerbaijan>.

259 Andre Walker, Westminster Was Bribed by Azerbaijan Ahead of Armenian Invasion, October 11, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lruywlyeLac&fbclid=IwAR1RsFtm4_K5f1S7wOF9PrVenObyqJaPx2aDTps4EY11QJKg_pR_xLWLFHrkQ.

The term “caviar diplomacy” was first made public in 2012, in a report by the German think-tank European Stability Initiative (ESI) entitled “Caviar Diplomacy – How Azerbaijan silenced the Council of Europe.” According to the report,

“It [the scheme] began in 2001, not long after Azerbaijan joined the Council of Europe – the continent’s club of democratic nations. It gathered speed after Ilham Aliyev, who had served in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, became President of Azerbaijan in 2003. Once the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline was completed in 2005 and the Azerbaijani state coffers were awash in oil revenues, the ‘caviar policy’ shifted into top gear.” The report describes how the corruption of PACE MPs proceeded - starting from visits with precious gifts meant to test the beneficiaries’ reactions and later long-term contracts involving huge sums of money.²⁶⁰

Azerbaijan’s high-ranking politicians have appeared in different corruption schemes. The largest to date has been dubbed the “Azerbaijani Laundromat.” This money-laundering scheme was used to transfer a total of \$2.9 billion USD (2.5 billion Euros) from Azerbaijani companies and government departments through four UK-based shell companies (Metastar Invest, Hilux Services, Polux Management and LCM Alliance) and through the Estonian branch of Danske Bank to finance both foreign policy schemes aimed at improving the country’s international reputation as well as the private enrichment of some Azerbaijani officials, including President Aliyev’s family.²⁶¹ The majority of Azerbaijani Laundromat resources came from opaque companies linked to the regime. However, \$9 million USD was contributed directly by Azerbaijani defense and security institutions, and another \$29 million USD came from Russian state-owned arms export company Rosoboronexport.²⁶²

Aliyev’s “caviar diplomacy” involved a “charm offensive”²⁶³ – gift-giving to achieve certain favor. According to the ESI report:

“People [politicians] are invited to conferences, events, sometimes for summer vacations. These are real vacations and there are many expensive gifts. Gifts are mostly expensive silk carpets, gold and silver items, drinks, caviar and money. In Baku, a common gift is 2 kg of caviar.”²⁶⁴

260 ESI, Caviar Diplomacy - How Azerbaijan Silenced the Council of Europe, May 24, 2012,

<https://www.esiweb.org/publications/caviar-diplomacy-how-azerbaijan-silenced-council-europe>.

261 Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), Azerbaijani Laundromat, September 4, 2017,

<https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat>; The Guardian, Everything You need to Know about the Azerbaijani Laundromat, September 4, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/04/everything-you-need-to-know-about-theazerbaijani-laundromat>; OCCRP, Azerbaijan’s High-Profile Beneficiaries, September 5, 2017,

<https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/azerbaijans-high-profile-beneficiaries>.

262 OCCRP, The Origin of the Money, 2 September 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/the-origin-of-the-money>; OCCRP, The Core Companies, 4 September 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/the-core-companies-of-the-azerbaijani-laundromat>; OCCRP, Where Did the Money Go?, September 2017,

<https://www.occrp.org/en/laundromat/profiles>; OCCRP, Azerbaijan’s High-Profile Beneficiaries, September 5, 2017,

<https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/azerbaijans-high-profile-beneficiaries>; Transparency International

Defence and Security (TI-DS), Corruption as Statecraft: Using Corrupt Practices as Foreign Policy Tools, November 18,

2019, https://ti-defence.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/DSP_CorruptionasStatecraft_251119.pdf.

263 Ibid.

264 ESI, Caviar Diplomacy, How Azerbaijan Silenced the Council of Europe, May 24, 2012,

<https://www.esiweb.org/sites/default/files/reports/pdf/ESI%20-%20Caviar%20Diplomacy%20-%20May%202012.pdf>.

Caviar diplomacy was executed with the active involvement of Western politicians and institutions, as well as representatives of international organizations, who received money or other gifts to serve Azerbaijani interests. Corrupt relations of European structures with Azerbaijan and their promotion of the latter's interests at the expense of human rights are rather illustrative.²⁶⁵

Based on ESI's investigations on corruption among CoE parliamentarians, the PACE Bureau decided to set up an independent, external body to investigate the allegations. The investigation body's final report, published in April 2018, revealed "strong suspicions of corruptive conduct involving members of the Assembly" and naming a number of members and former members as having breached PACE's Code of Conduct.²⁶⁶

Fourteen members of PACE were accused of accepting gifts and bribes from the government of Azerbaijan in 2013. The list included 2 MPs from Germany, 2 from Belgium, 1 from Italy, 1 from Spain, 1 from Slovenia, 1 from Finland, 1 from Norway, 1 from Sweden, 1 from Poland and 3 from Azerbaijan (the facilitators).²⁶⁷ In July 2018, the CoE decided to expel them from the premises of PACE for life.

To illustrate a few examples, Luca Volonte, a prominent Italian MP from Union of the Centre (UdC) and former chair of the PACE European People's Party faction, received a total of \$2.64 million USD in 19 payments to organize support for Azerbaijan in the Council of Europe, more specifically to build a coalition to reject a 2013 report criticizing Azerbaijan's poor human rights record.²⁶⁸

265 ZDF Comedy, *Mysteriöses Geld aus Aserbaidschan* | Die Anstalt, May 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLhtilrJ1Ys>.

266 CoE, Report of the Independent Investigation Body on the Allegations of Corruption within the Parliamentary Assembly, April 15, 2018, assembly.coe.int/Communication/IBAC/IBAC-GIAC-Report-EN.pdf.

267 EU-OCS, Council of Europe Expels 14 Members Accused of Corruption in Azerbaijan Case, July 4, 2018, <https://eu-ocs.com/council-of-europe-expels-14-members-accused-of-corruption-in-azerbaijan-case>.

268 ESI, Caviar Diplomacy: How Azerbaijan Silenced the Council of Europe, May 24, 2012, http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_131.pdf; ESI, The European Swamp (Caviar Diplomacy Part 2): Prosecutors, Corruption and the Council of Europe, December 17, 2016, <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20-%20The%20Swamp%20-%20Caviar%20Diplomacy%20Part%20two%20-%202017%20December%202016.pdf>; 1843 Magazine, Heaping on the caviar diplomacy, October/November 2016, <https://www.1843magazine.com/features/heaping-on-the-caviar-diplomacy>; OCCRP, The Influence Machine, September 4, 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijaniiaundromat/the-influence-machine>; Guardian, Council of Europe Members Suspected of Corruption, Inquiry Reveals, April 22, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2018/apr/22/council-of-europemembers-suspected-of-corruption-inquiry-reveals>; OCCRP, Italian Court Sentences Former Council of Europe MP for Bribery, January 14, 2021, <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/13628-italian-court-sentences-former-council-of-europe-mp-for-bribery>; Processo all'ex parlamentare dell'UDC Luca Volonté, January 11, 2021, <https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/623644/processo-allex-parlamentare-delludc-luca-volonte>.

Several cases relate to German politicians.²⁶⁹ One of them is Eduard Lintner from Christian Social Union in Bavaria - CSU, who led an election observation mission to Azerbaijan, was paid a total of \$1.1 million USD,²⁷⁰ and publicly praised the 2013 presidential election, which was described as flawed by most independent observers.²⁷¹

Four PACE MPs, 2 from Spain, 1 from Romania and 1 from Azerbaijan, were temporarily (1 MP for 10 years and 3 MPs for 2 years) deprived of a number of rights in the Assembly – including the right to be appointed or act as a rapporteur, to stand for a number of key posts, or to observe elections.²⁷²

The major case in this group is Spanish MP from People's Party (since 2016 - a Chairman of the European People's Party) and President of PACE Pedro Agramunt. As the rapporteur of PACE on political prisoners in Azerbaijan, he produced biased reports and did not properly highlight the numerous violations of human rights.²⁷³ He was also accused for his close relations with Azerbaijani authorities and for playing a key role in rallying various votes at PACE in favor of Azerbaijan.²⁷⁴

A number of allegations related to UK delegates. Particularly, Robert Walter, UK MP from the Conservative Party, failed to declare or resolve conflicts of interest that could have an impact on his opinion whilst being a rapporteur for Azerbaijan and head of a PACE mission to observe the country's 2013 presidential election.²⁷⁵ Another UK delegate, independent MP Mike Hancock, has been alleged to be an "apologist" for Aliyev's regime, defending Azerbaijan's 2008 and 2010 elections against the criticism of the OSCE/ODIHR international observation missions,²⁷⁶ and opposing a key report critical of the country's record on human rights.²⁷⁷ In

269 Deutsche Welle, "Azerbaijani Scam": Why Does Baku Need Influence on German Politicians? March 16, 2021,

<https://www.dw.com/ru/azerbajdzhanskaja-afera-zachem-baku-vlijanie-na-nemeckih-politikov/a-56879932?fbclid=IwAR2AEY-KITItWv98QQKuU8vWc1tT92b22DwcV-B02FEK2taws6xeJSWdXq>; Vice, How an Authoritarian Regime Infiltrated a Government in the Heart of Europe, March 29, 2021,

https://www.vice.com/en/article/qip74b/azerbajjan-lobbying-germany-angela-merkel-ilham-aliyev?fbclid=IwAR2K3-tJEHnjOeuxPWGZM-xy98pcursVQoQMJOwZ5qw5pfSiMpe_kCJfJdM.

270 OCCRP, The Influence Machine, September 4, 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/the-influence-machine>; ESI, Caviar Diplomacy: How Azerbaijan Silenced the Council of Europe, May 24, 2012, http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_131.pdf; ESI, The European Swamp (Caviar Diplomacy Part 2): Prosecutors, Corruption and the Council of Europe, December 17, 2016, <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20-%20The%20Swamp%20-%20Caviar%20Diplomacy%20Part%20two%20-%202017%20December%202016.pdf>; OCCRP, The Influence Machine, September 4, 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/the-influence-machine>.

271 ESI, Caviar Diplomacy: How Azerbaijan Silenced the Council of Europe, May 24, 2012, http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_131.pdf; ESI, The European Swamp (Caviar Diplomacy Part 2): Prosecutors, Corruption and the Council of Europe, December 17, 2016, <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20-%20The%20Swamp%20-%20Caviar%20Diplomacy%20Part%20two%20-%202017%20December%202016.pdf>; 1843 Magazine, Heaping on the Caviar Diplomacy, October/November 2016, <https://www.1843magazine.com/features/heaping-on-the-caviar-diplomacy>; OCCRP, The Influence Machine, September 4, 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat/the-influence-machine>.

272 PACE, Allegations of Corruption within the Assembly: Committee Deprives Four Members of Certain Rights, May 16, 2018, <https://pace.coe.int/en/news/7066>.

273 ESI, A Portrait of Deception. Monitoring Azerbaijan or Why Pedro Agramunt Should Resign, January 22, 2013, https://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_134.pdf.

274 Transparency International, Clean Up Spain – Justice for Azerbaijan's Reputation Laundering in Europe, October 31, 2018, <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/clean-up-spain-justice-for-azerbaijans-reputation-laundering-in-europe>.

275 Mr Robert Walter, MP for Mid Dorset from May 1997 until March 2015, <https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/Mr-Robert-Walter/244>.

276 ESI, The European Swamp (Caviar Diplomacy Part 2): Prosecutors, Corruption and the Council of Europe, December 17, 2016, <http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20-%20The%20Swamp%20-%20Caviar%20Diplomacy%20Part%20two%20-%202017%20December%202016.pdf>.

277 Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, The Follow-up to the Issue of Political Prisoners in Azerbaijan, Doc. 13079, December 14, 2012, <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=19217&lang=en>; [http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/Votes/DB-VotesResults-EN.asp?VoteID=34435&DocID=14409&MemberID%20\[Accessed%2024%20April%202018](http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/Votes/DB-VotesResults-EN.asp?VoteID=34435&DocID=14409&MemberID%20[Accessed%2024%20April%202018).

2010, both Mike Hancock's local constituency party and party headquarters received a total of £11,500 in cash donations from The European Azerbaijan Society (TEAS) – Azerbaijan's lobbying organization for Europe, including the UK.²⁷⁸ TEAS, aimed at promoting Azerbaijan's international reputation, was founded and led by Tale Heydarov, the son of the country's Minister of Emergency Affairs, Kamaladdin Heydarov, whose family name is linked in the Maltese bank corruption scandal.²⁷⁹ As for its expenditures, they included a consultant lobbyist costing £150,000 annually and had an office lease worth almost £200,000 per annum.²⁸⁰

These cases do not reveal the deals of Western politicians with Azerbaijani authorities to keep silent about the military aggression against the Armenians in Artsakh. There was only one person - Andre Walker, a British political commentator – who reported that the Azerbaijani government has bribed foreign politicians in anticipation of their support in the possible new war.²⁸¹ Given this track record, it is likely that there are additional cases that have not yet been uncovered. The extent to which bribery was used to keep silence about the 2020 war and war crimes of Azerbaijan and Turkey cannot be fully known.

Some other corruption cases involving Western or international actors directly related to the Artsakh conflict include the following:

- Independent investigations revealed several bank transfers, totaling more than \$9 million USD, from Azerbaijan to Hungarian MKB Bank in 2012 – coincident with the Hungarian government's extradition to Azerbaijan of convicted Azerbaijani serviceman Ramil Safarov, who murdered with an axe the sleeping Armenian officer Gurgen Margaryan during NATO training in Budapest in 2004.²⁸² Several media outlets suggested a connection between Viktor Orban's visit to Baku in June 2012 and the first instalment of \$7.6 million transferred to the bank account in July 2012. Safarov was handed over to Azerbaijan in the end of August and immediately pardoned.²⁸³

278 Transparency International, *In Whose Interest? Analysing How Corrupt and Repressive Regimes Seek Influence and Legitimacy through Engagement with UK Parliamentarians*, July 2018, https://www.transparency.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/publications/In_Whose_Interest_WEB3.pdf.

279 Forbes, *An Inconvenient Truth In Azerbaijan*, January 17, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joharper/2019/01/17/an-inconvenient-truth-in-azerbaijan/?sh=59e28c2a574c>; Radio Liberty, *Gilan' Takes Control of Cotton Business*, February 27, 2017, (in Azeri); <https://www.azadliq.org/a/kemaleddin-heyderovun-holdingi-pambiq-biznesini-de-nezarete-goturdu/28336457.html>; OCCRP, *Pilatus: A Private Bank for Azerbaijan's Ruling Elite*, April 23, 2018,

<https://www.occrp.org/en/thedaphneproject/pilatus-a-private-bank-for-azerbajians-ruling-elite>; Eurasianet, *Azerbaijan's First Family Accused in Maltese Corruption Scandal*, May 1, 2017, <https://eurasianet.org/azerbajians-first-family-accused-maltese-corruption-scandal>; Running Commentary, *Daphne Caruana Galizia's Notebook, US\$1.017 million in Single Transaction from Azerbaijan-Owned Company to Egrant Inc.*, April 20, 2017, <https://daphnecaruanaqalizia.com/2017/04/us1-017-million-single-transaction-azerbaijan-owned-company-egrant-inc>.

280 Transparency International UK, *In Whose interest? Analysing How Corrupt and Repressive Regimes Seek Influence and Legitimacy through Engagement with UK Parliamentarians*, July 2018, https://www.transparency.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/publications/In_Whose_Interest_WEB3.pdf; Organized Crime and OCCRP, *The Azerbaijani Laundromat*, September 4, 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/azerbaijanilaundromat>; Transparency International, *The Impact of the Azerbaijani Laundromat*, October 10, 2017, <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/the-impact-of-the-azerbaijani-laundromat>.

281 Andre Walker, *Westminster Was Bribed by Azerbaijan Ahead of Armenian Invasion*, October 11, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lruywlyeLac&fbclid=IwAR1RsFtm4_K5f1S7wOF9PrVEnObyqJaPx2aDTps4EY11QJKg_pR_xLWLFHrkQ.

282 Atlantzo, *Hungarian Businessman Connected to the Azerbaijani Laundromat Makes a Fortune in the Ventilator Business*, November 5, 2020, <https://english.atlatszo.hu/2020/11/05/hungarian-businessman-connected-to-the-azerbaijani-laundromat-makes-a-fortune-in-the-ventilator-business>.

283 The Budapest Beacon, *Big Push in Hungary and EP for Comprehensive Inquiry into Azeri Laundromat*, November 16, 2017, <https://budapestbeacon.com/big-push-hungary-ep-comprehensive-inquiry-azeri-laundromat>; Hungarian Spectrum, *The "Azerbaijani Laundromat" and Orban's Hungary*, September 6, 2017, <https://hungarianspectrum.org/2017/09/06/the-azerbaijan-laundromat-and-orbans-hungary>; Eurasianet, *Report: \$7 Million Payment Tied to Hungary's Extradition of*

- Aliyev's wife Mehriban Aliyeva has been a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador since 2004,²⁸⁴ but she used her role to cover up the destruction of Armenian heritage. In December 2004, in her first year in the position, Azerbaijan erased the Armenian script from the Blessed Virgin Mary church in Nij, Gabala.²⁸⁵ In 2005, it completed the destruction of the medieval Armenian cemetery in Julfa. In spite of multiple condemnations of the vandalism from different sides, UNESCO's reaction was not strong enough.
- Aliyeva's role at UNESCO appeared to be questionable also regarding corrupt schemes. Aliyev's family appeared to get rather close to UNESCO's Director General Irina Bokova and her husband Kalin Mitrev, Bulgaria's representative to the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The latter received at least €425,000 (£390,000) through the Azerbaijani Laundromat, though he claimed it was received for legitimate business consultancy.²⁸⁶
- The close relationship between the mentioned families also manifested itself in other ways. There have been six agreements and memorandums of cooperation signed between UNESCO and Azerbaijan in 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2015 and 2018.²⁸⁷ In 2013, Azerbaijan donated \$5 million USD to UNESCO.²⁸⁸
- In 2010, Bokova gave one of UNESCO's highest honors – the Mozart Medal – to Mehriban Aliyeva.²⁸⁹ In 2013, she hosted a photo exhibition at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris, named "Azerbaijan – A Land of Tolerance", organized by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation.²⁹⁰

The corrupt regime of Ilham Aliyev came out of the Second Karabakh War much stronger. He became an "epic" president for many of his citizens, and apparently nowadays uses the success of his offensive to deepen his autocratic power in Azerbaijan and to further enrich himself, his family, and his clan. To emphasize his critical role in Azerbaijan's history, he further intensifies the Armenophobic sentiments within Azerbaijani society, which is also used to suppress local democracy and opposition.

Azerbaijani Axe-Murderer, September 7, 2017, <https://eurasianet.org/report-7-million-payment-tied-to-hungarys-extradition-of-azerbaijani-axe-murderer>; Atlantszo, Atlantszo is Joining Forces with Hungarian MEP to Urge a Comprehensive Inquiry into the Azerbaijani Laundromat, November 17, 2017, <https://english.atlantszo.hu/2017/11/17/atlantszo-is-joining-forces-with-hungarian-mep-to-urge-a-comprehensive-inquiry-into-the-azerbaijani-laundromat>.

284 Wikipedia, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO_Goodwill_Ambassador.

285 BBC News, Azeri Church Sparks Political Row, March 10, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4336733.stm>; Armenian Mirror Spectator, Former Dutch Envoy Exposes Azeri Vandalism on Armenian Church, November 28, 2020, <https://mirrorspectator.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Armenian-Mirror-Spectator-November-28-2020.pdf>.

286 Guardian, UK at Centre of Secret \$3bn Azerbaijani Money Laundering and Lobbying Scheme, September 4, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/04/uk-at-centre-of-secret-3bn-azerbaijani-money-laundering-and-lobbying-scheme>.

287 UNESCO Archives AtoM Catalogue, Showing 6 Results for Searching Agreements of UNESCO with Azerbaijan (for 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2015 and 2018), https://atom.archives.unesco.org/informationobject/browse?view=card&sort=endDate&places=484&sortDir=desc&levels=196&languages=en&sf_culture=en&names=&topLod=0.

288 UNESCO, The Republic of Azerbaijan Donates US\$ 5 Million to UNESCO, July 2013, <https://en.unesco.org/news/republic-azerbaijan-donates-us-5-million-unesco-0>.

289 Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Mehriban Aliyeva Receives UNESCO's Mozart Gold Medal, July 30, 2010, <https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/en/content/view/53/1112/Mehriban-Aliyeva-receives-UNESCO%60s-Mozart-Gold-medal>.

290 Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Photo exhibition "Azerbaijan – A Land of Tolerance" at UNESCO, 22 October 2013, <https://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/en/content/view/139/2938/Photo-exhibition-“Azerbaijan—A-Land-of-Tolerance”-at-UNESCO>.

Azerbaijani civil society, at least whoever is left after the crackdown in 2014 or did not emigrate to flee from Aliyev's autocratic regime, is mostly anti-Armenian. Observations of social media accounts of "human rights defenders" or "pro-democracy leaders" showed their full satisfaction with the military approach to resolving the Artsakh issue and with the general Armenophobic hysteria within their country.

Whenever there is some criticism against the government by a few journalists and activists, the Aliyev-controlled media, along with labeling them a "5th column", also refer to them pejoratively as "Armenians."²⁹¹

Bahruz Samadov writes:

"The ruling regime is now stronger than ever and has no need for reconciliation, neither with the opposition parties and civil society groups that reject its legitimacy nor with the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. The latter would require at least some degree of democratization and reforms, and that in turn would require a greater inclusion and revitalization of civil society. It would also run the risk of angering the people who have accepted the premise of an Azerbaijani national identity based on enmity against and dehumanization of Armenians. What interest does the government have in this?"²⁹²

CONCLUSION

The xenophobic and racist policies of Azerbaijan against Armenians constitute the actual source of the "Nagorno-Karabakh conflict." The "conflict," in fact, has been caused by the persistent hatred and racism of Azerbaijan against Armenians and the subsequent violent response to the aspirations of the Armenian people of Artsakh to live safely and organize their own political, economic and social life within their indigenous territory.

A solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could possibly be reached through negotiations on different models of coexistence and efforts at peacebuilding. However constant rejections by the Azerbaijani government of the proposed solutions, and later the launching of the 2020 Artsakh War, in cooperation with Turkey, proved that the Azerbaijani regime does not strive for reconciliation and peace with Artsakh's Armenians, but merely wants the territory of Artsakh itself, without the Armenians. Azerbaijan calls on the people of Artsakh to surrender and give up their aspirations for independence. But their own actions and continued rhetoric clearly demonstrate that doing so would result in the elimination of Armenians from Artsakh, concomitant to the Armenian Genocide. This obviously drives Artsakh's push for independence, and their lives actually depend on it.

291 Xeber.media, "Beşinci kolon"un simaları, July 28, 2020, <https://xeber.media/news/15272584/besinci-kolonun-simalari>.

292 Eurasianet, Samadov B., Perspectives | Azerbaijan's Authoritarianism and Baku's "Military Trophies Park", April 16, 2021, <https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-azerbaijans-authoritarianism-and-bakus-military-trophies-park>.

Obviously, one is not able to build peace by means of terror. The current ceasefire does not ensure a sustainable peace, especially when the institutions, attitudes, initiatives, and enormous national revenues of one party to the conflict are directed at destroying the other party. While choking Artsakh and destroying Armenian cultural heritage, Azerbaijan with its oil money intensively builds up its own infrastructure - human settlements, roads, airports, religious sites, military bases – with an intent to spread fear, change the demography of the region and prevent any claim of self-determination, or otherwise to actually apply force. This approach, indeed, affects any reconciliation prospects in the foreseeable future.

The international community at large has not acted adequately and strongly enough during the 44-day war to condemn the ethnic cleansing operation by Azerbaijan, backed by Turkey, and to call for responsibility. For many countries, double standards, geopolitical and economic interests are possible impediments for taking a value-based approach. Many organizations and individual actors were trying to appear “neutral,” which in the end meant siding with the authoritarian aggressors, Azerbaijan and Turkey, against the victim who wants to survive and exercise its basic human rights. This “neutrality” has resulted in the increased arrogance and increasing violence of dictatorial regimes. Even now, international players do not react duly to the terror policies of Azerbaijan and to the isolation of the Artsakh people from the rest of the world - in violation of the UN principle of “leaving no one behind”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

International organizations should engage urgently and more effectively to ensure long-term and sustainable resolution to Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) conflict, acknowledging:

- the xenophobic, aggressive and racist policies of the state of Azerbaijan and its intensive militarization that poses an existential threat to the Artsakh people;
- the torture and killing of Armenian captives, including PoWs and civilians;
- the danger posed to Armenian cultural heritage and the sensitivity of timing, given the speed of actions initiated by Azerbaijan;
- the occupation of certain Armenian territories of Artsakh that ensure the integrity of the region, safe communication, access to water and other security guarantees;
- the impossibility of reconciliation between the conflicting parties in the near future and the sensitivity of timing remedial actions given the five-year term of the Russian peacekeeping forces.

Based on the outlined manifestations of Armenophobia and racism in Azerbaijan described in this report, we propose the following actions to domestic and international actors:

To the Government of Armenia:

- Use all multilateral and international human rights mechanisms, including the structures of the United Nations, Council of Europe, security- and cooperation-focused institutions and other relevant organizations, to shed light on the various manifestations and root causes of Armenophobia and racism demonstrated during and after the 44-day war, and demand concrete actions within the scope of their jurisdictions to stop and prevent further deterioration;
- Continue filing applications with the International Court of Justice, making maximal use of the legal mechanisms provided by UN Conventions, including at least the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), International Convention Against Taking of Hostages (1979), Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1985), and International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (1989);
- Take urgent measures to ensure the adoption and entry into force of an international, legal and long-term mandate for peacekeeping forces in Artsakh by the end of 2024, in order to guarantee the safety of Artsakh's people after the expiry of the five-year term of the peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation, as prescribed in the trilateral statement of November 10, 2020;
- Adopt a resolution condemning the violent attack on, occupation and ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, and work intensively with international actors to correct the false narrative and the distorted picture of Azerbaijan's human rights record, crafted over many years of "caviar diplomacy";
- Work effectively with the EU and other international organizations to establish and support a civilian monitoring mission along the border with Azerbaijan, given the impact of the current Azerbaijani intrusions into Armenian territory.

To the Various Structures of the United Nations:

UN Secretary General

- Prioritize the issue of genocides of small indigenous nations (including Armenians, Yezidis, Alevis, etc.) that happen in many locations throughout the world, take bold action and revisit the institutional mechanisms, as needed, to effectively solve ethnic conflicts and prevent future genocides and ethnic cleansing;

UN Security Council

- Take the initiative to discuss the safety of people in Artsakh and the existential threats under the Azerbaijani dictatorial regime, its military partnership with Turkey, and the deployment of mercenaries;
- Take measures to ensure the adoption and entry into force of the international (including neutral OSCE countries), legal, clearly-regulated and long-term mandate of the peacekeeping forces in Artsakh within the region before the end of 2024, in order to guarantee the safety of Artsakh's people, as well as their connectivity with Armenia

and the rest of the world after the expiry of the five-year term of the current Russian peacekeeping force;

- Take measures to promote an agenda of demilitarization of the conflict zone of Artsakh and adjacent areas to prevent the proliferation of weapons in this area, military drills and operations;

UN Human Rights Council

- Prioritize the issue of genocides of small indigenous nations (including Armenians, Yezidis, Alevis, etc.) that happen in many locations throughout the world, take bold action and revisit the institutional mechanisms, as needed, to effectively solve ethnic conflicts and prevent future genocides and ethnic cleansing;
- Discuss the situation related to the existential threats faced by the indigenous Armenian population of Artsakh, and adopt effective measures to prevent ethnic cleansing and ensure long-term assurance of basic human rights and a safe environment;

UN Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups and Independent Experts

- **Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance:**

commission a country visit to Azerbaijan and use other tools to investigate the existing policies and practice of anti-Armenian racism, hate speech, and hate crimes, in order to develop a report and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the Security Council take action to put an end to impunity for inflammatory language and hate-driven actions of the Azerbaijani leadership, create accountability, including mandating a Special Procedure (sanctions) specific to Azerbaijan for the incitement to hatred and violence on grounds of racism, xenophobia and ethnic origin;

- **Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and to the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment:**

investigate Azerbaijan for war crimes and violations of the rights to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture and ill treatment of Armenian POWs and all other ethnic Armenians, and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the Security Council take action to ensure the return of all Armenian PoWs and detained persons, and demand accountability, including mandating a Special Procedure specific to Azerbaijan for the crime of aggression;

- **Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health:**

investigate and report on Azerbaijan's violation of the moratorium on armed conflict during the pandemic, and on the targeting of ambulances and destruction of medical facilities, all of which compromise the right to health in both the short- and long-term, and report and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the Security Council take action to demand accountability;

- **Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment:**

investigate Azerbaijan's illegitimate use of white phosphorous and other substances harmful to the environment, which compromise the self-sustainability of villages, and report and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the Security Council take action to demand accountability;

- **Special Rapporteur on the right to education:**

investigate Azerbaijan's aggressive actions attacking schools, depriving children of their right to education, the aggressive actions of the Azerbaijani military in areas close to the Lines of Contact both in Artsakh and Armenia, as well as investigate hate propaganda in Azerbaijan, including in textbooks and sentiments spread in educational establishments;

- **Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights:**

visit and investigate Azerbaijan's targeting, damaging or destroying of cultural monuments, as well as its altering and cultural appropriation of Armenian cultural monuments, and its refusal to return cultural property, and report and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council take action to demand accountability and to safeguard cultural monuments and historic sites currently under threat;

- **Special Rapporteur on the right to development, the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity, and the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights:**

address Artsakh's claim to self-determination within the framework of the 2014 interim report on self-determination NA/69/272 developed by the Independent Expert on the Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, and advocate that these Special Procedures report and recommend to the UN

Human Rights Council, the UN General Assembly, and the UN Security Council, to recognize and support self-determination for Artsakh with defensible borders, inclusive of all Armenian-inhabited communities prior to the conflict and secure contiguity with Armenia;

- **Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence:**

establish truth-seeking mechanisms to identify human rights violations and abuses and introduce trust-building measures between the Armenian and Azerbaijani nations;

- **Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances:**

investigate Azerbaijan's taking of civilians as hostages and all other detainees, regardless of the status Azerbaijan assigns to such persons, advocate for the release and repatriation of all ethnic Armenians, and report and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the Security Council take action to demand accountability;

- **Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination:**

investigate Azerbaijan's deployment of mercenaries, and Turkey's recruitment and transport of such mercenaries for deployment in Artsakh, and study Artsakh's claim to self-determination, and report and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the Security Council take action to demand accountability for the use of mercenaries;

UN Agencies and offices

- **UNHCR:**

study the circumstances of the forced displacement of persons, both in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the conditions for their possible return to their homes under the control of UNHCR, as prescribed in the trilateral statement of November 10, 2020; ensure equal treatment, opportunities and processes for Armenian and Azerbaijani displaced persons to prevent unjustified change to the demography of the region;

- **UNESCO:**

conduct an on-site visit to the territories under Azerbaijan's control to document and report the situation, meaningfully and successfully engage in the protection of Armenian cultural heritage, and prevent any further destructive acts, including unjustified appropriation or falsification of history;

- **UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and UN Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide:**

study and report to the Secretary General on the situation related to racism and ethnic cleansing in Artsakh to activate high-level actions directed at the prevention of genocide;

Committees on the Oversight of UN Conventions

- **UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR):**

investigate and request remedial action from Azerbaijan regarding all harms done by violating the moratorium on armed conflict during the pandemic, targeting, damaging and destroying ambulances and medical facilities, compromising access to health care in a pandemic; negatively impacting private and family life by targeting civilians, indiscriminate shelling of populations, destroying property and means of livelihood, and forced displacement via ethnic cleansing; damage to the environment reducing the self-sustainability of villages; damage and destruction of cultural monuments, historic sites, and undermining cultural heritage and identity; study the Artsakh claim to self-determination and, in the light of common covenant article 1(3), remind Azerbaijan of its good faith obligations to the covenants; report and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the Security Council take action to demand accountability;

- **UN Committee Against Torture (CAT), and to the Committee on Enforced Disappearances:**

inquire, investigate, and request remedial action from Azerbaijan for beheadings, summary executions, mutilations, and torture and ill-treatment of ethnic Armenians, including civilian hostages, PoWs, and those of any other status; demand immediate release and repatriation of all ethnic Armenians detained by Azerbaijan, regardless of the status ascribed by Azerbaijan; investigate Azerbaijan's failure to notify about ethnic Armenians detained; and report and recommend that the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the Security Council take action to create accountability, including mandating a Special Procedure specific to Azerbaijan;

- **UN Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT):**

organize a visit to meet all ethnic Armenian captives in Azerbaijan, regardless of the status ascribed by Azerbaijan; report and advocate for their humane treatment, and demand their release and repatriation;

- **CERD:**

considering Azerbaijan's policy and practice of anti-Armenian racism, as documented in CERD's concluding observations for the years 2001, 2005, 2009, and 2016, and considering the latest hate speech by President Aliyev himself, recognize and notify other State Parties of Azerbaijan's failure to act in good faith in regard to the Convention, and cooperate with the Human Rights Council for referral and action by the General Assembly and the Security Council to hold Azerbaijan accountable.

To Council of Europe Entities and Institutions:

- **European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI):**

considering Azerbaijan's long history of anti-Armenian racism, the recent war crimes as a manifestation of such racism, and President Aliyev's continued hate speech and incitement to discrimination and violence, call upon the Committee of Ministers to take up these issues and to establish accountability for Azerbaijan's continued violations;

- **European Committee on the Prevention of Torture (CPT):**

carry out ad hoc visits to Azerbaijan, meet with all ethnic Armenians detained by Azerbaijan, regardless of ascribed status, investigate and report on violations of the right to liberty and security, torture and ill treatment, and follow up on the implementation of CPT recommendations;

- **Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape:**

carry out an examination of the facts of demolition and alterations of Armenian cultural and religious monuments and heritage; investigate the use of white phosphorus on the forests of Artsakh and its consequences for the environment, human life and landscape, and present the situation to the Committee of Ministers;

- **Group of States against corruption (GRECO), and to Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), and to The Conference of the Parties under the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS No. 198):**

investigate the sources of funding and the payment of mercenaries by Turkey and Azerbaijan for deployment in Artsakh, as at least some mercenaries were recruited from terrorist factions of the Syrian National Army (SNA) backed by Turkey, and present a report with recommendations to the Committee of Ministers.

To Security- and Cooperation-Focused Institutions:

- **NATO:**

Investigate Turkey's involvement in the war against the ethnic Armenians of Artsakh, the legitimacy of the use of Turkish military equipment and personnel, as well as the deployment of Syrian mercenaries assigned the task of murdering Armenians; address continued joint Azerbaijani-Turkish military drills on the border of Artsakh and Armenia, and commit to the adhered human rights and democracy values with respect to the conflict and security matters in the region;

- **OSCE:**

Ensure the international protection of the people of Artsakh via an extended peacekeeping mission and the monitoring of the situation on the line of contact; discuss Azerbaijan's compliance with the principles of the OSCE and its aggression against Artsakh, as well as Armenia elaborating measures for accountability for racism and aggression;

- **OSCE Minsk Group:**

take urgent measures to ensure the adoption and entry into force of the international, legal and long-term mandate of the peacekeeping forces in Artsakh within the region before the end of 2024, in order to guarantee the safety of Artsakh's people after the expiry of the five-year term of the current Russian peacekeeping force; emphasize the focus of the group on the human dimension of the conflict rather than the political, and take urgent and effective measures for a peaceful resolution; take measures to promote an agenda of demilitarization of the line of contact in Armenia and Artsakh, especially in areas near human settlements, to prevent the proliferation of weapons in this area, military drills and operations, or the intimidation of the peaceful population; advocate for the removal of the joint monitoring center in the neighborhood of Artsakh and to ban the flow of their aircraft over the skies of Artsakh.

To Other International and Professional Organizations:

- **International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL):**

closely monitor and stop the sale or transfer of cultural heritage from Artsakh and return intercepted artifacts and cultural heritage to the Republic of Artsakh;

- **International Council of Museums (ICOM):**

include the cultural and religious portable monuments that appeared under Azerbaijan's control in the Red List published by the Organization, and denounce the destruction by Azerbaijan of Shushi's Geological Museum, Shushi's Historical Museum, Shushi's Museum of Fine Arts, and Hadrut's Museum of Homeland Studies named after Artur Mkrtchyan;

- **International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS):**

by resolution, denounce the destruction and vandalism of the cultural property of Artsakh by Azerbaijan; use the expertise of the members of the ICOMOS Scientific Committees and relevant ICOMOS National Committees to assess the significance of, and threats to, cultural property understood to be at risk; confirm the facts of the threats to, and the heritage and significance of the cultural property at risk; alert the public to the significance and threat to the cultural property at risk using ICOMOS networks to publicize the situation; and selectively act to support the conservation of the cultural property at risk.

To Individual States and EU:

- Call on Azerbaijan to immediately release and repatriate all ethnic Armenians detained by Azerbaijan, regardless of their ascribed status, as foreseen by the November 10, 2020 trilateral agreement;
- Call on the Human Rights Council to create a Special Procedure on Azerbaijan to investigate its systemic violations of human rights;
- Revise provision of military assistance to Azerbaijan, as relevant; end the supply/sales of military equipment, sharing of technology and military intelligence - given the potential use of those in realization of ethnic cleansing intents by this country;
- Adopt resolutions and impose sanctions on Azerbaijan for the abuse of human rights and corruption, including the unlawful influence on foreign officials for silencing the human rights abuses;
- Apply sanctions on Azerbaijani officials engaged in human rights abuses and corruption, including the bribery of foreign officials and laundering of proceeds of corruption - using the global financial system.

International organizations and individual member states must condemn Azerbaijan's aggression, which poses a challenge to the world order and a threat to the human dimension of international politics.

They must exert effort to stop the isolation of Artsakh and ensure accessibility for all, without restrictions on actors providing humanitarian assistance and reporting on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, including international governmental and non-governmental organizations, diplomatic missions, development projects, as well as international journalists and visitors - in order to put into action the UN principle of "leaving no one behind."

International organizations and individual member states must refrain from false equivalence fallacies, unaddressed and "balanced" calls to both states in a context where there is an obvious aggressor. Such calls are seen as neglect and indifference to the situation and contribute to the current environment of impunity and gross violations of human rights violations, harming the prospects for solving the conflict peacefully.

ANNEX. EXCERPTS FROM ANTI-ARMENIAN HATE SPEECHES AND INTERVIEWS OF ILHAM ALIYEV, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Below are some illustrative excerpts from the speeches and interviews of I. Aliyev during 2021 till February 2022 - emphasizing the problematic expressions.

08.01.2021, Meeting in a Video Format on Results of 2020²⁹³

We stopped when Armenia acknowledged its humiliating defeat, fell to its knees, threw in the towel and surrendered. I think this was a historic lesson for Armenia. They once again saw the greatness of the Azerbaijani people...

There are no moral frames for the hated enemy. They have no moral values. And yet I said that we could not act like them, we are Azerbaijanis, we are a self-respecting people. We have defeated the enemy on the battlefield. We have taught the enemy a lesson on the battlefield and they are still struggling to recover from it...

The whole world recognizes this territory as an integral part of Azerbaijan. Armenian foreign minister, who are you to go there? We warn you. If a similar step is repeated, our response will be very harsh. We first warned them through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further warnings will be given differently. Their visits there must stop. Let them sit in their own country and thank God that they have a country of their own. No-one should have any business in our territory...

... The Armenian army has been smashed to smithereens in 44 days. There is almost no Armenian army any more. The post-war situation shows that the Armenian armed forces are virtually completely destroyed today.

As a result, Armenia virtually fell to its knees and was forced to sign an act of capitulation on 10 November. Thus, Aghdam, Lachin and Kalbajar districts were returned to us without a single bullet being fired and without a single martyr.

15.01.2021, Laying Foundation Stones for Fuzuli-Shushi Highway and Fuzuli Airport in Fuzuli District, Visiting Shushi²⁹⁴

I remember some representatives of the Armenian separatist regime saying at the time that the Azerbaijani flag could be raised in Shusha only if Azerbaijan recognized the so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh republic" and then opened an embassy in Nagorno-Karabakh. Notice what disgusting and arrogant expressions they used. They are sitting like mice now, tight-lipped. They can't utter a word. We came here as winners, we raised our flag, the Azerbaijani flag is flying in all the liberated lands. We have come

293 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting in a Video Format on Results of 2020, January 8, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/President-Ilham-Aliyev-chaired-meeting-in-a-video-format-on-results-of-2020-coloredUPDATEDcolor-339614>.

294 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Laid Foundation Stones for Fuzuli-Shusha Highway and Fuzuli Airport in Fuzuli district, Visited the City of Shush, January 15, 2021, https://apa.az/en/xeber/nagorno_garabagh/President-Ilham-Aliyev-laid-foundation-stones-for-Fuzuli-Shusha-highway-and-Fuzuli-airport-in-Fuzuli-district-visited-the-city-of-Shush-coloredUPDATED-1color-340232.

here through fighting. Nobody gave us these lands. No negotiations were of any importance whatsoever. We saw that we had to liberate our lands on our own, and we did that. We have proved our strength to the whole world by crushing the enemy's head. We forced the enemy to kneel before us and sign the act of capitulation. This is what happened, and the humiliating act of capitulation will go down in history forever...

We had prepared properly for this war, and we made no secret of that. I have said many times, including in my meetings with the military, that if the enemy does not leave our lands of its own free will, we will force them out of our lands. Force will play a role, and so it happened....

15.02.2021, Visit to Fuzuli, Zangilan, Lachin and Jabrayil Districts with M.Aliyeva ²⁹⁵

This is also important because revanchist forces are trying to raise their heads in Armenia even today. They are trying to threaten Azerbaijan with more provocations and another war. They must understand that we are paying attention to everything, that we keep everything under control and will never allow Armenian fascism to raise its head again. We have destroyed Armenian fascism. We drove out the enemy out of our native lands, threw it out of here. It is safe to say that we have destroyed the Armenian army. There is no Armenian army. It has been defeated. There is neither equipment nor manpower left. They have acknowledged that they had 10,000 deserters during the war.

26.02.2021, Ceremony to Give out Apartments to Families of Martyrs and War Disabled was Held in Baku²⁹⁶

I must say that the blood of our martyrs did not remain unavenged. We have avenged the martyrs of the first Karabakh war and the martyrs of the second Karabakh war. We have taken revenge on the enemy, restored our territorial integrity and will forever cherish the memory of our martyrs in our hearts.

Of course, we were preparing for war all these years. We never concealed that because our lands were under occupation and we saw that a negotiated solution to this issue was impossible.

Armenia has never been in such a miserable state. It is their leaders who put them in this situation – both the leaders of the junta that led Armenia for 20 years, the Kocharyan-Sargsyan junta, and the government that came to power after it.

295 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Fuzuli, Zangilan, Lachin and Jabrayil Districts, February 15, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/President-Ilham-Aliyev-and-first-lady-Mehriban-Aliyeva-visited-Fuzuli-Zangilan-Lachin-and-Jabrayil-districts-colorredPHOTOcolor-colorredUPDATEDcolor-342602>.

296 Apa.az, Ceremony to Give out Apartments to Families of Martyrs and War Disabled Was Held in Baku, February 26, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/Ceremony-to-give-out-apartments-to-families-of-martyrs-and-war-disabled-was-held-in-Baku-colorredUPDATEDcolor-343485>.

The S-300, seven of which we destroyed, were provided free of charge, just as tanks, artillery and other air defense systems. We have destroyed them all. There is no Armenian army any more. It is gone.

The Armenian army is gone. It is not and should not be there. There should be no army in such a fascist state.

We control all the work. We will continue to strengthen our army. New contracts have been signed, the most modern weapons are being purchased and are already being imported. All modern weaponry available in the world has already been contracted and will be delivered to Azerbaijan. The war also raised the issue of the future of our army. The reforms that will take place will lead to the creation of a more agile, more combatant and more capable army.

We drove the Armenians out of our lands, reached the border and did not cross it.

We have shown that the people of Azerbaijan are victorious. We have shown that the people of Azerbaijan are combatant. They were on their knees before us. They have never been in such a bad situation. Should someone has punished them or not? They are challenging the whole world.

06.03.2021, Speech at the 7th Congress of the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP)²⁹⁷

Our entire people rallied into a single fist, inflicted crushing blows on the enemy and liberated our historical lands from the invaders. We have completed this historic mission.

The PFFA-Musavat tandem, which was then in power, pursued only its own interests. The random people who came to power are like twin brothers of those who came to power in Armenia in 2018. Inexperienced, illiterate, uncultured, incompetent, cowardly and deserters. Whatever epithets remain, anything negative would suit them. They governed Azerbaijan at the time...

From the first day of the war, the moral advantage was on our side. And not only because we were right and they were wrong. Armenian propaganda has poisoned the minds of the Armenian people so much that many of them may have believed that they were right in occupying our lands. I was saying that they need to be treated. They are sick, a virus more horrific than the coronavirus has settled in their bodies. This is what the Armenian politicians have led them to with their nationalism and racism, Azerbaijanophobia and Islamophobia. Not only because we were right. We received a moral advantage because all these years we lived with one goal: the restoration of our territorial integrity and the expulsion of the enemy from our lands.

²⁹⁷ Azertag, 7th Congress of New Azerbaijan Party Held, March 6, 2021, https://azertag.az/en/xeber/7th_Congress_of_New_Azerbaijan_Party_held_VIDEO-1727327.

16.03.2021, Visit to Fuzuli and Khojavand Districts with M.Aliyeva²⁹⁸

The so-called “Artsakh state” went to hell. If it was a “state”, then why didn’t they leave a single stone intact? Because they knew that this land was not theirs. This land is the land of Azerbaijanis.

We knew exactly that the Armenian army had been completely destroyed here and the surviving Armenian soldiers cowardly fled into hiding in the mountains.

20.03.2021, Address to the Nation on Novruz Holiday from Shusha²⁹⁹

We waged the war of the 21st century and destroyed the enemy. There is no Armenian army any more. We have destroyed it.

01.04.2021, Informal Summit of Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States in Video Conference Format³⁰⁰

We are already working very hard on the Zangazur corridor. I said at the summit in Nakhchivan that the decision to separate Zangazur from Azerbaijan and annex it to Armenia led to a geographical divide of the Turkic world. If we look at the map, it looks as if a dagger was stuck in our body and the Turkic world was divided. Zangazur, the land of ancient Azerbaijan, will now play the role of uniting the Turkic world because the transport, communication and infrastructure projects passing through Zangazur will unite the whole Turkic world and create additional opportunities.

14.04.2021, Speech at the Opening of the Military Trophy Park in Baku³⁰¹

I have opened the Military Trophy Park today. The enemy's equipment, crushed and taken as spoils of war, is further evidence of our strength and the enemy's defeat. The equipment demonstrated here represents only a small part of the enemy equipment we have destroyed and taken as spoils of war. We have destroyed and taken as spoils of war 125 artillery installations, 366 tanks, seven S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems, more than 50 other anti-aircraft missile systems, 522 trucks and other equipment.

The second Karabakh war is our glorious history. Our people will always be proud of this war. We have established ourselves in the world as a victorious people. Armenia, however, is a country that has suffered defeat, a country that has fallen on its knees

298 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Fuzuli and Khojavand Districts, March 16, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/President-Ilham-Aliyev-and-first-lady-Mehriban-Aliyeva-visited-Fuzuli-and-Khojavand-districts-colorredUPDATEDcolor-344719>.

299 Apa.az, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev Addressed Nation on Novruz Holiday from Shusha, March 20, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/President-of-Azerbaijan-Ilham-Aliyev-addressed-nation-on-Novruz-Holidayfrom-Shusha-colorredVIDEOcolor-345102>.

300 Apa.az, Informal Summit of Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States Was Held in Video Conference Format, April 1, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/foreign-politics/Informal-Summit-of-Cooperation-Council-of-Turkic-Speaking-States-was-held-in-video-conference-format-colorredUPDATEDcolor-345741>.

301 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Attended Opening of Military Trophy Park in Baku, April 14, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/President-Ilham-Aliyev-attended-opening-of-Military-Trophy-Park-in-Baku-colorredUPDATEDcolor-346597>.

before us, a country with a bowed head, and it will always be the case. Cows and pigs were kept in our mosques, they insulted the entire Muslim world, destroyed and plowed up graves, stole gold teeth even from buried people. If they are not savages, then who are they? Savages is perhaps too soft a word to describe them. The whole world saw what their ideological factor was. They are allegedly a cultured people living here in a minority, belonging to a large civilization and they are surrounded by wild Muslims. They were saying this at every corner in Europe. At every corner in Russia, they were saying – help us, otherwise they will strangle us here. Everyone can see now what their civilization, their culture and their morality are like. Someone who destroys and plows up graves, removes gold teeth from the dead and keeps pigs in a mosque is a barbarian. There is no other name for them. The whole world saw and will see even more of that here.

We simply must never forget Armenian barbarism. We are a very kind people. This is our advantage, but at the same time, one cannot be kind when there is a barbarian in front of you. We must give them an answer that they will forever preserve it in their historical memory, so that this is never erased from their memory. Certain revengeful forces raising their heads there today should know that the iron fist remains in place and, if necessary, we can strike them in such a way that all this will end forever.

You have glorified our people, the Azerbaijanis of the world. Our Victory is not only the victory of our people, the entire Turkic world is proud of it. We have created a new reality. We have created it by shedding blood, showing courage and driving away the enemy. Everyone should and will reckon with us from now on.

21.04.2021, Interview Given to the Azerbaijan Television³⁰²

In this war, we not only restored our territorial integrity but also destroyed Armenian fascism. This is a historic mission we have completed not only for the Azerbaijani people but also for the whole world. Armenian fascism has been destroyed. It has been destroyed by the Azerbaijani people. If certain revengeful forces raise their head in Armenia today, they should know that, if necessary, we will smash their heads at any moment. We cannot allow Armenian fascism the opportunity to raise its head again. We cannot allow Armenia to bring its army to a state that would pose threat to us again. If we see a potential threat, we will immediately eliminate it. Everyone should know this – both Armenia and its patrons, because it is an issue of national defense, a matter of national security for us.

We are implementing the Zangazur corridor, whether Armenia wants it or not. If they do, it will be easier for us to decide, if they do not, we will decide it by force. Just as before and during the war, I said that they must get out of our lands or we will expel them by force. And so, it happened. The same will apply to the Zangazur corridor.

302 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Interviewed by Azerbaijan Television, April 21, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/President-Ilham-Aliyev-interviewed-by-Azerbaijan-Television-coloredUPDATEDcolor-347302>.

Our main rival is time because the construction of a railway and a highway takes time. Therefore, all resources have been mobilized to implement this project. So, the Azerbaijani people will return to Zangazur, which was taken away from us 101 years ago.

28.04.2021, Visit to Jabrayil and Zangilan Districts with Mehriban Aliyeva³⁰³

Unfortunately, the revengeful forces in Armenia have raised their head yet again, are accusing us and making territorial claims. I want to warn them from here to stop these ugly deeds, or they will face a bitter end. We showed who was who during the patriotic war. An iron fist crushed the enemy's head. The recent military provocation against our border guards in the direction of Zangilan on the Azerbaijani-Armenian border should be the last such attempt. We showed restraint and did not respond to this provocation. But this is the last warning. If a similar attempt is made again, the enemy will be destroyed on the spot.

10.05.2021, Interview Given to the Azerbaijan Television³⁰⁴

“Our yet another historic achievement will be to connect Zangilan, in the Eastern Zangazur region, with our ancient land of Western Zangazur, with Nakhchivan, via Ordubad, and onwards with Turkey. I am sure that this will happen – I have no doubt about that. I want to repeat that Azerbaijan will fulfill its responsibilities and do its best to ensure that there are no problems with the implementation of this project”.

11.05.2021, Interview Given the Azerbaijan Television³⁰⁵

I want to say again that we are following these statements for the time being. Both the government and the opposition in Armenia, almost all elements involved in politics are voicing their views on the return of Shusha, on the return of Hadrut. We are still showing restraint. But they shouldn't play with fire. They have experienced our fist. Our fist is still in place. No-one can stand in front of us. If we see the slightest danger, the slightest danger, we will destroy them immediately. We will destroy them on the spot. And they know this too. We have the strength, we have the determination and we have the courage. The fist is also in place.

303 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Jabrayil and Zangilan Districts, April 28, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/President-Ilham-Aliyev-and-first-lady-Mehriban-Aliyeva-visited-Jabrayil-and-Zangilan-districts-coloredUPDATED-1color-347823>.

304 President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Azerbaijan Television, May 10, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbaefKKWc3c>; <https://president.az/en/articles/view/51454>.

305 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Azerbaijan Television, May 11, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-azerbaijan-television-updated-348903>.

12.06.2021, Receiving Credentials of Some Newly Appointed Non-resident Ambassadors³⁰⁶

Our proposal which is supported by big international actors to start negotiation on delimitation of state border with Armenia is also ignored by Armenian government. This is what we cannot understand. If Armenia wants peace, we need to have a peace agreement. If Armenia wants war, they will get the same result as they got last fall. If Armenia wants peace, they [Armenians] need to start negotiation with us on delimitation. If they don't do it, they will regret.

15.06.2021, Press Statement Following the Ceremony of Signing Shusha Declaration with President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan³⁰⁷

The second Karabakh war is now in the past. As a result of the 44-day war, the Armenian army was completely destroyed. Armenia was brought to its knees, waved the white flag, surrendered and was forced to sign an act of capitulation after the liberation of Shusha, after which our other districts were returned to us without a single shot being fired. The occupation, which lasted nearly 30 years, came to an end. Azerbaijan put an end to this with the support of brotherly Turkey. Thirty years of negotiations had yielded no results. This shows again that where there is a will, resolve, strength and justice, everything is possible. Of course, inspired by this support from an ally like Turkey in the second Karabakh war, Azerbaijan fulfilled its historic mission, restored justice and restored its territorial integrity.

26.06.2021, Meeting with Leadership and a Group of Military Personnel of Azerbaijani Army on Armed Forces Day³⁰⁸

...I said that we would never allow for the establishment of a second Armenian state on our historical lands. The first Armenian state was established on our historical lands. The whole world knows this now. Historians know this. I said that if someone wants to create a second state for the Armenians, they should create it in their own territory, not in the territory of Azerbaijan. This position was based on historical justice. We stated it and gave Armenia a chance. But they did not take this opportunity.

The April fighting was not a lesson for Armenia. Two years later, as a result of the Nakhchivan operation, we took over a large area, demonstrating our strength and professionalism once again. That did not serve them as a lesson either. Finally, the second Karabakh war was a lesson that they will remember forever. The second Karabakh war is our glorious history... We mobilized all our resources, won this war and drove the enemy out of our lands. We put the enemy in such a disgraceful situation

306 Apa.az, Azerbaijani President: If Armenia Wants Peace They Need to Start Negotiation with us on Delimitation, June 12, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/azerbaijani-president-if-armenia-wants-peace-they-need-to-start-negotiation-with-us-on-delimitation-351546>.

307 Apa.az, Azerbaijani, Turkish Presidents Made Press Statements, June 15, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/domestic-news/azerbaijani-turkish-presidents-made-press-statements-updated-351731>.

308 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Met with Leadership and a Group of Military Personnel of Azerbaijani Army on Armed Forces Day, June 26, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-met-with-leadership-and-a-group-of-military-personnel-of-azerbaijani-army-on-armed-forces-day-updated-352641>.

that they knelt before us, waved the white flag and were forced to sign an act of capitulation.

We showed strong resolve and courage. We demonstrated national spirit and achieved what we wanted. I want to say again that the second Karabakh war is forever inscribed in the history of Azerbaijan in golden letters as a glorious victory. From now on, Azerbaijan will live as a victorious state and Armenia as a defeated country.

We have already avenged the blood of the martyrs of the first and second Karabakh wars. We exacted our revenge on the battlefield. But at the same time, Armenia must understand that Azerbaijan will continue to grow, and this is beyond doubt.

14.07.2021, Presenting Apartments and Cars to Families of Martyrs and War Disabled in Khojasan Settlement³⁰⁹

...I must also say that there were no deserters during the war. There were more than 10,000 deserters in the Armenian army. Half of them fled the country and criminal proceedings were instituted against the other half. But then the Armenian leadership started wondering how they could arrest these 10,000 people. So he pardoned them. There were more than 10,000 deserters. There is this famous footage showing chained soldiers of the Armenian army in the trenches, they chained them to cars so that they would not run away. There was pervasive desertion in their army. This is our achievement. Not a single one of our servicemen escaped from the battlefield.

... Nevertheless, we are ready and must be ready for war at any moment. I said this in my statement on the Armed Forces Day on 26 June. We are implementing new plans for our army. However, we believe that the conflict has been resolved and we have restored our territorial integrity. We have won. We do not have any other issues on the agenda today. We have accessed our borders and taken control of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. There is no need for that because East Zangazur is our historical land. West Zangazur is our historical land. We cannot forget history. We cannot become hostages of anyone's political interests. Let them look up historical documents and maps and see when the Soviet government tore Zangazur apart from Azerbaijan and handed it over to Armenia. This is a relatively recent date – 101 years ago. So why should we say that this didn't happen? Why? We are telling the truth. It is the land of our ancestors: the whole of Zangazur – East and West Zangazur. It is now being said in Armenia that Ilham Aliyev is making territorial claims. If there is East Zangazur, then there is also West Zangazur. Yes, West Zangazur is our ancestral land. I said that we have to go back there. I said this 10 years ago. All my speeches are available in the media. I said that it is the land of our ancestors, that we must return there, we will return

309 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Attended Ceremony to Give out Apartments and Cars to Families of Martyrs and War Disabled in Khojasan Settlement, July 14, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/social-news/president-ilham-aliyev-attended-ceremony-to-give-out-apartments-and-cars-to-families-of-martyrs-and-war-disabled-in-khojasan-settlement-updated-353855>.

and we are already returning there. No-one can stop us. We will definitely return, because there is no other way.

When all communications are opened, we, the people of Azerbaijan will return to their ancestral land, of course. The 10 November Trilateral Declaration states: all refugees must return to their homeland. Our native land is Zangazur, our native land is Goycha district, Iravan. We will definitely return there.

Our proposal is the proposal of the winning country, the proposal of the strong side, the proposal of the victorious people. If there is a negative reaction to this in Armenia, it is up to them. But again, they will regret it. From now on, we will only move forward. We are systematically implementing plans for our construction work, and the construction work has already begun. As I said, we will turn Karabakh and East Zangazur into a paradise. People will return there and live comfortably in the land of their ancestors.

22.07.2021, Interview Given to the Azerbaijan Television³¹⁰

Indeed, Armenia's disappointment will last long because, as we can see, they have not yet learned the lesson from the war. Some of their inappropriate statements and steps indicate that they still have a lesson to learn. They shouldn't forget the second Karabakh war. While in Yerevan, Charles Michel described the border territories as disputed. To be honest, I also disagree with this expression because we believe that these territories are ours. I believe that this is the territory of Zangazur, and Zangazur is the land of our ancestors, so we are in our own territory.

Of course, this issue was discussed during the visit, and I tried to clarify that we had reached our border. Why did we reach it in May? Because the snow has melted. There was snow two or three meters thick. It was impossible to access the border. As soon as the snow melted, we went out, took the necessary points, settled there, strengthened and will strengthen our positions there. Therefore, Armenia's disappointment is caused by the fact that they are still daydreaming, of course. They cannot come to terms with the post-war realities. I believe that the psychological factor also plays a role here. Apparently, they need some time to get used to the new realities from a psychological point of view, because our Victory smashed all their ideological foundations to smithereens. For 30 years, they had been spreading utter lies about themselves, trying to force the world to accept that they have a supposedly victorious army, an invincible army, that the Armenian people have a fighting spirit and the Armenian army is the strongest. But what happened? We crushed it, we defeated it, we destroyed it in a matter of 44 days. We have shown that the Azerbaijani people are a victorious people. We showed that all their propaganda is nothing but a myth, mythology. We have demonstrated that in the first Karabakh war they gained an advantage thanks to external support. This is no secret to anyone. Of course, I understand that it is not easy to realize this, to live with this reality and to get used to

310 Azernews, President Aliyev Gives Interview to Azerbaijan Television, July 22, 2021, <https://www.azernews.az/nation/181483.html>.

it. Therefore, we must take this psychological reality into account. But at the same time, I have to say that Armenia should not make the same mistakes again because their inappropriate and unacceptable actions and statements cost them very dearly. The second Karabakh war showed this. Therefore, there is no need to waste breath. The fact that Charles Michel did not use the words “status” and “Nagorno-Karabakh” was a very wise step, of course. It was the step of a statesman. We appreciate this and Armenia must draw the right conclusion. There is neither a status nor Nagorno-Karabakh.

On 10 November, after the end of the war, I said where the status is. It is still there and it will stay there, burning in flames, forever. So there can be no other opinions on this issue either.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Russia visits Armenia and Azerbaijan to discuss issues in a bilateral format. In any case, our position remains unchanged – the Zangazur corridor must be opened. The sooner Armenia realizes this, the better for it.

14.08.2021, Interview Given to CNN Turk TV Channel³¹¹

My words were materialized, and Azerbaijan started the War of Salvation, liberated its historical lands from the occupiers, restored historical justice, expelled the occupiers from our lands and restored its territorial integrity.

Let Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other's territorial integrity and begin the process of delimitation, i.e. demarcation of borders. But we have not received a positive response from Armenia yet. It seems that Armenia is not ready for this or is opposed to it. I said that it would be a huge blunder and that they would regret it. Because we do not have to keep this proposal on the table forever. If they object to it, let them say it openly that they do not want to sign a peace agreement with Azerbaijan. In this case, we will pursue our policy accordingly.

I have said this and I want to say again that if Armenian fascism tries to raise its head ever again, we will crush it again. The defeat in the second Karabakh war should be a lesson for them.

17.08.2021, Visit to Kalbajar and Lachin Districts with M.Aliyeva³¹²

There has never been Armenian land here, and there never will be. This is the land of Azerbaijan. We, the Azerbaijanis, the owners of these lands, have returned. We have driven the enemy out of our lands, crushed the enemy army and returned here by showing heroism and self-sacrifice.

311 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by CNN Turk TV Channel, August 14, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-cnn-turk-tv-channel-full-text-355814>.

312 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Kalbajar and Lachin Districts, August 17, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-and-first-lady-mehriban-aliyeva-visited-kalbajar-and-lachin-districts-updated-355909>.

But they did not know that all the people of Azerbaijan lived with the dream of ending the occupation, expelling the enemy from our lands. And we returned to the land of our ancestors. We returned by crushing the Armenian army. We returned by crushing the head of Armenian fascism. We returned by punishing Armenian executioners. We returned by avenging the blood of our martyrs. We are back, we are here today and we will be here forever!

The second myth was that Armenian soldiers were “brave” and could prevail in any war. We have dispelled this myth as well. Armenian soldiers are deserters and cowards. They have acknowledged themselves, and this has been proven, that there were 10,000 fugitives in the Armenian army during the war. There was not a single deserter in the Azerbaijani Army. So this myth was also blown to smithereens. Armenian soldiers are deserters.

Yet another myth was associated to their so-called “military commanders”. They were saying that there were prominent generals and commanders in Armenia capable of fulfilling any military task...

Basarkechar district is called Vardenis in Armenia, but the real name of this district is Basarkechar, Goycha region, ancient Azerbaijani land. Basarkechar district was established in the territory of Armenia in 1930. The absolute majority of those living there were Azerbaijanis. Residents of Zod village were also Azerbaijanis. They were deported from Armenia. Only in June 1969, Armenia renamed Basarkechar district to Vardenis. I request that the name Basarkechar, not Vardenis, be restored to our general lexicon when reports are prepared from this region of Azerbaijan. All other ancient Azerbaijani settlements located in the territory of present-day Armenia should be called by their real names. For example, I have been following the media coverage of the tensions on the Nakhchivan-Armenian border. Our media write about what is happening in and around the Armenian village of Yeraskh. The name of this village is Arazdayan, and Azerbaijanis used to live there prior to deportation. Therefore, all ancient, i.e. historical names must be restored. These names are also available in various books. Therefore, I request that both journalists and the general public use real names of these places – not Vardenis but Basarkechar district, Basarkechar city...

After the snow melted in May³¹³, we approached these borders, took our positions, settled in Zangazur and reinforced our positions there. This is our land. The opinions expressed in Armenia are completely unfounded. We are on our own land. Lake Garagol and other places are ours. We are here now. ...

Because both Karabakh and Zangazur are our historical ancestral lands. The Karabakh economic region includes all the regions of the Karabakh region. The East Zangazur economic region covers the regions belonging to East Zangazur. West Zangazur is currently under Armenian control. But as a result of the construction of the Zangazur corridor, of course, we will use this corridor to return our citizens to their

313 Barron's, Aliyev Talks about the Incident Dated Back May 12, 2021, When Azerbaijani Soldiers Crossed the Border, It Was an Invasion and Few State Leaders Called Baku to Leave the Armenian Territory, <https://www.barrons.com/news/azerbaijani-troops-must-leave-armenian-territory-macron-01622550013>.

ancestral lands. There are such plans, and this is only natural. Because our citizens were deported from the territory of present-day Armenia – not only from Zangazur district, but also from Goycha district, which borders here. So they have the right to go and live on their ancestral land. We are keeping that for the next stage.

26.08.2021, Presenting Apartments and Cars to Families of Martyrs and Heroes of the War Together with Mehriban Aliyeva³¹⁴

Today, Armenia openly admits that it cannot provide for its own security, protect its borders and live at its own expense. Under such circumstances, there can be no talk of independence. It is completely unfounded to call Armenia an independent country. Because the absolute majority of the features of an independent country are not present in the Armenian state. The reason is their policy of aggression. If they had heeded my words and vacated our lands on time, they would not have been in such a disgraceful situation. As a result, they still had to follow my words. I said that they should get out of our lands. They did get out of there. As a result, what I said proved right, but they only lost time. Everyone can see what state Armenia is in today. Of course, they will experience the shock of the bitter defeat for many years to come...

After the war, the whole world saw the predatory face of Armenian savagery. They can see that Armenians have destroyed our mosques, more than 60 mosques have been destroyed. Armenians kept cows and pigs in our mosques. This is an insult to the entire Muslim world. I once again turn to the leaders of all Muslim countries and say to you – never forget this, do not turn a blind eye to this, do not ignore this. The Armenian leadership has insulted the entire Muslim world. It was Armenians who destroyed graves and sold gravestones, it was Armenians who removed the golden teeth of the dead, it was Armenians who demolished our mosques and houses. It was also Armenians who demolished our houses. Everyone can and must see this. We regularly take foreign guests, journalists, politicians and public figures to the liberated lands so that they can see and know that we have not only liberated our territory from occupation, we have liberated the whole region from Armenian fascism.

30.08.2021, Opening of Vagif Poetry Days in Shusha³¹⁵

Even in a ruined state, even during the occupation when it was vandalized, Shusha was able to preserve its spirit, its stature. It did not bend, did not break, it waited for us. We had to come, and we did. We have come here as a victorious people. We did not come through negotiations, not as a result of any concessions made by Armenia, but by shedding blood, by giving martyrs, by showing self-sacrifice on the battlefield, by restoring our territorial integrity and by restoring our national dignity...

314 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and Mehriban Aliyeva Presented Apartments and Cars to Families of Martyrs and Heroes of Patriotic War, August 26, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-and-mehriban-aliyeva-presented-apartments-and-cars-to-families-of-martyrs-and-heroes-of-patriotic-war-updated-356530>.

315 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening of Vagif Poetry Days in Shusha, August 30, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-and-first-lady-mehriban-aliyeva-attended-opening-of-vagif-poetry-days-in-shusha-updated-2-356762>.

The hated enemy was building the so-called parliament of the self-styled “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” there. This was intended to annoy us. There is no concept of a “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic”. The foundation of that building had already been laid and stonework had already been completed. By my order, this devil's lair was destroyed.

07.09.2021, Meeting in a Video Format with Farid Gayibov on his Appointment as Minister of Youth and Sports³¹⁶

The feelings of patriotism must come to the fore in this. Of course, our bright and historic victory in the Second Karabakh War must play the key role in educating young people. Every single day of the 44-day war is dear to us. The memory of our martyrs who gave their lives for the homeland is dear and sacred to us, and young people should be educated on the basis of these examples. Our young people will grow up as representatives of a victorious nation. This has a great moral and psychological meaning. Azerbaijan was a country under occupation for many years. We, the Azerbaijanis, lived as a people expelled from our homeland by the enemy, we lived in suffering, we experienced both physical and spiritual torment. But we put an end to it. From now on, we will forever live as a victorious people, as a victorious country, as a proud people. Your ministry has a great responsibility to keep this glorious history alive, to protect it and to educate the youth on the basis of that.

24.09.2021, Speech in a Video Format Presented at the Annual General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly³¹⁷

The despotic warlords, who came to power in Armenia as a result of coup d'état and ruled for 20 years from 1998 to 2018, were completely doomed to failure in achieving their nefarious dreams and goals during the three-decade-long occupation of Azerbaijan's territories. On the contrary, Armenia has become a failed state, as I had emphasized in my statement at the UN General Assembly in 2017. The country has been weakened to the extent that it cannot even guard its own borders by itself. “Azerbaijanophobia” promoted by the government is on the rise in Armenia. Racist ideology cultivated in Armenian society based on ethnic hatred and demonization is the root cause of ethnic cleansing and unprecedented vandalism in the formerly occupied lands of Azerbaijan by Armenia.

Despite the regime change in Armenia, the fascist ideology continues to dominate in the country. Successive Armenian governments have glorified Nazism in the person of Nazi general Garegin Nzhdeh who has been turned into “national hero” in Armenia. While the progressive world is fighting against the rise of neo-fascism, the then president of Armenia inaugurated the monument of Garegin Nzhdeh in capital Yerevan

316 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Received in a Video Format Farid Gayibov on His Appointment as Minister of Youth and Sports, September 7, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/III-sector/president-ilham-aliyev-received-in-a-video-format-farid-gayibov-on-his-appointment-as-minister-of-youth-and-sports-357295>.

317 Azertag, Speech of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in Video Format Was Presented at the Annual General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, September 24, 2021, https://azertag.az/en/xeber/Speech_of_President_of_Azerbaijan_Ilham_Aliyev_in_video_format_was_presented_at_the_annual_general_debate_of_the_76th_session_of_the_UN_General_Assembly_VIDEO-1883881.

in 2016. Azerbaijan defeated not only Armenian occupying forces, but also Armenian fascism. If we see again any danger to our sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of our people we will exercise our legitimate right to self-defense without any hesitation.

24.09.2021, Interview Given to Russia's "Nasionalnaya Oborona" Magazine³¹⁸

Unfortunately, questions about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh are still being raised, which is completely unpromising and, I think, harmful and dangerous for Armenia in its current deplorable state. Because they should not forget the lessons of the second Karabakh war. If Armenia continues to have territorial claims against Azerbaijan, it will be difficult for Azerbaijan to refrain from territorial claims against Armenia. We have more grounds for this in terms of the historical belonging of Zangazur and the region of Lake Goycha. We have more historical prerequisites for territorial claims. But we are not putting them forward. Why does Armenia, having been defeated and having signed an act of surrender, consider itself entitled to speak about some kind of a status for Nagorno-Karabakh? A status for something that doesn't exist. There is no Nagorno-Karabakh.

24.09.2021, Speech in a Video Format Presented at the Annual General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly³¹⁹

One of the areas that can serve as the cause of peace and cooperation is transportation projects. In this context, the Zangazur corridor connecting mainland Azerbaijan with its inseparable part Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and Turkey will create new opportunities for our region. Azerbaijan has created a new reality in the Southern Caucasus region which has to be taken into account by all. Armenia has to make a choice between regional cooperation and illegal and baseless territorial claims against its neighbors. The international community should also play its positive role in this regard and urge Armenia to realize that peace has no alternative. Any acts directly or indirectly supporting revanchism and militarization in Armenia must be ceased.

27.09.2021, Address to Nation on the Occasion of the Remembrance Day³²⁰

...The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been consigned to history. There is no administrative territory called "Nagorno-Karabakh" in Azerbaijan, and if someone wants to resurrect the dead entity called "Nagorno-Karabakh", let them resurrect it in their own territory, create an entity called "Nagorno-Karabakh" in their territory, create a republic or an association. And we recognize it, but not in Azerbaijan! This issue has

318 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Gave Interview to Russian Influential "Natsionalnaya Oborona" Magazine, September 24, 2021, <https://apa.az/public/index.php/en/xeber/official-chronicle/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-russias-prestigious-magazine-nasionalnaya-oborona-358512>.

319 Official Website of the President, Speech of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in Video Format Was Presented at the Annual General Debate of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, September 24, 2021, <https://en.president.az/articles/53197>.

320 Apa.az, Victorious Commander-in-Chief, President Ilham Aliyev Addressed the Nation on the Occasion of the Remembrance Day, September 27, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/victorious-commander-in-chief-president-ilham-aliyev-addressed-the-nation-on-the-occasion-of-the-remembrance-day-video-updated-358654>.

been resolved. I say this as President of Azerbaijan and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Everyone must and will reckon with these words.

Although a year has passed since the war, the entire international community has already acknowledged and accepted our victory.

In 44 days, we have not only restored our territorial integrity, we have not only expelled the enemy from our land, we have not only restored our national dignity, we have also smashed the head of Armenian fascism. Anyone visiting the liberated lands today can see the manifestations of Armenian savagery with their own eyes. All our cities have been razed to the ground, all our historical sites and mosques have been completely destroyed or desecrated by the Armenians. Of the 67 mosques, 65 are completely destroyed, while the rest of our half-destroyed mosques were used by the hated enemy to keep animals, cows and pigs in order to insult us, to insult Muslims all over the world. I am confident that Muslims of the world will respond adequately to that. I receive letters from many Muslim countries about this issue. We are doing tangible work to circulate information about Armenian atrocities committed in the years of occupation, about Armenian fascism. We are informing and will continue to inform the whole world about this. Therefore, our victory, as I said, is a victory over Armenian fascism.

There has been a change of government in Armenia, but the nature of the enemy does not change. The Azerbaijanophobia and Islamophobia, which are rampant in Armenia, have reached the level of mental illness. Hatred against the Azerbaijanis has become an official ideology there. Otherwise, so much atrocity would not have been committed. Anyone who comes to the liberated lands is terrified. This couldn't have been done by humans. I can even say this couldn't have been done by animals either. The perpetrators of this are depraved, impertinent, Azerbaijani-phobic mass, a tribe. It cannot be described in any other way, and the whole world should see that. Armenia's patrons should see that. Even though they are reluctant to see this, they must and they will see this. We will show that, we will show the whole world whom we have taught a lesson and what evil we have saved our region from. After all, shouldn't the enemy who plundered and destroyed all our historical sites, national treasures and resources for 30 years have been taught a lesson?

Armenian fascism has been destroyed, but its manifestations are visible. This is a very dangerous trend, especially for the Armenian state proper. I am saying this today, on the Day of Remembrance, revering the memory of our martyrs, that if we see Armenian fascism rising again, if we see a new threat being posed to our people and state, we will crush Armenian fascism again without any hesitation whatsoever. Everyone should know this! The Iron Fist, the symbol of war and victory, is still in place, and let no-one forget about that!

28.09.2021, Interview Given to France 24 TV Channel³²¹

“Therefore, my words may seem rude, but the main purpose of those words was to warn Armenian leadership, and Armenian political establishment, that any sign of revanchism, any sign of threat to our people and our statehood and our territorial integrity will be responded, and they know how we respond and the second Karabakh war showed that they have no chance in front of us. We don't want to start war, we don't need it. We never needed during the years of negotiations but now, I think it's time to warn them to give up the efforts of revanchism and to look to the future.

Therefore, any kind of statement that the conflict is not resolved are not only inappropriate, but very dangerous. If it is not resolved, then those who say that they should say how it should be resolved. What they understand when they say things like Nagorno-Karabakh? In which boundaries? In which area? In what form? There is no even a hint to answer those questions. Therefore, saying that the conflict is not resolved is counter-productive, and dangerous. It means that there should be other, maybe hostile actions in order to resolve it.

04.10.2021, Speech at Raising the Azerbaijani Flag in Sugovushan Settlement, Tartar District³²²

In other words, it shows again what an ugly enemy we were faced with. They used every opportunity to cause damage to us. As a result of the liberation of the Sugovushan settlement and the re-establishment of control over the reservoir, the Armenian state lost these opportunities.

Another important aspect of the liberation of this settlement, I want to say again, is the further strengthening of our moral and psychological superiority.

Of course, the Armenian army and personnel were in a deep moral and psychological shock. They were terrified, and, of course, in the following period, from 3 October until the last minutes of the war, the Armenian army remained in fear. It is no coincidence that there were more than 10,000 deserters in the Armenian army. They realized that they could not stand in front of us...

... If Serzhik is a man, let him come here instead of talking of manhood. He talks about manhood in the Caucasus. First of all, his nation has nothing to do with the Caucasus. They are a settlers here and everyone knows where they came from.

...By saying these words, I do not respond to an element that only opens his ugly mouth to utter some nonsense, someone giving off the smell of naphthalene. I appeal to people like him all over Armenia, to all those who cherish revanchist sentiments -

321 Azertag, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by France 24 TV Channel, September 28, 2021, https://azertag.az/en/xeber/President_Ilham_Aliyev_was_interviewed_by_France_24_TV_channel_VIDEO-1887799.

322 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Raised Azerbaijani Flag in Sugovushan Settlement, Tartar District, October 4, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-raised-azerbaijani-flag-in-sugovushan-settlement-tartar-district-updated-359154>.

come to your senses. The iron fist is still there, it has not gone anywhere, it is still in place. Don't upset us and behave. If you behave, then you can live safely. But if there are further provocation, statements or actions against us, we will crush your head without looking at anyone. No-one can protect you.

05.10.2021, Meeting with Members of Jabrayil General Public, Laying Foundation of Memorial Complex and Restoration of City³²³

“...Everyone who comes here can see these ruins and witness Armenian savagery and vandalism. This atrocity, this vandalism was committed during the occupation. There could not have been so much destruction during the war. During the occupation, the Armenians were engaged in looting and robbery, tearing down all houses and buildings, but the whole world turned a blind eye to this.

I want to say once again that by showing heroism and selflessness, by shedding blood and giving martyrs, we have restored historical justice, expelled the enemy from our land and taught the enemy the necessary lessons. The enemy fell to its knees before us, waved the white flag, and from now on the people of Azerbaijan will forever live as a victorious people.

The whole world must see that not only did we defend ourselves, we have also restored our territory and broken the back of Armenian fascism.

There are no traces left of the myths they had been inventing for 30 years. Where is their “victorious” army? Where is the “invincible” Armenian soldier? Those engaged in ugly propaganda against us for 30 years and trying to humiliate the dignity of the Azerbaijani people have already taken their share, have learned their lesson. No-one in the world is saying a word about “victorious Armenian soldiers”. After all, what kind of bravery and heroism can we talk about in an army of 10,000 deserters? Nobody talks about the “invincible Armenian army” any more. There is no Armenian army. We have crushed it. We have destroyed it from the bottom up.

They must give up the mythical Armenian fantasy from sea to sea. They must and will give up their territorial claims against Azerbaijan and Turkey. There is no other way. We will force them to do that.

When I say that we will not allow any provocation against us in Armenia, I mean exactly that. It is our legitimate right. If we see a threat, if we see a small manifestation of danger, we will take the necessary steps, and no-one can stop us, no-one can stand in front of us.

We have restored international law, historical justice and human justice. Because this destruction was not caused by humans. One can't call them humans.

323 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Met with Members of Jabrayil General Public, Laid Foundation of Memorial Complex and Restoration of City, October 5, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-met-with-members-of-jabrayil-general-public-laid-foundation-of-memorial-complex-and-restoration-of-city-updated-359271>.

10.10.2021, Meeting with Members of General Public of Khojavand District³²⁴

This shows yet again that the Armenian propaganda was based on lies during the occupation, during the war and in the post-war period. Their history is false, their past is false, their statehood is false and their mythology is false. Armenians of the world have simply created the false impression in the countries where they live that the Armenian people have allegedly lived on these lands for centuries.

26.10.2021, Statement to the Press after Meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Zangilan Region³²⁵

“The Zangazur corridor passing through here will unite the whole Turkic world. Both Azerbaijan and Turkey are taking practical steps to implement the Zangazur corridor. I am confident that these steps will bear fruit in the near future. Today, my dear brother and my guests laid the foundation of a major highway. This highway is also part of the Zangazur corridor. As a result of the construction of this highway and railway, we will achieve our goal...”

08.11.2021, Speech Made in Front of Servicemen in Shusha³²⁶

“...From now on, no songs will be sung here in a strange language and no inappropriate statements will be made in this land and under this sky. From now on, it will be the Azerbaijani language that will dominate this land, as has been the case throughout history – calls to prayer in the Shusha mosque, the sound of the mugham in the Jidir Duzu, poems in front of the mausoleum of Vagif. That is the reality.

During the occupation, Armenia invented myths about its army and its alleged warriors: “the invincible Armenian army”. Where is this invincible army now? Where is the Armenian army? It has been blown to smithereens, we crushed them in a matter of 44 days. They begged for help and were on their knees. Accepting our conditions, they signed an act of capitulation in the early hours of 10 November and waved the white flag.

... If any force in Armenia looks askance at us or engages in revanchist tendencies, it will see our fist. Our fist is still in place...

324 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Met with Members of General Public of Khojavand District, October 10, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-met-with-members-of-general-public-of-khojavand-district-359593>.

325 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev: “Both Azerbaijan and Turkey Are Taking Steps to Realize the Zangazur Corridor”, October 26, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/foreign-politics/president-ilham-aliyev-both-azerbaijan-and-turkey-are-taking-steps-to-realize-the-zangazur-corridor-360687>.

326 Azertag, President, Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev made Speech in Front of Servicemen in Shusha, November 8, 2021, <https://azertag.az/en/xeber/President-Commander-in-Chief-of-Armed-Forces-Ilham-Aliyev-made-speech-in-front-of-servicemen-in-Shusha-VIDEO-1920726>.

12.11.2021, Speech at the 8th Summit of Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States³²⁷

As for Zangazur, I would like to remind you of my speech at the Nakhchivan summit. At that time, I said that in 1920, the Soviet government disrupted the geographical connection of the Turkic world by tearing Zangazur from Azerbaijan and handing it over to Armenia, and anyone can see this by looking at the map. We are restoring this geography now. With the implementation of transport and communication projects, we are redrawing this geography, and I do hope that we will succeed to the end”.

28.11.2021, Remarks at the 15th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Ashgabat³²⁸

“All cities and villages, including cultural and religious heritage sites of Azerbaijan have been totally wiped out by Armenia during the occupation. In total disrespect and hatred to all Muslims, Armenia has destroyed and desecrated our mosques, including by using them as stables for pigs and cows. 65 out of 67 mosques situated in the formerly occupied territories have been totally destroyed and the two remaining have been seriously damaged...”

"At the last ECO summit, I informed my colleagues about the Zangazur corridor. Today I can say that the Zangazur corridor becomes a reality. This new transport infrastructure will be an important part of the East-West and North-South corridors. I am confident that ECO Member States will benefit from this corridor."

06.12.2021, Speech at the Meeting with the Residents of Gonagkend Settlement of Guba District³²⁹

“Armenia has seen that. The whole world has seen that. No-one has been able to stop us. There were those who wanted to stop us during the war, there were fairly strong circles, but they could not stop us. I said that they should give us a timetable of when they would vacate our lands, and we were ready to stop the war. I say the same thing today. I tell them to give us a date of when the Zangezur corridor will be opened, and there will be no problem in this case. Therefore, I think that both the Armenian leadership and the Armenian public must understand this. We have achieved what we wanted, and we will do that again. It would be better if this issue were resolved constructively through negotiations and mutual understanding. Because the second Karabakh war showed the resolve, strength and unity of our people to the whole world.

327 Apa.az, Istanbul hosted 8th Summit of Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States, November 12, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/foreign-politics/istanbul-hosted-8th-summit-of-cooperation-council-of-turkic-speaking-states-photo-updated-361802>.

328 Apa.az, President of Azerbaijan: In Total Disrespect and Hatred to All Muslims, Armenia Has Destroyed and Desecrated Our Mosques, November 28, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/foreign-politics/president-of-azerbaijan-in-total-disrespect-and-hatred-to-all-muslims-armenia-has-destroyed-and-desecrated-our-mosques-362785>.

329 Apa.az, Azerbaijan's President: "I Tell Them to Give Us a Date of When the Zangezur Corridor Will be Opened, and There Will be No Problem in this Case", December 6, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/azerbajians-president-i-tell-them-to-give-us-a-date-of-when-the-zangezur-corridor-will-be-opened-and-there-will-be-no-problem-in-this-case-363383>.

16.12.2021, Interview Given to the Spanish “El Pais” Newspaper³³⁰

“We won the war, and we are the winner and this reality should be taken into account. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been resolved. There is no return to any kind of discussions about the so-called status of Nagorno-Karabakh, or something of that. We resolved it ourselves by force and by political means...”.

...Therefore, we will be very closely watching all their maneuvers, all their regroupings and all their attempts to once again create the military potential that can be a danger for us. If we see it happens, we will destroy it immediately and they know it. And international players know it. If we see positive dynamics, we definitely will take advantage of that and make contribution to strengthen peace”.

No one before us conducted the war in such a way. It was not only drones it was a very accurate reconnaissance. It was the integration of, as you said, drones from both countries-Turkey and Israel. The Israeli drones we have the surveillance drones and the Kamikaze drones, Turkish drones we have the surveillance drones and the fighter drones. And to integrate this in a single military operation, of course, was not easy. The same with our air defense system... We continue that, because as I said, there is still a threat of Armenian revanchism. There is still a threat of destabilization. So, we must be always ready to defend our border.”

16.12.2021, Speech at the Eastern Partnership Summit of European Union in Brussels³³¹

President Ilham Aliyev noted that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been resolved by Azerbaijan itself by military-political means. “The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict no longer exists. We have to look to the future.”

24.12.2021, Opening of Military Unit in Hadrut Settlement³³²

The 44-day second Karabakh war led to a complete destruction of the Armenian army. There is no Armenian army now. I have said this many times here in Hadrut, a district of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region and a settlement of Khojavand district, and I can say it again – there is no Armenian army today. If Armenia tries to become a source of danger for us again, their end will be the same as in the second Karabakh war. We can never allow any threat to be posed to our people, our state and our territorial integrity. Even if it is outside the country and if we see it as a threat, no-one can stop us.

330 El Pais, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Spanish El Pais Newspaper, December 16, 2021,

https://www.einnews.com/pr_news/558511386/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-spanish-el-pais-newspaper.

331 Azertag, President Ilham Aliyev Attended Eastern Partnership Summit of European Union in Brussels, December 16, 2021, https://azertag.az/en/xeber/President_Ilham_Aliyev_attended_Eastern_Partnership_Summit_of_European_Union_in_Brussels_VIDEO-1952602.

332 Apa.az, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended Opening of Military Unit in Hadrut Settlement, December 24, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/official-news/president-victorious-commander-in-chief-ilham-aliyev-attended-opening-of-military-unit-in-hadrut-settlement-updated-364588>.

On the basis of new contracts, the most modern weapons and equipment are already being delivered to Azerbaijan for the needs of our Army. We never concealed that and repeatedly demonstrated it in military parades during the occupation. The acquisition of military equipment, the increase in military spending, as well as the increasing salaries of servicemen – all these are obvious – show that even though the war is over, the process of building the army will not stop. On the contrary, the war experience has shown us our strengths and weaknesses. We didn't have many shortcomings during the war, but we did. Therefore, the war was a valuable experience for us. Since the war ended, weapons and equipment meeting modern requirements have been purchased and new armed units have been formed. There are representatives of the new military unit, the commando forces in this military unit in Hadrut today. The establishment of a commando brigade is a novelty for us. Not one, not two, but many commando brigades are already being established in Azerbaijan, and these brigades will be capable of performing any military task. Our well-trained children have shown great determination and readiness to sacrifice themselves for the Motherland and will serve in these brigades. This will greatly increase the strength of our army. I want to say again that there will be many such brigades and thousands of our servicemen will serve in these brigades. Thus, the Azerbaijani Army will continue to maintain its professionalism and fighting spirit.

Yes, Armenian tanks did come to Baku, but we brought them. We displayed them in the military parade in Azadlig Square, in the Victory parade. Today, they are displayed in the Military Trophy Park as a manifestation of the strength of the Azerbaijani Army and the Armenian army's defeat. From now on, we will always live as a victorious nation and a victorious state.

25.12.2021, Visit to Shusha with M.Aliyeva and Family Members³³³

We are in a free Karabakh today. We are in a free Zangazur today. We, the owners of these lands, have returned to these lands, and from now on we will live in these lands forever.

31.12.2021, Address to the Nation on the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year³³⁴

At the same time, we will continue to increase our military strength. In 2021, tangible steps have been taken in this direction, new weapons and equipment have been purchased and will continue to be purchased. At the same time, great importance is being attached to the training of our military units. In the second Karabakh war, the whole world saw the military power of Azerbaijan. The special forces of the Ministry of Defense are already recognized all over the world. Their heroism, selflessness and professionalism have become an epic. I must also say that a new military unit has been

333 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and Family Members Visited Shusha City, December 25, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-first-lady-mehriban-aliyeva-and-family-members-visited-shusha-city-updated-364606>.

334 Apa.az, Address of President Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, January 1, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/domestic-policy/address-of-president-ilham-aliyev-on-the-occasion-of-the-day-of-solidarity-of-world-azerbaijanis-and-the-new-year-365056>.

established in Azerbaijan this year – the Commando Forces. These Commandos are ready to perform any military task, and their number is constantly growing and will continue to grow. Thus, the creation of a new agile, professional armed force with great capabilities gives us reason to say that we must be ready for the protection of our lands and borders at any moment. Some incidents on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in 2021 showed that Azerbaijan retains the upper hand.

13.01.2022, Interview Given to Local TV Channels³³⁵

...Unfortunately, there are strong revanchist sentiments in Armenia, both in the government and in the opposition, and also in society.

Today, the Armenian army is in a completely dilapidated state and is incapable of resisting us on a scale greater than in the second Karabakh war. We are closely following all military-building efforts in Armenia both with their own forces and with the help of their partners. Therefore, I have sincerely and openly stated that if we see even the slightest threat to our security, we will immediately crush it no matter where it is and no matter how deep it is in the territory of Armenia. Everyone, first of all, the Armenian leadership should know and understand this.

31.01.2022, Interview Given to Azerbaijan State News Agency³³⁶

Armenia, on the other hand, was defeated on the battlefield. They had 10,000 deserters. They have been completely humiliated. Look at the ugly deeds they wanted to stop us with. But the people of Azerbaijan, even the people who came out from under the rubble, bleeding people, those who lost their loved ones were saying that we should only move forward. No-one and nothing could have stopped us. We took revenge for these innocent people, for our martyrs on the battlefield. We brought Armenia to its knees and defeated it. We defeated Armenian fascism and restored justice.

So this memory should not be erased. We must not forget this Armenian savagery. The war is over. Yes, we say there must be peace. But we must never forget the Armenian savagery and Armenian fascism. We must not forget the victims of Khojaly. We must never forget the victims of Ganja and the victims of our other cities. We bow our heads to their holy spirit and say once again that their blood did not remain on the ground. Perhaps this is a consolation for their loved ones. At the same time, we say that we are a victorious people. We are a victorious state. We have defeated Armenian fascism. We must ensure that Armenian fascism never arises again.

This shows that Armenian fascism is still alive. Yes, we defeated Armenian fascism in the second Karabakh war, in the Patriotic War. I can say that Armenian fascists are

335 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Local TV channels, January 13, 2022, <https://apa.az/en/social/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-local-tv-channels-video-updated-365799>.

336 Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Azerbaijan State News Agency, January 31, 2022, <https://apa.az/en/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-azerbaijan-state-news-agency-updated-367173>.

not as active now as they were in previous years. But we can see that fascism is on the rise in Armenia. Former fascist leaders of Armenia, child murderers Sargsyan and Kocharyan are rising up and trying to challenge us again. We have defeated them. We brought them to their knees. They will go down in history as deserters. Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan will remain in the history of the Armenian people as deserters. Because as the Azerbaijani Army approached Shusha, they fled Khankandi like cowards.

We have not only liberated our lands, we have cleansed the region, the South Caucasus, of these savage forces. I repeat that they are in a humiliated state now, but no-one can guarantee that they will not rise again. We will never allow Armenian fascism to rise in our region. We can never allow Armenia to become a potential threat to Azerbaijan again. If we see that, we will destroy it on the spot. Everyone should know this.

02.02.2022, Speech at Youth Forum on 25th Anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth³³⁷

Because we have raised such a generation that even young people who did not see Karabakh and who did not experience that bitter history were ready to die for Karabakh, for the Motherland, for national dignity, to become martyrs, to become wounded but raise the glory of our victorious Army. If this policy did not exist, if young people were not educated in the spirit of patriotism, it would be impossible to know what the consequences of the war would be.

In other words, Shusha is an alien city for Armenians. After the second Karabakh war, the Armenian leader said the same thing and repeated my words. If it were an Armenian city, then why is it in such a bad condition? Why didn't you look after this city? Why did you dry up all the springs? Why did you demolish all historical sites? Of course, these historical sites belong to the Azerbaijani people. Given the Armenian fascist nature, this is not a surprise to us. Palaces and mosques were destroyed by Armenian savages.

Because Armenia also tried to fight us on social networks, but their struggle was similar to the struggle in the war – very low and cowardly. Their method of struggle was slander, lies and insults. Ours was based on the truth and, as they say, the steps taken on the basis of following the general rules of conduct.

Was it possible to win the war with such a government? Of course not! There was no confidence. The lands were being lost there, but they were engaged in organizing rallies here in the vicinity, in front of this Milli Majlis, accusing each other, saying hollow words and making false promises. It was all empty. Therefore, the people had to be ready. I can say that by his martyrdom Polad Hashimov played a great role in preparing the people for war. If it hadn't been for that, it would have been difficult to wage war...

³³⁷ Azertag, President Ilham Aliyev Attended Youth Forum on 25th Anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth, February 2, 2022, https://azertag.az/en/xeber/1997516?fbclid=IwAR13ohWEJxJAsiaJE5SKJr1i7c0_suR8la3bYCTkCOA3X790vwRTyk6VRS0.

...Yes, as you said, Armenia is a mono-ethnic state, but the territory currently called Armenia was never a mono-territory before. Because the Azerbaijanis living there in their ancient land were gradually expelled from there. Other nations were expelled as well. I am told that a false Jewish community has been established in Armenia, but its leader is an Armenian. Just imagine the extent of xenophobia, anti-Semitism and racism in Armenia. Along with Azerbaijanis, other peoples lived in the territory called Armenia, and they were all gradually expelled from there. Of course, the greatest injustice was done against our people. Because Azerbaijanis were expelled from their native lands in several stages. We must definitely never forget 1918. At that time, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic gave Yerevan, the ancient city of Azerbaijan, to Armenia for virtually no reason. The reasons provided, as they say, are unacceptable, i.e. they cannot be viewed as reasons, and this crime can never be forgiven or justified. However, representatives from Yerevan strongly objected to this at that time. But no-one would listen to them. In 1920, in November, the Soviet government took Zangazur from us and annexed it to Armenia. This was a great injustice. I must also say that when Zangazur was taken from us back then, it wasn't within the current borders of the Zangazur corridor of the present-day Armenia, it covered smaller territory. As years passed, they gradually took our villages and annexed them to Armenia under various pretexts. This process stopped only in 1969. This process continued until 1969. After Heydar Aliyev took office in Azerbaijan, not an inch of land was given to Armenia. Then, in 1940-1950, Azerbaijanis were subjected to deportation. Hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis were relocated from their homelands to the Kur-Araz lowland.