

ANTI-ARMENIAN

XENOPHOBIA AND RACISM

IN AZERBAIJAN

2022

YEREVAN - STEPANAKERT



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2022

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Abbreviations

CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CHW	Caucasus Heritage Watch
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EEAS	European Union External Action Service
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
HALO	Hazardous Area Life-support Organization
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IAGS	International Association of Genocide Scholars
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
LICRA	International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKAO	Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
ODIHR	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PoW	Prisoner of War
RA	Republic of Armenia
UAV	Unmanned air vehicles
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Executive summary

Report **Anti-Armenian Xenophobia and Racism in Azerbaijan 2022** is a volume in a series of reports that manifest the state-sponsored racism in Azerbaijan, putting at risk peace and security in South Caucasus. Its purpose is to keep the record and raise the international awareness on the aggressive stance of Azerbaijan's leadership that ongoingly reveals its determination to destroy the Armenian statehood and eradicate Armenians and their culture from the region.

The report is based on the compilation of publicly available information taken from reliable and verifiable open sources. Though focused on 2022 developments, where relevant, related or comparable, the report also presents the historical background of the conflict lasting for decades and refers to incidents taken place in earlier years in order to demonstrate the course of the aggressive strategy of Azerbaijan.

The report was prepared by Transparency International Anticorruption Center, Democracy Development Foundation, Protection of Rights Without Borders, Law Development and Protection Center, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Vanadzor, For Equal Rights NGO in Armenia and Civic Hub in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh).

The year of 2022 marked with escalation of the racist policy of Azerbaijan against the Armenian people both in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) and Armenia.

Cultivated hatred towards Armenians

Hatred towards Armenians has been demonstrated in kindergartens and schools infiltrating hate since the very early ages. It has been expressed in literature, music, films of mass consumption, caricature and technology. The policy of hatred served as a tool to amplify the nationalistic consciousness of the Azerbaijani people, galvanize the general aggression against the common "enemy," and consolidate the authoritarian-dictatorial regime in Azerbaijan.

Fabrication of the history

Azerbaijan flavoured its aggression with newer narratives against Armenia - denying the existence of the Armenian statehood as well as of Armenians in the region as indigenous people and claimed both - the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia as "ancient Azerbaijani lands" launching a new project to prepare the return of Azerbaijani people to "Western Azerbaijan." Azerbaijan intensified its claims for an extraterritorial corridor through the territory of Armenia to connect Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

Threats of the use of force

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev consistently used the language of intimidation and continuously emphasized Azerbaijan's military superiority and Turkey's support trying to spread fear amongst the Armenian people as well as to strengthen its own bargaining power at various levels of relations to pressure the authorities of both Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh to surrender before the Azerbaijani claims.

Ongoing terror policies and practices

Azerbaijan terrorized Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh to disrupt their livelihood and force them to leave their homeland, thus accomplishing the policy of ethnic cleansing. Terror practices included intimidation of civilians with weapons, throwing stones against the Armenian cars, using violence and threats against the farmers doing agricultural works, damaging agricultural equipment, stealing cattle, kidnapping, routinely firing in the air, shooting in the direction of civilians, houses and schools, poisoning of water, causing fire in the nature, etc.

Special operations to galvanize ethnic cleansing

Azerbaijan activated its aggressive policies towards Armenians since March 2022, following the war launched by Russia against Ukraine. It included series of military operations along the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh, occupying new territories, killing people, emptying from Armenians their villages. In September, Azerbaijan furthered its aggression and attacked Armenia occupying strategic heights and creating threats for local population.

The culmination of ethnic cleansing attempts of Azerbaijan was the blockage of the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to the outside world and cutting gas and electricity supply, thus depriving the local Armenians of basic human rights to food, education, healthcare, freedom of movement, adequate standard of living.

Breaking incidents in 2022

March: Azerbaijan attacked Karaglukh height and Khramort, Khnapat and Parukh villages in Nagorno-Karabakh, Parukh village was consequently cleansed from ethnic Armenians.

August: The Armenian population of Berdzor (Lachin) town, Aghavno and Sus villages in Lachin Corridor was forcefully deported under the threat of force by Azerbaijan.

September: Azerbaijan launched an offensive targeting the cities of Jermuk, Goris and Sotq, killed more than 220 persons and occupied territories in Armenia proper.

December: Azerbaijani state-sponsored activists closed the road from Shushi to Stepanakert, virtually blocking the Lachin Corridor and consequently - whole Nagorno-Karabakh.

Inhumane and degrading treatment of Armenian captives

Azerbaijan continued holding as hostages the Armenian PoWs and civilians captured within the context of the 44-day war of 2020 as well as during the aggression against Armenia on 13 September 2022. Azerbaijan subjected the captives to extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearance, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, sham trials, at the same time continuing to glorify and reward the perpetrators. Particularly shocking has been the evidence of torture and mutilation of the female servicepersons that demonstrated the hatred and violence of Azerbaijani people towards the Armenians.

Destruction of Armenian cultural heritage

Azerbaijan continued the erasure of Armenian cultural heritage in the region by destroying, damaging, converting Armenian monasteries and churches into mosques or leisure use. At the same time it claimed that their origins come from their “ancestors” – Caucasus Albanians and established a specialized working group at the state level to actually legalise the acts of vandalism. The destruction of Armenian cultural heritage was also addressed and confirmed by satellite investigations of “Caucasus Heritage Watch” initiative.

Reaction of international institutions

International response to the outrageous policies and acts of Azerbaijan have been largely inadequate or ineffective, lacking due condemnation of the aggression and practical actions by relevant international actors and institutions. Ineffectiveness of the international response is proven by the mere fact of continuous emboldening of the criminal regime of Azerbaijan and the furtherance of its aggressive racial and expansionist policy, in complete disregard of the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and orders of the International Court of Justice. The absence of any sanctions against Azerbaijan, false equivalence between the perpetrator and the victim and the “bothsidist” statements without actual naming of the aggressor created a conducive environment for furtherance of policy of hatred towards Armenians and materialization of the aim of ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Call for action to prevent ethnic cleansing

The report calls the representatives of states, governmental and non-governmental organizations to

- **Refrain from controversial statements on the conflict**, using false equivalences and emboldening Azerbaijani leadership to push forward its aggressive agenda;
- **Put pressure on Azerbaijan’s leadership to stop its hate propaganda, falsification of history, racism and expansionism policies**, to revise its schools’ curricula to remove Anti-Armenian content and incorporate general education to promote cultural tolerance and respect for other nations and safeguard compliance with international norms and respect for human rights;

- **To put pressure the Azerbaijani government to ensure immediate and unconditional repatriation** of all Armenian POWs and civilians detained in Azerbaijan;
- **Ensure opening of Lachin Corridor** and restoration of unimpeded and safe movement of all persons, vehicles and cargo through the Lachin Corridor, as well as secure supply of gas, electricity and internet from Armenia;
- **Elaborate mechanisms for ensuring an international presence in Nagorno-Karabakh, including urgent fact-finding and peacekeeping missions**, to guarantee impartial monitoring of the situation on the ground, regular and public reporting to the international community, and serve as an essential guarantor for the security of the local people;
- **Elaborate formats and mechanisms for ensuring long-term safety, durable peace and self-governance** of Nagorno-Karabakh people in their homeland to ensure full enjoyment of their *erga omnes* right to self-determination;
- **Support the establishment of an international mechanism and guarantees** for communication between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh to ensure the protection of the rights of local people;
- **Support delimitation and demarcation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan in line with human rights principles and international best practices**, assuring immediate withdrawal of Azerbaijan's armed forces from the territory of Armenia;
- **Ensure effective response to war crimes and other grave violations of international law**, accountability of perpetrators of aggression through imposing sanctions and restoration of the infringed rights of the suffered people, including the return to their homes;
- **Ensure the safety and protection of the Armenian cultural heritage** appeared under Azerbaijani control, in compliance with ICJ's Provisional Measures order of December 7, 2021.

Historical background

1. The first two decades of the 20th century are replete with unprecedented levels of destruction inflicted through the imperial and national tensions in South Caucasus, which then was a part of the Russian Empire. In 1905-1907, the decade-long (1895-1905) systematic anti-Armenian Russian policies in the Caucasus and nascent national sentiments among the Caucasian Tatars or Muslims, gave rise to conflicts, mass killings and pillages in Baku, Yerevan, Tiflis and Yelizavetpol provinces.¹ Russian state reports and statistics of the period and eye-witness accounts indicated that attacks aimed at Armenians and their properties.
2. Influenced by the Young Turks' Revolution in 1908, the landmark events of the WWI, the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the advancement of the Ottoman army to the east, the consciousness of cultural and ethnic affinity with Turkey brought the National Muslim (or Tatar) Council in the Caucasus to proclaim the birth of a new nation on 27 May 1918. The efforts of establishing the new Azerbaijani nation were accompanied with attacks on the Armenian population in various regions, notably in Baku and Shushi.²
3. The establishing of the Soviet regime in the South Caucasus in 1921, volatile border demarcations by Bolsheviks, the creation of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic that had a large presence of Armenians and of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) with majority Armenian population as an enclave inside Azerbaijan further exacerbated the intolerances, which however were silenced under the guise of Soviet "brotherhood of nations." Azerbaijan applied discriminatory policies against its minorities, but especially - the largest group - Armenians.³ As later attested by Heydar Aliyev, the former president of Azerbaijan and father of the current president of Azerbaijan, who was in power in, throughout the years of his leadership he was trying to increase the number of Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh and to decrease the number of the Armenians.⁴

Swietochowski, Tadeusz, "National Consciousness and Political Orientations in Azerbaijan." 1905–1920, in Suny, Ronald Grigor (edn.), *Transcaucasia, Nationalism and Social change*, 1996, Amsterdam University Press, pp. 211–234; Swietochowski, Tadeusz, "The 1905 Revolution and Azerbaijani Political Awakening," in *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905–1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 37–64; Foreword: Troynitsky, Nikolay, edn., *Distribution of the Population in the Main Estates, Faiths, Mother Tongue and in Some Occupations: Brief General Information on the Empire*, Saint Petersburg, 1905, Presidential Library of Russia, <https://www.prlib.ru/en/node/441801> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

² Hovannisian, Richard, *The Republic of Armenia, Vol. I: The First Year, 1918–1919*. University of California Press, 1971; Armenpress, *Retrospective - Pogroms of Armenians in Baku in 1918 on the Pages of World Press*, 20 January 2020, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1001906/retrospective-pogroms-of-armenians-in-baku-in-1918-on-the-pages-of-world-press.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Harutiunyan, Hamlet, *Massacres of Armenians in Shushi (June 1919 and March 1920)*, *Review of Armenian Studies* 1, 2015, pp. 50-69, <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/103110/edition/93790> (accessed on 5 May 2023); Balayan, Vahram, *The Massacre of the Armenians of Shushi on March 23, 1920 as a Consequence of Impunity of the Armenian Genocide in 1915*, *Review of Armenian Studies* 2, 2016, pp. 95-105, <https://arar.sci.am/dlibra/publication/103188/edition/93859> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

³ Geukjian, Ohannes, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in the South Caucasus; Nagorno-Karabakh and the Legacy of Soviet Nationalities Policy*, Routledge, 2012 pp., 105-113; Malkasian, Mark, "Gha-ra-bagh!": *The Emergence of the National Democratic Movement in Armenia*. Wayne State University Press, 1996.

⁴ On the Historical Background of Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, including Heydar Aliyev's Meeting with Media Representatives, 22 July 2002, «Зеркало», 23 July, 2002, <http://www.mediasocialfeed.com/> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

4. In February 1988, when encouraged by the opportunity offered by Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of "glasnost" the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh claimed their oppressed right of self-determination from Moscow, anti-Armenian pogroms broke out in the second biggest city of Azerbaijan – Sumgayit, which were later echoed in Kirovabad (November 1989) and Baku (January 1990), which had a significant fraction of Armenian population.⁵
5. In 1992, the president of Azerbaijan at the time, Abulfaz Elchibey announced: "If a single Armenian remains in Karabakh, the people of Azerbaijan can hang me in the central square of Baku."⁶
6. The sentiments nurtured by the zigzagging interests of imperial and regional powers during the 20th century have turned the 2000s into an era of institutionalization of Armenophobia and anti-Armenian racism, which was used as an instrument of generating national unity in Azerbaijan and loyalty to the long-reigning government of Aliyevs.
7. On 27 September 2020, in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic Azerbaijan started a large-scale attack on Nagorno-Karabakh.⁷ 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 Nagorno-Karabakh. There were multiple cases of executing military and civilian captives and mutilating their bodies.⁸
8. Azerbaijan took control of about ~30% of the former NKAO, including 111 settlements in Shushi, Hadrut, Martuni and Martakert districts.⁹
9. The war was stopped in the night of 9 to 10 November 2020, through mediation by Russia, with a ceasefire statement signed by the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia (the "trilateral statement").¹⁰

⁵ Karabakh Records: Catalog of Documents and Evidence, Maragha, <http://karabakhrecords.info/english.html> (accessed on 5 May 2023); The New York Review, An Open Letter on Anti-Armenian Pogroms in the Soviet Union, joint initiative of the Helsinki Treaty Watchdog Committee of France and intellectuals from the College International de Philosophie, Paris, 27 September 1990, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1990/09/27/an-open-letter-on-anti-armenian-pogroms-in-the-sov> (accessed on 5 May 2023); US Congress, In recognition of the Victims of the Baku and Sumgayit Pogroms; Congressional Record Vol. 166, No. 20, 30 January 2020, <https://www.congress.gov/116/crec/2020/01/30/CREC-2020-01-30-pt1-PgE112-3.pdf> (accessed on 5 May 2023); The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation, Massacres and Attacks against the Armenian Population in Sumgayit on February 27-29, 1988, 28 February 2019, http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/28.02.2019_Sumgayit.php (accessed on 1 May 2023); Armenpress, Unpunished Genocide - Armenians Worldwide Commemorate 30th Anniversary of Sumgayit Pogroms, 28 February 2018, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/924309> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Susanna Serobyan, Sumgayit Tragedy in the Soviet Periodical Press in April - May 1988, *Akunk* 1 (18) 2018, pp. 165-174; European Parliament, Joint Resolution on the Situation in Armenia. Official Journal of the European Communities. Volume 33, No C 38/81, C 38/82, 19 February 1990, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:1990:038:FULL&from=EN> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶ Gamaghelyan, Phil, Rethinking the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict; Identity, Politics, Scholarship. *International Negotiation*, International Negotiation 15 (2010) 33–56, Koninklijke Brill NV, p. 38, fn. 5, https://brill.com/view/journals/iner/15/1/article-p33_3.xml (accessed on 5 May 2023).

⁷ Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by CNN Turk TV Channel, 14 August, 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-was-interviewed-by-cnn-turk-tv-channel-full-text-355814> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Aliyev Admits Azerbaijan Started the Nagorno-Karabakh War, 16 August, 2021, <https://bit.ly/36EsaNf> (accessed on 5 May 2023); Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening of Vagif Poetry Days in Shusha, 30 August 2021, <https://bit.ly/3BLfJdL> (accessed on 15 April 2023); Human Rights Watch, Azerbaijan: Unlawful Strikes in Nagorno-Karabakh, 11 December 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/11/azerbaijan-unlawful-strikes-nagorno-karabakh> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

⁸ 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: Fact-Finding Report, December 2021, https://www.osf.am/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Fact-Finding-Report_FINAL_web.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁹ 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), 21 November 2020, <https://bit.ly/3vbmV1u> (accessed on 23 April 2023).

¹⁰ Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation, 10 November 2020, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384> (accessed on 1 May 2023).

10. 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 Nagorno-Karabakh 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.¹¹

Cultivated hatred towards Armenians

Demonization and dehumanisation of Armenians

11. With textbooks and practices in schools, with media including daily pronouncements by the highest-ranking officials, Azerbaijan worked systematically to create a negative image and to cultivate hatred towards Armenians and Armenia, using it as a tool to enhance nationalism and authority within its society.

12. Throughout the year of 2022, president of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev continued systematically using the expressions “Armenian fascism,” “Armenian savagery” or “Armenian savages,” “Armenian barbarism,” “Armenian occupants and invaders,” “occupying enemy,” “contemptible enemy” in his public speeches, interviews, addresses to the nation, receptions of the Azerbaijani youth and even international meetings. According to Aliyev’s messages, Armenians who are the enemy of the Azerbaijani people “lie everywhere,” “destroy everything,” “pursued a policy of aggression,” “commit ugly deeds and genocide” against the Azerbaijani people, therefore, the Azerbaijani people had “a sense of revenge” and “expelled them from the ancient Azerbaijani lands.”

13. President Aliyev started the year with the New Year’s address to the nation with depicting the Armenians as arrogant and their “arrogant looks having been offending the Azerbaijanis of the world.”¹² This message comes on the day declared as the “Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis.”¹³

14. On 12 January, in his interview to the local TV channels, president Aliyev emphasized “the vandalism and barbarism,” “the mean nature” of the Armenians, and that “Armenians being a civilized people was an ideological concept” rather than reality.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² President of Azerbaijan, Address by the President Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 1 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55195> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Обращение Ильхама Алиева по случаю Дня солидарности азербайджанцев мира и Нового года, 1 January 2022, <https://president.az/ru/articles/view/55195> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev was Interviewed by Local TV channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

15. On 31 January, he added that “we must never forget the Armenian savagery and Armenian fascism, and will continue to wipe out the Armenian fascism,” “we have defeated Armenian fascism and restored justice” in 44-day war. Aliyev called this a “Patriotic War” in order to draw parallels with the WWII where the Soviets had fought Nazi Germany, drawing a consistent line to ascribe fascism to Armenians and legitimizing its aggression of 2020. According to the Azerbaijani president, Azerbaijan did “not only liberate lands, but have also cleansed the region, the South Caucasus, of these savage forces.”¹⁵ In this single interview, Aliyev used the expression “Armenian fascism” ten times, “fascism” attributed to Armenians eight times, overall identifying Armenia with the rise of fascism for 18 times, as well as calling various Armenian leaders “fascists” for nine times.¹⁶

16. On 2 February, addressing the Youth Forum on the Day of Azerbaijani Youth, president Aliyev reaffirmed that the “Armenian fascist nature is not a surprise,” pointed out to the Armenians being their “enemy” and to the “Armenian savages” that “destroy places and mosques.”¹⁷ He also conveyed the message to the youth about the “Armenian fairy tales” and the “Armenian lobby,” basically referring to the information on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue beyond the official Azerbaijani position.¹⁸

17. On 14 February, president Aliyev again pointed out the “ugly face of Armenian fascism and Armenian savagery” and that the “Azerbaijani people must never forget these atrocities,” after which he justified that Azerbaijani “people expelled the enemy [Armenians] from our native lands.”¹⁹

18. In his various speeches in March, the president of Azerbaijan repeatedly depicted “Armenians as the enemy that destroyed²⁰, pursued a policy of aggression against the Azerbaijani people²¹, committed atrocities²², acts of genocide, thus, leading to the feeling of revenge in the hearts of the Azerbaijani people.”²³ Such messages were conveyed not only to the general public of Azerbaijan, but also to the international actors such as the OSCE the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, in charge of leading the peace process before September 2020 Azerbaijan practically rejected it and resorted to the use of force to “resolve” of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.²⁴

¹⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev was interviewed by AZERTAC, 31 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55326> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev attended Youth Forum on 25th Anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth, 2 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55348> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Viewed Progress of Restoration Work at Aghdam Juma Mosque, 14 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55438> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

²⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Executive Director of UN Human Settlements Programme, 5 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55578> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended Groundbreaking Ceremony for Garadagh Solar Power Plant, 15 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55623> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

²¹ President of Azerbaijan, The Message of Congratulation from Ilham Aliyev to the People of Azerbaijan on the Novruz Holiday, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55659> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²² President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received a Delegation Led by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, 31 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55690> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²³ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Participants of 7th European Wrestling Championships Held in Bulgaria, 17 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55638> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Əliyev 7-ci Avropa çempionatının iştirakçılarını qəbul edib, 17 March 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-fTVJ074_M (accessed on 26 January 2023).

²⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received a Delegation Led by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, 31 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55690> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

- 19.** On 5 March, president Aliyev, receiving the Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme, referring to the Armenians asserted that “we have put an end to the evil forces in our land.”²⁵
- 20.** On 17 March, president Aliyev’s target for the incitement of hatred towards Armenians were the young members of the Azerbaijani junior wrestling team under the age of 23 that had participated in the European Wrestling championship held in Bulgaria. Aliyev praised the team for their its successes in the sport competition, which justify the “sense of revenge” of the Azerbaijani people towards the enemy, Armenians, due to the latter having “committed acts of genocide against us,” and consequently the “liberation of Karabakh from that enemy.”²⁶
- 21.** On 20 March, congratulating the people of Azerbaijan on the Novruz holiday from the conquered Mataghis village of Martakert region of Nagorno-Karabakh, president Aliyev again emphasized that the Armenians as “the loathsome enemy destroyed all our cities, villages and historical sites.”²⁷
- 22.** On 8 April, receiving the senior wrestling team of Azerbaijan, president Aliyev emphasized that “the contemptible enemy [Armenians] was committing ugliest deeds, acts of terror against the Azerbaijani civilians.”²⁸
- 23.** On 12 April, after talking about peace in the region, president Aliyev emphasized that “we, as Azerbaijanis, must never forget [among others] the Armenian savagery, ethnic cleansing against us, Khojaly genocide,” and that “we will expose the Armenians all over the world for their atrocities.”²⁹
- 24.** On 22 April, Aliyev reaffirmed the “Armenian savagery,” that “Armenia and the Armenian people have disgraced themselves worldwide for the atrocities,” that Azerbaijan “has crushed fascism and saved the South Caucasus from fascism,” and is “always prepared to crush Armenian fascism.”³⁰
- 25.** On 30 April, president Aliyev reminded the Special Forces of Azerbaijan who their “enemy” is and that the “hatred for the enemy” was one of the driving forces for the “liberation of the cities and villages from that enemy.”³¹

²⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Executive Director of UN Human Settlements Programme, 5 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55578> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received participants of 7th European Wrestling Championships Held in Bulgaria, 17 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55638> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, İlham Əliyev 7-ci Avropa çempionatının iştirakçılarını qəbul edib, 17 March 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-fTVJ074_M (accessed on 26 January 2023).

²⁷ President of Azerbaijan, The Message of Congratulation from İlham Aliyev to the People of Azerbaijan on the Novruz Holiday, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55659> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

²⁸ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Received Members of Azerbaijani National Team Participating in European Wrestling Championships in Hungary, 8 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55747> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁹ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of First Quarter of 2022, 12 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55780> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁰ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Gave a Speech at 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³¹ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Visited Military Unit of Defense Ministry’s Special Forces, 30 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55917> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

26. In May, president Aliyev continued declarations on “Armenian savagery,”³² “the ugly deeds,” and “the ugly face of Armenian vandalism to the whole world”³³ and attributing fascism to Armenians, calling it the “great scourge – Armenian fascism,” from which “yet again [...] the Azerbaijani people and the Azerbaijani Army have saved our region.”³⁴

27. On 27 May, Aliyev threatened “to crush the heads of the Nazis in Armenia” and to “teach the Armenian fascists that try to discredit us a lesson at any time.”³⁵ According to Aliyev, the “Armenian savagery is exposed” and that “Armenians have destroyed everything:³⁶ cities and villages, historical and religious sites,³⁷ ecology,³⁸ everything related to agriculture.”³⁹

28. June was marked with president Aliyev’s continual demonization of the Armenian people calling them “Armenian occupants that erased Azerbaijani historical and religious heritage” and pointed out that “the visitors such as public figures, journalists, representatives of civil society can see the ruins.”⁴⁰ This comes upon the fact that Azerbaijan has been declaring any foreign person visiting Nagorno-Karabakh as *persona non grata*, including but not limited to journalists, politicians, diplomats, artists, businesspersons, scholars and professors, writers, representatives of humanitarian organizations, travel bloggers. Azerbaijan even added the Director of The HALO Trust (Hazardous Area Life-support Organization) program in Nagorno-Karabakh to the “Black list” less than a month before the Azerbaijani unleashed 44-day war.⁴¹ The HALO Trust is the only international humanitarian non-governmental organization besides the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that has been present in Nagorno-Karabakh helping to clear landmines and other explosives in the communities since 2000 and cleared around 500 minefields.⁴²

³² Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev Received Delegation Led by Saudi Arabia’s Attorney General - Updated, 9 May 2022, <https://apa.az/en/III-sector/president-ilham-aliyev-received-delegation-led-by-saudi-arabias-attorney-general-updated-375536> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³³ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received in Video Format Vahid Hajiyev on His Appointment as Special Representative of President in Zangilan District, 4 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55936> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening Ceremony of First Stage of “Smart Village” Project in Zangilan District, 27 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56208> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received a Delegation Led by Saudi Arabia’s Attorney General, 9 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received in Video Format Vahid Hajiyev on His Appointment as Special Representative of President in Zangilan District, 4 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55936> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Remarks by Ilham Aliyev in Shusha, 10 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55989> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received in Video format Vahid Hajiyev on His Appointment as Special Representative of President in Zangilan District, 4 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55936> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lad Mehriban Aliyeva Planted Trees in a Park to be Created in Fuzuli City, 10 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55982> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev has Received a Delegation Led by Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkiye Vahit Kirisci, 19 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56084> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the IX Global Baku Forum, 16 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56442> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended Baku Conference of Non-Aligned Movement Parliamentary Network, 30 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56578> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴¹ MFA of Azerbaijan, “List of Foreign Citizens Illegally Visited Occupied Territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan,” Updated: 18 January 2021, https://mfa.gov.az/files/shares/illegally_visited.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴² The HALO Trust, Nagorno Karabakh, <https://www.halotruster.org/where-we-work/europe-and-caucasus/nagorno-karabakh/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); The HALO Trust, Building Resilience in the Face of Crisis, 2020 Nagorno Karabakh, Impact Report, <https://www.halotruster.org/media/7842/nk-2020-impact-report.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

29. On 30 June, president Aliyev again called out the “Armenian fascism,”⁴³ reminded once again that Azerbaijan “drove the enemy [Armenians] out of our lands, brought it to its knees, in a matter of 44 days,” added that this “contemptible enemy killed the civilian population,” and threatened “the revanchist forces in Armenia” not to forget the “iron fist” of Azerbaijan.⁴⁴ He called the Armenian people “a savage tribe that have only done ugly things here – destroy, dismantle, burn.”⁴⁵

30. July and September were no exception for repeatedly pointing out the “Armenian vandalism” by Aliyev.⁴⁶

31. In August president Aliyev again called Armenians “occupiers,”⁴⁷ “loathsome enemy” that has deprived Azerbaijanis of water,⁴⁸ “committed acts of destruction and vandalism.”⁴⁹

32. On 13 September 2022, on the day of launching wide scale attacks towards the bordering towns of Jermuk, Goris and Sotq inside the Republic of Armenia, president Aliyev delivered a video message, threatening the Armenians and showing his fist: “Learn to think with your head. We are here. Didn't go anywhere. And don't piss us off. Behave yourselves. If you behave well, then you can live in peace. If you commit any provocation against us or make a statement again, we will smash your heads. Regardless of anyone. No one will help you.”⁵⁰

33. On 21 September, president of Azerbaijan announced that two more villages “were liberated from the invaders” referring to the deportation of the Armenian civilians from Berdzor (Lachin) town and the villages of Aghavno and Sus in August, and attributed to the “sordid intentions of Armenia and Armenians of the world” for this “liberation” not having taken place earlier.⁵¹

34. On 27 September, on the day of the start of the 44-day war of 2020, Aliyev reaffirmed that Azerbaijan had “defeated the enemy.”⁵²

⁴³ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Istisu Sanatorium in Kalbadjar, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56546> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴ President of Azerbaijan, President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar District, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Istisu Sanatorium in Kalbadjar, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56546> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Delegation Led by Chair of European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, 19 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56692> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, To Representatives of the Azerbaijani Media, 22 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56720> (accessed on 2 May 2023), President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev during a Trip to Lachin, 21 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58559> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Television Interviewed Ilham Aliyev in Basgal Settlement of Ismayili District, 12 August 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56906> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Special Representative of President of Republic of Korea, 25 August 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57021> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁰ Maiden Tower Telegram Channel, <https://t.me/MaidenTower/27716> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵¹ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev during a Trip to Lachin, 21 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58559> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵² President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Have Visited the Fuzuli District, 27 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57387> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

- 35.** In October and November, president Aliyev's speeches did not change and he continued emphasising the "Armenian barbarism⁵³ and vandalism" and pointed out "Armenians [having] destroyed all our cities and villages,"⁵⁴ buildings, historical monuments, graves of our ancestors, mosques.⁵⁵
- 36.** On 21 November, Aliyev stated that Armenians "lie everywhere."⁵⁶
- 37.** On 25 November, he also targeted the Armenian diaspora, who has "poisoned" and "brainwashed" the Armenian society, as a result of which they committed "brutal acts against the Azerbaijanis" and "destroyed our cities."⁵⁷
- 38.** On 24 December, President Aliyev went as far as blaming "Armenians for committing devastation in Western Azerbaijan." "Western Azerbaijan" is a newly coined term implying the territory of the Republic of Armenia,⁵⁸ which also mirrors the reference of Armenians to their "Western Armenia," where the Ottoman Empire organized genocide of indigenous Armenians along with other Christians (Greeks, Assyrians) and cleansed the territory from these ethnic groups, eventually changing the composition of Turkey's population. Aliyev continued demonising the Armenians "as they did in Karabakh, the Armenians razed all our historical and religious monuments in Western Azerbaijan to the ground," committed crimes against the Azerbaijani people in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia after removing his father, Heydar Aliyev, from the positions of power in the Soviet Union.⁵⁹ Aliyev added that "the devastation committed by the Armenians in Western Azerbaijan must be communicated to the rest of the world," and that he is confident that "the Western Azerbaijan Community will do it with the support of the Azerbaijan state."⁶⁰ In addition, he presented accusations that Armenians "did not allow other nationalities to live there [Armenia]. They expelled all ethnicities from there [Armenia] in every possible way, killed some, threatened others, and burned down their livelihoods. They expelled all other nationalities from there [Armenia] and established a state for themselves in someone else's land."⁶¹

⁵³ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Takes Part in Plenary Session of 6th Summit of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in Astana, 13 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57553> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attend the Opening Ceremony of the Urban Planning and Architecture of Azerbaijan Forum, 5 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57481> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani, Turkish Presidents Made Joint Press Statements in Jabrayil city, 20 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57647> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attending 31st Arab League Summit Held in Algiers, 1 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57754> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto "Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy," 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Made a Speech at the Event Marking the 30th Anniversary of Establishing the New Azerbaijan Party, 21 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57919> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto "Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy," 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with a Group of Intellectuals from Western Azerbaijan, 24 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58470> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

39. On 25 December, president Aliyev held a meeting in the building of the “Western Azerbaijan Community” organization, where he spoke about the “devastations” by Armenians in “Western Azerbaijan” (meaning Armenia), also expressing a confidence that Azerbaijani people will return to their “historical lands.”⁶²

Fostering the sense of superiority over Armenians

40. Public speeches of the president of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev in 2022 largely rely on emphasizing the superiority of the Azerbaijani people over Armenians, the virtues of the Azerbaijani people and the vices of the Armenians.

41. In his address to the nation on 1 January, president Aliyev emphasized that while Armenians’ “arrogant looks have been offending the Azerbaijanis of the world,” the Azerbaijanis “have never been arrogant.”⁶³

42. On 12 January, in his interview to the local TV channels, president Aliyev emphasized the superiority of Azerbaijan against Armenia since, according to him, despite the “crimes and covert provocations” from Armenia, Azerbaijan demonstrated humanism.⁶⁴ After saying that Armenians have destroyed everything and committed crimes, president Aliyev emphasized that “we have not committed anything like that” and that “this, in general, contradicts the nature of the Azerbaijani people.”⁶⁵ He also added that during the 44-day war Azerbaijan fought “like men, without violating international humanitarian norms” and that “there were few casualties among Armenian civilians, in contrast to the Armenians who had “committed many attacks and constantly bombed our cities.”⁶⁶ This comes upon the existence of mounting evidence of the international crimes committed by the Azerbaijani military during the 44-day war, including targeting cities, civilian population, civilian objects, destruction of cultural property, torture and other inhumane and degrading treatment, executions and beheadings, spreading terror among the civilian population, including children, and other crimes.⁶⁷

⁶² Baku TV | RU, Выступление Президента Ильхама Алиева в Здании Общины Западного Азербайджана | Baku TV | RU, 25 December 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jvs2TU7tg_w (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶³ President of Azerbaijan, Address by the President Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 1 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55195> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Обращение Ильхама Алиева по случаю Дня солидарности азербайджанцев мира и Нового года, 1 January 2022, <https://president.az/ru/articles/view/55195> (accessed on 2 May 2023), in Russian: “Потому что при общении с армянами в различных странах их высокомерные взгляды причиняли боль азербайджанцам мира,” - Ilham Aliyev.

⁶⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev was Interviewed by Local TV channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Second Ad hoc Report on Inhuman Treatment of Members of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) Defense Army and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces (from October 17-25, 2020), 25 October 2020, pp. 4-5; Narek Babayan (closed for general public), 08.4454757, Instagram Post, 17 October 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CGcPVZcnJZf/> (accessed on 13 February 2023); from the interrogation of Yousef Alabet Al Haji, Investigation Committee of Armenia, Ազգային Կոմիտեի Կարգադրությունները | The testimony of a Syrian Mercenary, 3 November 2020, 06:56 minute, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSP31_aqxUI; HRW, Survivors of Unlawful Detention in Nagorno-Karabakh Speak out about War Crimes, 12 March 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/12/survivors-unlawful-detention-nagorno-karabakh-speak-out-about-war-crimes> (accessed on 2 May 2023); HRW, Azerbaijan: Armenian POWs Abused in Custody, 19 March 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/19/azerbaijan-armenian-pows-abused-custody> (accessed on 2 May 2023); The Guardian, Two Men Beheaded in Videos from Nagorno-Karabakh War Identified, 15 December 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/15/two-men-beheaded-in-videos-from-nagorno-karabakh-war-identified> (accessed on 2 May 2023); “Azerbaijani Military Beheading an Armenian Civilian Alive, Genadi Petrosyan” backed up at <https://transparency.am/cloud/n2lt8N1iUwFDY7RZ72KFvhicAOGepiM5.mp4>; Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Sixth ad hoc Report on Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Members of Artsakh Defense Army and Captured

Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces (from December 2-16, 2020), pp. 5-6, <https://transparency.am/cloud/v3yab7VCXhOAYyJQxrAspytaoF14iYBV.pdf>; Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim Report on the Cases of the Killing of Civilians in Artsakh by the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan (updated on September 27, 2021), Stepanakert, 2021, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/785>; “Azerbaijani Military Beheading an Armenian Civilian, Yuri Asryan” (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/hs665mJ2DycROq9VsGZwVGVW8n30tclZo.mp4>; The Guardian, Two Men Beheaded in Videos from Nagorno-Karabakh War Identified, 15 December 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/15/two-men-beheaded-in-videos-from-nagorno-karabakh-war-identified> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim report on the Cases of the Killing of Civilians in Artsakh by the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan (updated on September 27, 2021), Stepanakert, 2021, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/785>; Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, ad hoc Report on Inhuman Treatment of Members of Artsakh Defense Army and Civilians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces, 16 October 2020, Stepanakert, 2020, p. 12 (closed for general public); “Execution in Hadrut, combined video” (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/m4rijSjQ57U0vouOOTHs4pf9rSW33fb3.mp4>; Bellingcat, An Execution in Hadrut, 15 October 2020; Captured Armenian Civilian Tortured, “We will kill all of you, jackals, chase you like dogs, you are not humans” (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/QdEfYibxLAhY4Ent4ZpACnHjNtVlc.mp4>; Filming dead Armenian soldiers, expressing ethnic hatred, confessing killing of wounded soldiers (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/ypdhjD6OtEP1oRxO8Cj0udef5lCTptFT.mp4>; Cutting ears of deceased Armenian soldiers and hoping for elimination of their race (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/MKenUllgMFrG9HBjr8sjRQbaHk1ld30T.mp4>; Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Forth ad hoc Report on Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Members of Artsakh Defense Army and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces (from November 4-18, 2020), Yerevan-Stepanakert, November 2020, pp. 10-11, <https://transparency.am/cloud/gVtaFlhOe74JaOPf9wNsNnu1oHs8aGSe.pdf>; Azerbaijani army commander cutting a dead Armenian soldier's ear to take it to his friend (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/SltxQHdDkdMKk8x6cNwScPEpqN49t0fe.mp4>; Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Sixth ad hoc Report on Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Members of Artsakh Defense Army and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces (from December 2-16, 2020), p. 20 <https://transparency.am/cloud/v3yab7VCXhOAYyJQxrAspytaoF14iYBV.pdf>; Yenoq Avetisyan, Azerbaijani flag kissing (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/uQNZYMHZxqDoBqpVnw71W7TXQUzoA5id.mp4>; Eric Khachatryan, Azerbaijani flag kissing; Колонит 18+, Telegram video (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/nqAfgOjszSfgnZKQZvEMDbmYwr50xN.mp4>; Azerbaijani soldiers forcing Arsen Gharakhanyan to repeat “Karabakh - Azerbaijan,” 7 January 2021 (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/waZ1OD5FEIsRADVkl4hLEifd0aYxe5Fm.mp4>; Shirak Sargsyan, head covered, in a vehicle (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/6dMJeJW5VYzrJdCi64yy782y9Wb1gNqQ.mp4>; Armenian PoWs compelled to repeat Karabakh Azerbaijan (under stick threats) (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/yDwEfwB9neDSNfeyn2hPZHU2rC140zn8.mp4>; Armenian PoWs repeating after Azerbaijani military (on knees) (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/YHbLvGbex7EEUdNBs7ZaydKZifEOCGI.mp4>; Erik Mkhitarian compelled to say Karabakh is Azerbaijan (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/JgFe0EdaAVQCgEKudT2VkrKfZQ8Rc4Sd.mp4>; Erik Gasparyan, Armenian captured soldier after 9 November “Karabakh is Azerbaijan” (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/S9aovn7ybyb0aZUcAH8BYUK0qcMG6ULL.mp4>; Gevorg Mkrtchyan compelled to repeat Armenians are forced to fight against Azerbaijani children (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/HF0nABdfMG4Dgkw7RGc35HI6dLqMHHhg.mp4>; Eric Khachatryan, Robert Vardanyan et al (clapping on knees) (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/poqMHg6dnQxpcNpKz1ijkq4t5UvguQ66.mp4>; Eric Khachatryan, Vahram Vardanyan (“room, bruises, karabakh azerbaijan”) (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/1bpM6qmR8Yn1f8jdmwjqq6uxzdnP9hqG.mp4>; Shirak Sargsyan, in a room, talking heavily, repeating hardly Pashinyan is a bitch; Kanal 1, Erməni əsirin növbəti videosu. Ona yemək verdirilər, sakitca yeyir. Cəbhədən son görüntülər, 9 October 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_m3FCq8HEE (accessed on 2 May 2023); Armenian PoW beaten, mistreated, in a room, Aliyev portrait (backup), <https://transparency.am/cloud/pDnSa6dUHk3J3t2xTZQ4dajicobjMmN2.mp4>; Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Ad hoc Report on Inhuman Treatment of Members of Artsakh Defense Army and Civilians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces, 16 October 2020, Stepanakert, 2020, p. 11, <https://transparency.am/cloud/JqK4zs3cpvRCP0BCovDrxMEs1K98lPoX.pdf>; Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Second ad hoc Report on Inhuman Treatment of Members of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) Defense Army and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces (from October 17-25, 2020), 25 October 2020, pp. 6-9 (closed for general public); Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Sixth ad hoc Report on Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Members of Artsakh Defense Army and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces (from December 2-16, 2020), Yerevan-Stepanakert, December 2020, p. 14, <https://transparency.am/cloud/v3yab7VCXhOAYyJQxrAspytaoF14iYBV.pdf>; Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report, Responsibility of Azerbaijan for Torture and Inhumane Treatment of Armenian Captives: Evidence-Based Analysis (The 2020 Nagorno Karabakh War), Yerevan, September 2021, para. 32, https://ombuds.am/images/files/5c7485fdc225adfd8a35d583830dcd17.pdf?fbclid=IwAR20Ajo6BxmRFaBSrtbXFqySyXeM3M-5vZRFgpgCRCo4urVPVE2NPL_VO4g; Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Fifth ad hoc Report on Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Members of Artsakh Defense Army and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces (from November 19-December 2, 2020) Yerevan-Stepanakert, December 2020, p. 10; HRW, Azerbaijan: Armenian Prisoners of War Badly Mistreated, 2 December 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/02/azerbaijan-armenian-prisoners-war-badly-mistreated>; HRW, Survivors of unlawful detention in Nagorno-Karabakh speak out about war crimes, 12 March 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/12/survivors-unlawful-detention-nagorno-karabakh-speak-out-about-war-crimes> (accessed on 2 May 2023); HRW, Azerbaijan: Armenian POWs Abused in Custody, 19 March 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/19/azerbaijan-armenian-pows-abused-custody> (accessed on 2 May 2023); See on torture of Armenians by Azerbaijan before the 44-days war: ECHR, Badalyan v. Azerbaijan (Application no. 51295/11) Judgment, 22 July 2021; ECHR, Khojuyan and Vardazaryan v. Azerbaijan (Application no. 62161/14), 28 February 2022; ECHR, Petrosyan v. Azerbaijan case (Application no. 32427/16), 28 February 2022; Video “Azerbaijani military erasing the Flag of Artsakh and intimidating the Armenian children by “Karabakh is Azerbaijan” expression,” 18 September 2021; Artak Khulyan, Չիսկա՞նք ու ղիմակալորված արդեթճանցիկները արցախից պատակիների ավտորուս են կանգնեցրել,

43. On 31 January, in another interview, president Aliyev again emphasized that “we must never forget the Armenian savagery and Armenian fascism” and reaffirmed that “unlike Armenians, Azerbaijanis will “never commit war crimes,” which shows the “greatness of Azerbaijani people.”⁶⁸

44. On 2 February, addressing the Azerbaijani youth, the president Aliyev stressed their superiority over the Armenians in the information space. In particular, he said that Azerbaijan had overcome Armenia in 44-day war not only militarily, but also in the information space, and that the struggle of Armenians on social networks had been “very low and cowardly, their method of struggle was slander, lies and insults” in contrast to “ours [which] was based on the truth.”⁶⁹ According to him, Azerbaijan’s success in this regard was, first of all, based on the “right upbringing” of the Azerbaijani youth.⁷⁰

45. On 17 March, receiving the young team of wrestlers of Azerbaijan at his office, president Aliyev again represented Armenians and Azerbaijanis in contrast, emphasizing that during the 44-day war “we fought the war with dignity and followed all the rules of warfare, did not commit atrocities,” while “Armenians committed acts of genocide against us” which led to the “feeling of revenge in the hearts of our people.”⁷¹

46. On 20 March, at his address on the occasion of Novruz holiday, Aliyev reaffirmed that while Armenians destroy, destroying “contradicts the nature of the Azerbaijani people,” “a nation that builds and creates.”⁷²

47. On 8 April, when receiving the senior wrestling team of Azerbaijan, president Aliyev drew parallels between the 44-day war and the European wrestling competition. According to him, just like Azerbaijan defeated the “contemptible enemy in war who committed ugliest deeds,” but Azerbaijanis “would never repeat the actions of the Armenians.” Similarly, Aliyev saw the same character of the Azerbaijani people at the wrestling championship, “justice, mercy and a certain degree of compassion for the defeated side, inherent to the Azerbaijani people.”⁷³

48. On 12 April 2022, right after talking about peace in the region, president Aliyev emphasized that “building and creating is very characteristic of the Azerbaijani people,” however “we, as Azerbaijanis, must never forget the occupation, the Armenian savagery,” “the policy of ethnic cleansing Armenia pursued against us, Khojaly genocide, the occupation,” and that “Azerbaijan is strong and Armenia is weak today.”⁷⁴ While summarising the works done during the first quarter of 2022, president Aliyev emphasized the superiority of Azerbaijan also in the sphere of financial

սպառնալից բարոգչութեամբ զբաղվել, Radio Free Europe/Armenia, 18 September 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31466757.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by AZERTAC, 31 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55326> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended Youth Forum on 25th Anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth, 2 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55348> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Participants of 7th European Wrestling Championships Held in Bulgaria, 17 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55638> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Əliyev 7-ci Avropa çempionatının iştirakçılarını qəbul edib, 17 March 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-fTVJ074_M (accessed on 26 January 2023).

⁷² President of Azerbaijan, The Message of Congratulation from Ilham Aliyev to the People of Azerbaijan on the Novruz Holiday, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55659> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁷³ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Reception of Azerbaijani National Team Participating in European Wrestling Championships in Hungary, 8 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55762> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁷⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of First Quarter of 2022, 12 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55780> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

resources especially in the defence sector. According to him, while the number of personnel of the Special Forces of Azerbaijan “increases, the state, which lives at its own expenses, allocates them the necessary money.” In contrast, according to Aliyev, “the picture is completely different in Armenia, since the latter can only spend the financial aid allocated from abroad or unrepaid loans” and that “Armenia does not and never did have money to buy weapons.” Aliyev, in addition, called to stop the “process of arming Armenia” which Azerbaijan considers “an unfriendly step and will take steps accordingly.”⁷⁵

49. On 22 April, addressing a congress of world Azerbaijanis, president Aliyev again emphasized the superiority of the Azerbaijani army against the Armenian saying that “there were 10,000 deserters in the Armenian army, while there were no deserters in the Azerbaijani army.

50. On 30 April, addressing the special forces president Aliyev affirmed “we are a great nation and we have fought with dignity,” and despite “our cities and villages came under fire by the enemy, we have never fought and will never fight against civilians. The sublime qualities of the Azerbaijani people do not allow us, and it never happened.”⁷⁶

51. On 27 May, president Aliyev emphasized again that “unlike the Armenians, we did not wage war against the civilian population,” “carry out ethnic cleansing,” “destroy their cities and villages.” “We are Azerbaijanis, it is unbecoming of us.”⁷⁷ He added that while “Azerbaijan is a land of stability and security, Armenia cannot be considered a military, political, economic power, or even a mediocre state.”⁷⁸

52. On 27 June, president Aliyev reasserted that “not a single person in the Azerbaijani army escaped the battlefield, since this “is the spirit of the Azerbaijani people,” in contrast to the Armenian army where “panic and hysteria were rampant.”⁷⁹ He also mentioned once more that the “Armenians destroy, dismantle, burn, destructions are a manifestation of Armenian fascism,” while Azerbaijanis who are “a creative nation, are rebuilding and will build our cities and villages.” According to Aliyev, it “again shows the greatness of our nation.”⁸⁰

53. On 8 November, president Aliyev reaffirmed that while there were deserters in the Armenian army, there was none in the Azerbaijani army which “indicates the high moral qualities of our people.”⁸¹

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Military Unit of Defense Ministry’s Special Forces, 30 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56103> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁷⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening Ceremony of First Stage of “Smart Village” Project in Zangilan District, 27 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56208> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ President of Azerbaijan, President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar District, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁸⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Istisu Sanatorium in Kalbadjar, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56546> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁸¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57801> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Utilizing the victory in war to strengthen the regime

54. Azerbaijan's victory in 44-day war added one more instrument in the toolbox of incitement of hatred against the Armenian people, and patriotism within the society is nurtured largely hand in hand with this hatred. It is additionally used to enhance the recognition of the role and reinforcement of the power of the president of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his dynasty, started with his father Heydar Aliyev who held leading positions in Soviet Azerbaijan since 1960s and was the president of Azerbaijan from 1993 until his death in 2003, actually conferring his position on his son.⁸²

55. Throughout the year of 2022, the official news items often used the word "victorious" referring specifically to the president and/or the Commander-in-Chief of Azerbaijan. This included press releases on various events, including the opening a military campus,⁸³ units⁸⁴ and base,⁸⁵ commemoration of the victims of the WWII,⁸⁶ visit to the tomb of "national leader" Heydar Aliyev,⁸⁷ a folklore festival.⁸⁸ Press materials emphasize that the victory in the 44-day war was possible "under the leadership of President and Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev,"⁸⁹ as a result of which the "enemy [Armenians] was driven out of the Azerbaijani lands."⁹⁰ Ilham Aliyev in his speeches attributes the reasons of the loss of Azerbaijan in the war in 1990s to the leadership that preceded his father,⁹¹ asserting that "the country's salvation was in Heydar Aliyev's hands,"⁹² and if Heydar Aliyev was "not invited to power, the country could have faced with even greater disaster."⁹³ It is also

⁸² Freedom House, Azerbaijan, 2021 - September 2022, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/azerbaijan/freedom-net/2022> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁸³ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended the Inauguration of the Newly Built Military Campus for the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Aghjabadi district, 14 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55445> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

⁸⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attend Inauguration of Military Unit in Sugovushan, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55656> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Viewed Conditions Created at the Newly Commissioned Military Unit of the Defense Ministry in the Fuzuli District, 7 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57799> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁸⁵ President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar District, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁸⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Paid Tribute to Azerbaijanis Who Died for the Victory over Fascism, 9 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55966> (accessed on 2 February 2023).

⁸⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Tomb of National Leader Heydar Aliyev in Alley of Honors, 10 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55969> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁸⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening of 5th "Kharibulbul" International Folklore Festival, 12 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56001> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁸⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Paid Tribute to Azerbaijanis Who Died for the Victory over Fascism, 9 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55966> (accessed on 2 February 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Tomb of National Leader Heydar Aliyev in Alley of Honors, 10 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55969> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening of 5th "Kharibulbul" International Folklore Festival, 12 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56001> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁹⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Tomb of National Leader Heydar Aliyev in Alley of Honors, 10 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55969> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁹¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Visited Military Unit of Defense Ministry's Special Forces, 30 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55917> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening Ceremony of First Stage of "Smart Village" Project in Zangilan District, 27 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56208> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, 26 February 2022, Nationwide March to Commemorate 30th Anniversary of Khojaly Genocide Was Held in Baku, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55530> (accessed on 26 January 2022); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57801> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended Youth Forum on 25th Anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth, 2 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55348> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

⁹² President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Made a Speech at the Event Marking the 30th Anniversary of Establishing the New Azerbaijan Party, 21 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57919> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁹³ Ibid.

emphasized that the “Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev” is a “worthy successor of Heydar Aliyev” because he realised the latter’s dream.⁹⁴

56. The Assistant to the First vice-president and Ilham Aliyev’s wife Mehriban Aliyeva, Emin Huseynov, even tweeted on 27 March on the occasion of the World Theatre Day emphasising “the victory achieved under the leadership of Victorious Supreme Commander-in-Chief” as “a historic page for the revival of our culture in “Karabakh,” at the same time blaming the “Armenian vandalism.”⁹⁵

57. The president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, in his public speeches throughout 2022 has used every opportunity to bring the example of the 44-day war not only demonising, dehumanising Armenians, but also emphasising that the Azerbaijani people have become victorious nation, mentioning the hate towards Armenians as a factor of the Azerbaijani victory. The term “Patriotic War” itself provokes hatred towards the Armenian people since it identifies Armenians with fascism justifying and praising the war and other repressive policies against Armenian people. The term “Patriotic War” is particularly used in the Soviet space to refer to the struggle against Nazi Germany during the WWII.

58. On 1 January 2022, president Aliyev started the year with an address on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis praising the Azerbaijani people for being “known in the world as victorious people, and the Azerbaijani state as a victorious country” due to the 44-day war when they “liberated [their] native lands” from the Armenians.⁹⁶

59. On 12 January, in his interview to the local TV channel, Aliyev asserted that the victory plays a great role on the increase of the “respect for our people and our country” and on “the awakening of the national spirit and the return of dignity.”⁹⁷

60. In February, president Aliyev praised his government for having conducted the policy of raising the young generation that had not even seen Karabakh “in the spirit of patriotism that was ready to die, become wounded but raise the glory of our victorious Army.”⁹⁸ He added that patriotism was the main factor of the victory,⁹⁹ and that by the Patriotic War “our people restored historical justice and expelled the enemy [Armenians] from our native lands.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Gave a Speech at 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Tomb of National Leader Heydar Aliyev in Alley of Honors, 10 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55969> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁹⁵ Emin Huseynov, Twitter Post, 27 March 2022, https://twitter.com/Emin_H_official/status/1508130487856156672 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁹⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Address by the President Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 1 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55195> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁹⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by local TV channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁹⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended Youth Forum on 25th Anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth, 2 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55348> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Viewed Progress of Restoration Work at Aghdam Juma Mosque, 14 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55438> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

61. On 17 March, at the reception of the youth team of wrestlers under 23 years old that participated in the European Wrestling championship, president Aliyev turned to the “victorious” war of Azerbaijan waged against Armenians. President Aliyev specified that the young wrestlers “represent the winning country today,” that he was confident that “skill and capacity [they] show in international sports arenas would also be shown on the battlefield” and that in addition to “a strong army, equipment, weapons, and ammunition, true patriotism preconditioned [their] victory” in 44-day war. Due to the “eternal” victory in war, according to Aliyev, “young people represent a different Azerbaijan now, they represent a victorious nation, victorious country and people, the feeling of which they must have in their hearts when entering sports arena.” According to Aliyev, the victory is a new “incentive for the Azerbaijani athletes,” because they “represent a dignified nation who “liberated Karabakh from the enemy [Armenians].” President Aliyev also used the opportunity to praise his own government in front of the young athletes for waging the 44-day war. In particular, he emphasized that looking at different wars in the world, “both the Azerbaijani people and the entire world community will see the greatness of the Azerbaijani people and the responsibility of the Azerbaijani leadership.”¹⁰¹

62. On 20 March, president Aliyev addressed his nation on the occasion of Novruz (religious New Year) holiday from Mataghis village that Azerbaijan had occupied and cleansed from Armenians during the 44-day war, after an unsuccessful attempt earlier, in April 2016. His Novruz message was heavily based on the war and incitement of hatred towards Armenians. He also emphasized that “of course, our glorious and historic victory is a source of pride for each of us,” and that “we are rightfully proud to be citizens of a victorious state.”¹⁰²

63. On 8 April, when meeting the senior wrestlers’ team, president Aliyev stated “the young generation must be definitely raised in the spirit of patriotism,” and that “one of the factors that further strengthens patriotism is, of course, our historic military victory” of 44-day war.¹⁰³ This came with the demonization of Armenians and demonstrating the superiority of the Azerbaijani people over the Armenians. Aliyev encouraged that the athletes “should not forget that they represent the victorious country and the victorious people” because “it is a great honour and a great responsibility to represent the people who have won a great historic victory in a matter of 44 days” although “the contemptible enemy [Armenians] was committing ugliest deeds, acts of terror against the Azerbaijani civilians.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Participants of 7th European Wrestling Championships Held in Bulgaria, 17 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55638> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, İlham Əliyev 7-ci Avropa çempionatının iştirakçılarını qəbul edib, 17 March 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-fTVJ074_M (accessed on 26 January 2023).

¹⁰² President of Azerbaijan, The Message of Congratulation from İlham Aliyev to the People of Azerbaijan on the Novruz Holiday, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55659> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁰³ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Received Members of Azerbaijani National Team Participating in European Wrestling Championships in Hungary, 8 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55747> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

64. A significant event in reaffirming the role of the victory in enhancing the national consciousness based on the hatred towards the Armenians was the congress of world Azerbaijanis held on 22 April in Shushi city of Nagorno-Karabakh, occupied and cleansed from Armenians as a result of the 44-day war. In his speech during this event president Aliyev asserted that “in general, the name victory is very appropriate for our people. We have come here through Victory Road, the name of the congress is Victory Congress, Victory museums are being built” and that “from now on, the people of Azerbaijan will forever live as victorious people, and the state of Azerbaijan will live as a triumphant.”¹⁰⁵ He went on announcing that “the people of Azerbaijan proved the whole world that we are a great nation; the Azerbaijani state will forever live as a victorious state.”¹⁰⁶ He emphasized that “we didn’t wage war only with Armenia. We didn’t wage war only with the Armenians of the world, we fought against Armenia’s patrons and we have won the war.” Aliyev reaffirmed that the “young generation was brought up in the spirit of patriotism ready to embrace death” even though “none of them had been to Karabakh.”¹⁰⁷ In order to realise that “noble task of liberation of the lands the young generation was brought up in the spirit of patriotism, hatred of the enemy [Armenians] and loyalty to the Fatherland,” and the success of such policy was evidenced with the fact that “we have crushed the head of the enemy [Armenians] with an iron fist and restored historical justice and national dignity.”¹⁰⁸

65. On 30 April, addressing the Special Forces, president Aliyev again emphasized that “we will live forever as a victorious nation and as a victorious state,”¹⁰⁹ then reasserted that “the factors preconditioning the victory were patriotism, love of country and hatred for the enemy [Armenians]!... in which spirit the young generation was brought up.”¹¹⁰ He added that as a result of the support by the people to their army “we united like a fist and inflicted such crushing blows on the enemy,” as a result of which “the remains of the Armenian army are on display in the Military Trophy Park in the Centre of Baku.”¹¹¹ This glorification of the Military Trophy Park comes with the fact that it displayed mannequins of the Armenian servicepersons in the ugliest images, in captivity in chains and suffering from torture and inhuman and degrading treatment,¹¹² and where Azerbaijani children played with those mannequins, ridiculing them and shooting at them from toy weapons.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Gave a Speech at 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Visited Military Unit of Defense Ministry’s Special Forces, 30 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55917> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Military Unit of Defense Ministry’s Special Forces, 30 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56103> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹¹² Zartonk Media, Creators of Armenian Wax Figures: We Tried to Create the Ugliest Images, 14 April 2021, <https://zartonkmedia.com/2021/04/14/creators-of-armenian-wax-figures-we-tried-to-create-the-ugliest-images> (accessed on 2 May 2023); “Creators of wax figures, ugly images of Armenians at Baku Military Trophy park (12 April 2021)” <https://transparency.am/cloud/hPQS2IOhU0QK8NkwuPinhWNzMLUSuNbi.jpg>.

¹¹³ Photos and Videos “Baku Military Trophy Park, Wax Sculptures of Armenian Servicemen” folder <https://transparency.am/cloud/EsVBY6htisxe0V3QqdmxM59D9ymciuZ1.pdf>.

66. In his May speeches, president Aliyev declared that the Azerbaijani people will “forever live as heroes,”¹¹⁴ “as victorious people, victorious nation, victorious state holding our heads high” and having “restored our national dignity,” which “showed the greatness of our people,”¹¹⁵ “drove out the enemy and restored justice.”¹¹⁶ To strengthen the indoctrination and the hatred towards Armenians, president Aliyev announced the plan of establishing the “Museum of Victory and the Museum of Occupation” in territories occupied in Nagorno-Karabakh, in addition to the Victory Park of Baku.¹¹⁷

67. On 14 June, continuing the tradition of drawing parallels between the war and sports, president Aliyev sent the message to the members of the Azerbaijan national mini football team received in his office that “victories are worthy of our people, both on the battlefield and in sports.”¹¹⁸

68. On 27 June, the “Victorious Commander-in-Chief” Ilham Aliyev repeated that the “Azerbaijanis all over the world live as representatives of a victorious nation and have fulfilled our historic mission.” He added that “in a matter of 44 days, we drove the enemy out of our lands, brought it to its knees,” that the “main factor that led us to the Victory was the national spirit, dignity, and love of the Motherland,” and that “many measures have been taken to educate the younger generation.”¹¹⁹ He reaffirmed that “the Museums of Occupation and Victory must be built in all liberated cities on my instructions.”¹²⁰

69. On 9 August, meeting the Azerbaijani athletes participating in the Islamic Solidarity Games, president Aliyev mentioned that “Azerbaijani athletes will be representing a victorious country and victorious people” which “is a matter of pride for us,” since “victory achieved on the battlefield will be reflected in sports competitions.”¹²¹

70. On 27 September 2022, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the 44-day war president Aliyev addressed the nation emphasising the pride of “the glorious mission and glorious history” of having “defeated the enemy” leading to the Azerbaijanis living “forever as a victorious nation, as a victorious state.”¹²² He emphasized that in this victory, “the people of Azerbaijan mobilized all their strength, united like a fist and expelled the enemy from our native land,” that the “next generations will always be proud of this glorious victory.”¹²³

¹¹⁴ Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended the Inauguration of Residential Complex for Families of Martyrs and War Disabled - Updated, 2 May 2022, <https://apa.az/en/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-and-first-lady-mehriban-aliyeva-attended-the-inauguration-of-residential-complex-for-families-of-martyrs-and-war-disabled-updated-375021> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹¹⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening Ceremony of First Stage of “Smart Village” Project in Zangilan District, 27 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56208> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹¹⁶ Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended the Inauguration of Residential Complex for Families of Martyrs and War Disabled - Updated, 2 May 2022, <https://apa.az/en/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-and-first-lady-mehriban-aliyeva-attended-the-inauguration-of-residential-complex-for-families-of-martyrs-and-war-disabled-updated-375021> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Has Received Members of the Azerbaijan National Mini Football Team Who Won the European Championship in Slovakia, 14 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56435> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹¹⁹ President of Azerbaijan, President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar District, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹²⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Istisu Sanatorium in Kalbadjar, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56546> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹²¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Have Met with Athletes Representing the Country at the 5th Islamic Solidarity Games, 9 August 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56872> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹²² President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Have Visited the Fuzuli District, 27 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57387> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹²³ Report.az, Ilham Aliyev and Mehriban Aliyeva Visit Memorial Plaque Dedicated to Remembrance Day in Qaraxanbayli, 27 September 2022, <https://report.az/en/domestic-politics/ilham-aliyev-and-mehriban-aliyeva-visit-commemorative-plaque-dedicated-to-remembrance-day-in-qaraxanbayli/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

71. On 8 November, on the day of celebrating the victory in 44-day war in occupied Shushi, president Aliyev asserted that due to this victory “we have got rid of this stigma. We can hold our heads high and speak with dignity. We are living as proud, dignified, and victorious people.”¹²⁴ He emphasized once more the role of the president in this matter saying that “educating the younger generation in the spirit of patriotism was one of the primary directions of my policy as President, and we have achieved it.” According to Aliyev, “thanks to the policy I conducted... all peoples living in Azerbaijan were prepared to die for Karabakh.”¹²⁵ He repeated on 21 November that “we expelled the enemy from our historical lands in a matter of 44 days, restored historical justice and the dignity of our people” and praised the “great army we have built” as “the Great Leader’s [Heydar Aliyev] testament.”¹²⁶

72. On 25 November, president Aliyev, after announcing that “all their [Armenians’] history and all their historical products are fake,” said that the Azerbaijani victory in 44-day war “is a chance to get rid of this poisonous conscience of inventing stories of their great history,” and that “my belief in justice only happened after we won the war. I started to believe in justice again.”¹²⁷

73. On 24 December, Aliyev reassured that “the liberation of Karabakh and East Zangazur [“Zangezur” in Armenian] on the battlefield is a historic event and will remain in the history of Azerbaijan for as long as Azerbaijan stands.” He went on stating that not only the military victory of 2020, but also the “military and political successes achieved this year have laid the groundwork for the future,” “served as a lesson for those who fail to accept Azerbaijan as a strong state,” and “showed once again that no one and nothing could stop us.”¹²⁸

74. On 31 December, Aliyev finalised the year being confident “that Azerbaijanis living abroad today are rightfully proud that they are children of independent and victorious Azerbaijan.”¹²⁹

Incitement of hatred through education

75. Hatred, dehumanisation and demonization towards Armenians are institutionalized in kindergartens, schools and school curricula in Azerbaijan. This is actually the state policy to enhance national self-consciousness.

76. From kindergarten and throughout the whole period of school, Azerbaijani children are formed into hating the Armenian people in every subject matter they are taught, be it history, literature, or languages. Such knowledge, especially obtained at the age of 8-12 is extremely difficult to critically reconsider later in life, especially in the absence of the contributing social and cultural environment.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57801> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Made a Speech at the Event Marking the 30th Anniversary of Establishing the New Azerbaijan Party, 21 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57919> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹²⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto “Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy,” 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹²⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with a Group of Intellectuals from Western Azerbaijan, 24 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58470> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Sergey Rummyantsev, BBC News Русская версия, “Врагу - ненависть, ненависть, ненависть.” Чем “культ победы” оборачивается для азербайджанских школьников, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64077433> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

77. According to the textbooks, “hypocrisy is a characteristic feature of Armenians.”¹³¹ The Armenian people as a group are called “black clouds,” “grey wind,”¹³² “enemies,”¹³³ “rabid enemies,”¹³⁴ “aggressors,” “thief” that occupied, destroyed or stole Azerbaijani culture and land.¹³⁵

78. An illustrative example is that sixth grade children learn a story called “Bloody Viola” at the literature class, according to which “a child has a dream where aunt Siranush (Armenian name) strangled him with a sad face. Blood was dripping from the sharp sword that uncle Suren (Armenian name) was holding. That blood was on his forehead, head, but most of all, got into his eyes.”¹³⁶

79. Another example is the Azerbaijani language textbook of the same sixth grade containing a story called “Little Hostages,” according to which, “Mad Armenians with rusty pliers pulled out the tongues of those who did not want to read, undressed them and mocked them.”¹³⁷

80. Hatred in textbooks is also transferred to children through indirect means such as attributing the hate speech to the Armenians, as if the latter have expressed it about the Azerbaijanis.¹³⁸

81. It was circulated in media that a book “The Azerbaijani Armed Forces: for children,” which was first published in 2021 on the occasion of the “Great Victory,”¹³⁹ was available from the Azerbaijani government-funded Baku book center in the Azerbaijani, Russian and English languages.¹⁴⁰ According to the book description, “little readers of this book will get acquainted with the history of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan, will learn about the Azerbaijani military personnel and modern weapons that

¹³¹ Ibid., Section on History: Grade 9 textbook.

¹³² Xenophobia Prevention Initiative, Section on Literature: Grade 9 textbook, <http://azerichild.education/en/class-9-liter.html>; Гафар Гусейнов, Севиндж Гусейнова, Литература 9, Учебник по предмету «Литература» для 9-го класса общеобразовательных школ, Утверждено Министерством образования Азербайджанской Республики (Приказ No 369 от 03.06.2016) (Original in Russian), pp. 76, 153, <http://azerichild.education/pdf/uchebnik-po-predmetu-literatura-dlya-9-go-klassa-obsheobrazovatelnyh-shkol.pdf>; Azerbaijani language: Grade 2 textbook (English), <http://azerichild.education/en/class-2-azerbaycani-dili.html>; Rafiq Ismayilov et al., Azərbaycan Dili 2, 2016 (Original in Azerbaijani), pp. 110, 123, <http://azerichild.education/pdf/umumtahsil-maktablarinin-2-ci-sinfi-ucun-dovlat-dili-azərbaycan-dili-fanni-uzra-darslik.pdf>; Azerbaijani language grade 2: mythological manual (English), <http://azerichild.education/en/metodik-2-azerbaycani-dili.html>; Gülşən Orucova et al., AZƏRBAYCAN DİLİ 2 Müəllim üçün METODİK VƏSAİT, 2014 (Original in Azerbaijani), pp. 130, 142, 143, <http://azerichild.education/pdf/umumtahsil-maktablarinin-2-ci-sinfi-ucun-azərbaycan-dili-tadris-dili-fanni-uzra-metodik-vasait.pdf> (all accessed on 26 January 2023).

¹³³ Azerbaijani children chanting “Armenians” replying the question “Who is your enemy?,” Артак Ширинян, Кто твой враг? Отвечают дети Азербайджана, 16 March 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLh3Ch-jnWE> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹³⁴ Azerbaijan Ministry of Culture and Tourism, МƏKTƏBLİ OXUCULARIN VƏTƏNPƏRVƏRLİK TƏRBİYƏSİ (metodik vəsait), Baki, 2009, p. 13: “Torpaqlarımızsa şəhid olmamalıdır! Babalarımız bu torpağı quduz düşmənlərin əlindən ona görə qorumayıblar ki, onu əsrin ermənilik bəlasına qurban verək. Şəhidlər xiyabanında türk balalarının qəbir daşları ona görə sıralanmış ki, hansı bir rus əsgərisə “siz özünüzdü öldürməyin, rəhbərləriniz çoxdan Qarabağı satıblar” desin,” <https://clb.az/files/mv/vetenperver1.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹³⁵ Xenophobia Prevention Initiative, Section on Literature: Grade 9 textbook, <http://azerichild.education/en/class-9-liter.html> (accessed on 26 January 2023); Гафар Гусейнов, Севиндж Гусейнова, ЛИТЕРАТУРА 9, УЧЕБНИК по предмету «Литература» для 9-го класса общеобразовательных школ, Утверждено Министерством образования Азербайджанской Республики (Приказ No 369 от 03.06.2016) (Original in Russian) pp. 76, 153, <http://azerichild.education/pdf/uchebnik-po-predmetu-literatura-dlya-9-go-klassa-obsheobrazovatelnyh-shkol.pdf>, (accessed on 5 May 2023); Azerbaijani language, Grade 2 textbook (English), <http://azerichild.education/en/class-2-azerbaycani-dili.html>, (accessed on 2 May 2023); Rafiq Ismayilov et al., Azərbaycan Dili 2, 2016 (Original in Azerbaijani) pp. 110, 123, <http://azerichild.education/pdf/umumtahsil-maktablarinin-2-ci-sinfi-ucun-dovlat-dili-azərbaycan-dili-fanni-uzra-darslik.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Sergey Romyantsev, BBC News Русская версия, “Врагу - ненависть, ненависть, ненависть.” Чем “культ победы” оборачивается для азербайджанских школьников, Section on Literature: Grade 5 textbook, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64077433> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

¹³⁶ Sergey Romyantsev, BBC News Русская версия, “Врагу - ненависть, ненависть, ненависть.” Чем “культ победы” оборачивается для азербайджанских школьников, Literature: Grade 9 textbook <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64077433> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

¹³⁷ Ibid., Section on Azerbaijani Language: Grade 6 textbook.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Qazet.az, В новой книге Бахрам Багирзаде рассказывает детям об азербайджанской армии – Фото, 13 October 2021, <https://qazet.az/v-novoy-knige-bahram-bagirzade-rasskazhet-detyam-ob-azerbaydzhanskoy-armii---foto> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁴⁰ Baku Book Center, Вооруженные силы Азербайджана для детей, <https://bakubookcenter.az/en/product/55272> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

helped our country to win the Great Victory!”¹⁴¹ The book is devoted to the “esteemed President of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, valiant Azerbaijani soldiers and martyrs who liberated the sacred lands of Karabakh from occupation and defeated the enemy in the 44-day Second Karabakh War! Thanks to this great Victory, Azerbaijani lands will be cleared of deadly mines and Karabakh will become the most beautiful place in Azerbaijan, in which new cities, roads, bridges will appear and gardens will blossom!”¹⁴²

82. According to witnesses, after the victory in 44-day war the practices at school changed but the hate motives remained. While before the Azerbaijani children portrayed the Azerbaijani nation as a victim to the Armenian wrongdoings, after the war they have collectively become heroes. While before the Azerbaijani children painted Azerbaijanis who had been killed by the Armenians, after the war children paint Turkish striking drones “Bayraktar” that targeted Armenians in the 44-day war.¹⁴³

83. Children from two to five years old start their day in kindergartens with hate chants. Some teachers do not see anything wrong in that practice and proudly show how straight the children in their kindergarten are able to stand while chanting.¹⁴⁴ According to a deputy director of a school in Sumgayit, “the enemy is one, and if there is no hate towards the enemy, a child cannot be a patriot. We shall consider that Armenians used to win against us throughout the history.” “Armenians are our enemies and children must know it.”¹⁴⁵

84. In January, two videos were circulated, one of which shows two girls of 5-6 years old dancing on the flag of Armenia on the ground,¹⁴⁶ while the second video portrays a teenage boy, holding the flag of Azerbaijan and dancing on the flag of Armenia on the ground.¹⁴⁷

85. In September, in a video from one of the schools in Sumgayit is shown how the Azerbaijani children start their every day at school. Children standing in straight rows chant “Service to Homelands, hate, hate, hate to the enemy!” The reporter comments that “these children are tomorrow’s soldiers, doctors, teachers, our children who will protect our country on the frontline.”¹⁴⁸ There is no doubt whom they see as the enemy.

86. On 27 September 2022, in a video circulated on Azerbaijani social media it is seen how the children line up in several rows, the teacher reading out loud the names of the martyrs, their former students. The children chant “Hurrah!” after each name.¹⁴⁹ This is how the schools in Azerbaijan celebrate the start of the 44-day war against Nagorno-Karabakh.

¹⁴¹ Livelibe, Вооружённые силы Азербайджана для детей, Бахрам Багирзаде, <https://www.livelib.ru/book/1007405794-vooruzhionnye-sily-azerbajdzhana-dlya-detej-bahram-bagirzade> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁴² Qazet.az, В новой книге Бахрам Багирзаде рассказывает детям об азербайджанской армии – ФОТО, 13 October 2021, <https://qazet.az/v-novoy-knige-bahram-bagirzade-rasskazhet-detyam-ob-azerbaydzhanskoj-armii---foto> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁴³ BBC News Русская версия, “Врагу - ненависть, ненависть, ненависть.” Чем “культ победы” оборачивается для азербайджанских школьников, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64077433> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Tatev Ghazaryan, Facebook post, Video of two girls dancing on the Armenian flag, 9 January 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/100011341485805/videos/pcb.1862163057505059/339155638058301> (accessed on 2 May 2023);

¹⁴⁷ Tatev Ghazaryan, Facebook post, A teenage boy dancing on the Armenian flag, 9 January 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/100011341485805/videos/pcb.1862163057505059/678904019783646> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁴⁸ TTEL Lisey, Vətənə xidmət Xalqə sədaqət Düşməyə nifrət, nifrət, nifrət. Bu şüarla hər gün dərs başlanır liseydəAZ, 1:02 minute, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npG2_7xz2Qc&t=122s (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁴⁹ Guler Musayeva, Facebook post, 27 September 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/100004056635743/videos/1188469081884039/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

87. In November, two photos were published online in one of which we see Azerbaijani children burning the flag of Armenia with the help of the adults. One of the boys is dressed in camouflage with the flag of Turkey on it. In another photo, Azerbaijani little girls and boys dressed in camouflage and holding the flag of Azerbaijan pose in front of a rocket launcher displayed in Baku Military Trophy Park.¹⁵⁰

88. In another video from November 2022, we see kindergarten boys dressed in camouflage walk into the classroom with crutches and bandaged legs and arms. It also demonstrates how Armenophobia serves as a major component of “patriotic” education.¹⁵¹

89. Classes of patriotism, which have been included in Azerbaijani schools since 2021, organize competitions to write on the topic of the victory in 44-day war. Moreover, schools have been ordered to teach children that they must, in their writings, emphasize the role of the president and the unification of the nation around the president.¹⁵² According to the BBC findings in one of the kindergartens in Sumgayit, the tasks on patriotism are sent by the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan.¹⁵³

90. According to the response by the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan to the request of the BBC in 2022 to comment on the hatred in the practices and textbooks at the Azerbaijani schools, these are “artistic examples reflecting the struggle waged in the sphere of ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, recognised by the international community.”¹⁵⁴

Incitement of hatred through arts, culture and technology

91. On 18 October, the public TV in Azerbaijan released a video with children singing a Soviet times popular children’s song “Buratino”(similar to “Pinocchio”) - mocking, insulting French president Emmanuel Macron and blaming him in “dishonesty and being pro-Armenian.”¹⁵⁵ This came as a response to the president of France Emmanuel Macron’s interview to France 2, where he said that Azerbaijan had started the 44-day war in September 2020 and also attacked Armenia in September 2022. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev criticized Macron for having “erased Paris’s history of having a friendly and balanced attitude toward Baku.”¹⁵⁶

92. On 23 October, a video was circulated on social media of an Azerbaijani TV program (the actual date of broadcast might be earlier, too) where the guest, a musician says: “There is a song of our neighbours” which is very popular in Azerbaijan and is played in many occasions in Azerbaijan. “They have changed the title of the song and the name of the Armenian composer and wrote “Amirov” (some sources use “Temirov”). But it is an Armenian song and I categorically ask all our musicians not

¹⁵⁰ Diaspora Armenians group, Facebook post, photos of kindergarten children burning Armenian flag, 21 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/DiasporaArmenia/posts/pfbid02nEQKk2hkek3w3AfEc8naXjr1XX9Kgk79YXdJNb4oqaQUQeeT81HRmNXTDqS2ggewl> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁵¹ Ermənistanın İctimai Radiosu, Facebook post, 28 November 2022, https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=search&v=2029544823908165&external_log_id=9184d08d-5b99-4e43-828a-0f0161e4e341&q=Nifr%C9%99t%2C%20nifr%C9%99t%2C%20nifr%C9%99t! (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁵² BBC News Русская версия, “Врагу - ненависть, ненависть, ненависть.” Чем “культ победы” оборачивается для азербайджанских школьников, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64077433> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ İCTİMAİ TV, Əzizdən növbəti möhtəşəm ifa - “Emmanuel,” 18 October 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQUS5iS0b3U> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁵⁶ France Diplomatie, Ministère de l'Europe et Affaires Étrangères, Azerbaijan, 18 October 2022, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/azerbaijan/news/article/azerbaijan-18-oct-2022> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

to play that song. They play Armenian music and they don't even know it." Then he adds that he "will play the song very shortly because" he "gets very angry when he hears that song." "I am sorry, I have to play this song so that others stop playing it afterwards." As soon as the musicians start playing the music "Artsakh" by an Armenian composer Ara Gevorgyan, the host of the TV show says: "Stop it! I do not want to listen to it anymore!"¹⁵⁷

93. On 15 November, immediately after the adoption by the French Senate of a resolution condemning Azerbaijan, calling on imposing sanctions, oil and gas embargo, withdrawing Azerbaijani forces from Lachin Corridor, and implementing the ceasefire declaration,¹⁵⁸ the Azerbaijani social media was flooded with not only anti-French as well as Armenophobic content. An example was a caricature, made in Azerbaijan that contains anti-semitic symbols used in 1930s, portraying Armenia in the form of a rat feet, tail, big noses as well as France with frogs.¹⁵⁹

94. In November, an Armenian journalist from Civilnet online media, Lusine Hovhannisyan, published an overview of the image of Armenians in the Azerbaijani mass consumption films, focusing on the period since the Azerbaijani victory in the 44-day war.¹⁶⁰ These films present the official policy of Azerbaijan, distort the history and facts, and present the Armenian people as ugly in the wider sense. In particular, they portray Armenians as newcomers in the region with fake history, betrayers, fascist, arrogant, cruel people with ugly appearances, who lie, steal, refuse to live with Azerbaijanis although the latter had given them shelter when they had been resettled in Azerbaijan. The policy of presenting the Armenian cultural heritage as that of "Caucasian Albanians" is also propagated in the films. The films target the Armenian diaspora and France, as well as use Russia's war in Ukraine as an anti-Armenian propaganda. Sumgayit massacres of February 1988, in the second biggest city of Azerbaijan, are presented as Armenians themselves massacring other Armenians, which, according to the films, is inherent to the Armenian character. Khojaly or Aghdam massacres are attributed to Armenians even though there is considerable volume of video testimony that the massacres had been organised by the Azerbaijani political forces in their internal fight for power.¹⁶¹

95. One of such films, starts in a small workshop in Baku where the charming Azerbaijani man polishing the old dishes does not count when taking the money saying that no one has ever cheated. The man remembers the episode of his wedding in Nagorno-Karabakh before the 1980s, when the father of his Armenian wife says a toast: "When my ancestors moved to Karabakh, Orhan's [the groom's] grandfather gave us shelter at his place. It's impossible to forget such a conduct." Then, the

¹⁵⁷ Facebook, Mar Usya post, video, 23 October 2022,

https://www.facebook.com/lika.yan.3766/posts/pfbid029KzcA5yne4NnAybQRRc4zH7GR52Gn3ZBzqYDvwKbYBKepJqjU8AqQ4DGRuCpin_xol (accessed on 2 May 2023); Dialogorg.ru, Ара Геворкян выиграл. Азербайджан официально заявил, что Фикрат Амиров, приписывающий себе произведение «Арцах», не имеет никакого отношения к армянской музыке – Новости, 17 February 2021, <https://www.dialogorg.ru/news/17.02.2021-счнечочяпогмнччбкчнряаярпяояряояря/?fbclid=IwAR2-X7OnCRIQNHudtJf43ORSqblqBSGAYXHrOWQwSKkj7n07JKPTgfYNa3U> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁵⁸ Sénat, N° 3, Session Ordinaire de 2022-2023, Enregistré à la Présidence du Sénat le 3 octobre 2022, Proposition de Résolution, 15 November 2022, <https://www.senat.fr/leg/ppr22-003.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁵⁹ Twitter, Saida Zahidova post, 17 November 2022, https://twitter.com/Saida_Zahidova/status/1593153441312165889 (accessed on 1 February 2023).

¹⁶⁰ Civilnet, Lusine Hovhannisyan, Աղբրեցանի զանգվածային սպառնալու ֆիլմերը մեր մասին (Mass Consumption Films of Azerbaijan about Us), in two parts, on 27 November 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/683418/աղբրեցանի-զանգվածային-սպառնալու-ֆիլմերը-մեր-մասին> and 29 November 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/683826/աղբրեցանի-զանգվածային-սպառնալու-ֆիլմերը-մեր-մասին-մաս-երկրորդ> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁶¹ Chingiz Mustafae, Testimony in the Court in Azerbaijan, Truth about Khojaly, 25 January 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=desktop&fbclid=IwAR05rWvR0rQXy55psbsYykcF-EfQzjSol8hpoYkr8vZj18lq8m7lFU2iCPs&feature=youtu.be&v=Gba0aDRdG88> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Interview with Dana Mazalová, A Shocking Truth about Khojaly, 22 October 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-5WexuCWNU> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Azerbaijani man, after learning the news of Shushi city being taken by Armenians, opens the family album and says: “It is terrible when the friends betray you.” Then, a young Armenian man enters the courtyard, kills the friend, wife, children and his Azerbaijani friend, using a knife, gun, grenade and saying: “We do not want to live with you anymore.” This Armenian man was named “Arturik” (meaning “little” Artur), which is also used in the film to refer Armenians as a collective, showing a degree of disrespect. In the next episode, the same Azeri man is again in his workshop thinking: “I remember the first bullet. It was shot from France, Paris.” Next comes an Armenian man, Abel Aghanbekyan (a Soviet era famous economist of Armenian origin) with an unpleasant face, lying in the bed almost naked, eating chicken with all his 10 fingers. He takes a phone call and says: “Bonjour. My fiery speech in Paris is bearing fruits and destroys everything alive.” Next the film refers to Sumgayit massacres of Armenians. The thoughts of the same Azerbaijani man are: “Many say that everything started from Sumgayit. Armenians were just warming their hands.” Then, the movie takes the viewers to Sumgayit in 1988 where an Armenian with an ugly face named Edvard Grigoryan rings the bell of an apartment. Roza, an Armenian woman who knows Edvard very well opens the door. Edvard and his friends enter the apartment and start destroying and raping the woman, and the Azerbaijani man thinks again: “Armenians themselves organized the atrocities of their own people to have a cause to start the war.” The next episode shows the apartment of an Armenian Soviet era poetess Silva Kaputikyan who says: “They call us nationalist. But what is wrong with being a nationalist? The blood of the great Armenian empire flows in our vessels. Armenians must control the world.” Silva Kaputikyan presents two young men who were to start the war against Turks and other nations. Those two young men were the second and third presidents of Armenia who would, according to the film, become “bloody commanders in war.” During the whole time, the character of Silva Kaputikyan cleans her ear, nose and shows off her expensive rings. Another Armenian author, Zori Balayan, reads excerpts from his new book: “We entered a house with Khachatur [Armenian male name]. We nailed a thirteen-year-old Turk to the window so that the child would not scream, Khachatur put the mother’s cut breast in his mouth. Slowly approaching the child, I started removing the skin of his head, chest and belly. I looked at the clock: 7 minutes later the child died of bleeding. Then, Khachatur tore the body of the child apart and threw to the dogs. In the evening, we did the same to three more children.” In the end, the Azerbaijani character who is in the wheelchair comes to the bank to make his next transfer to the Azerbaijani army. He exits the bank, everyone is celebrating the victory and he shouts: “Thank you, country, thank you, people, thank you, Azerbaijan!”¹⁶²

96. The next film is “Karabakh, My Soul” which is devoted to Salatin Askerova, an Azerbaijani journalist who died in 1991 during the war while passing through Lachin to Shushi. Salatin Askerova is a national hero, there is a street named after her, and even a story in the Russian language textbook devoted to Askerova. This means that what her character in the film says shall have a great influence on the society. In addition, it is emphasized in the film that the journalist is famous for her fairness and courage to convey the truth to the reader. The film shows that Askerova goes to Nagorno-Karabakh and, accompanied with a Russian Lieutenant Colonel Larionov, goes to an Azerbaijani military hospital. Larionov informs that they have to go to an Armenian village where there are many victims. According to the film, Armenians have killed other Armenians in that village. They approach

¹⁶² Lusine Hovhannisyanyan, Civilnet, Աղբյուրների գանգվածային սպառման ֆիլմերը մեր մասին, 27 November 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/683418/աղբյուրների-գանգվածային-սպառման-ֆիլմերը-մեր-մասին> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

an old Armenian man hung on the tree with a sign “traitor” left by Armenians. The head of the hospital says that this man was a great person who was fighting against the separatist ideas of Armenian nationalists. When the head of the hospital says he has never seen such a thing that Armenians kill Armenians, the journalists, Askerova says: “I have seen it in Sumgayit” and that “the Soviet KGB and Prosecutor have discovered everything.”¹⁶³ Then, they approach a corps of an Armenian woman, Khojaly airport dispatcher, from whom, according to the Russian Lieutenant Colonel, “the Armenian separatists had demanded to cancel the flights to Baku, but she had refused to do it asserting that it was an Azerbaijani airport.” Then, they find an Armenian boy in the basement who was disgusted by Armenians and was glad to tell the Azerbaijanis what Armenians had done. Askerova’s character here meets another Azerbaijani journalist, Chingiz Mustafayev (another Azerbaijani journalist who testified that Khojaly massacres were organized by the Azerbaijani political forces in their fight for power and soon was found dead).¹⁶⁴ The two journalists stand in front of the bed of a patient with both his legs cut by his Armenian friend who, according to the film, had also killed his father-in-law, wife, two children and friend. Finally, the film refers to the cultural property. On the way to Shushi Askerova’s character asks: “Do you see this Albanian church? It has been converted into an Armenian church by the decree of tsar Nicolay.” “Armenians have appropriated our music, toponyms, food. I assure you that in some time, Azerbaijanis will learn from the Russians to repel those who try to occupy their lands.”¹⁶⁵

97. On 19 May 2022, a new computer game was released called “Maroon Berets: 2030.” The game simulates the units of Turkey’s special forces in the war. The game is set in Agri, Turkey (location of the symbol of Armenians people) as well as some marzes of Armenia. In the game, the special forces of Turkey, Maroon Berets, are called to the duty to fight against Armenia.¹⁶⁶ Following the public reaction, the names of the countries were changed into Turmenkay for Turkey and Arartiah for Armenia. Yet, the game trailer shows that the special forces fight for the flags of both Turkey and Azerbaijan.¹⁶⁷ The game, though developed by a private entity, fully falls under the Azerbaijani narratives of Armenians being an enemy whom Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem fights to kill.

98. On 28 May, Azerbaijan organized an aerospace and technology festival TEKNOFEST Azerbaijan in Baku, which was attended by the president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He gave a speech reaffirming that Azerbaijan and Turkey are “one nation, two states” and sent love to Baku and “every inch of the lands where the Caucasian Islamic Army under the command of Nuru Pasha fought

¹⁶³ Karabakh Records, Sumgayit files, Прокурор Азербайджанской ССР, Зам. Государственный советник юстиции 2 класса, И. А. Исмаилов, Обвинительное заключение По уголовному делу №18/60232-08, сентябрь, 1998, https://karabakhrecords.info/pdf/ud_18-60232-08.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁶⁴ RadarMedia, Interview de Dana Mazalova sur les massacre de Khodjaly (1992), 30 November 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6whW2lw-Hw> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Chingiz Mustafayev Testimony, Artur Martirosyan, Правда о Ходжалы - Чингиз Мустафаев / Truth about Khojaly - Chingiz Mustafaev, 2:45 minute, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gba0aDRdG88&t=165s> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁶⁵ Lusine Hovhannisyana, Civilnet, Արդրեցաւի զանգվածային սպառման ֆիլմերը մեր մասին (մաս երկրորդ), 29 November 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/683826/արդրեցաւի-զանգվածային-սպառման-ֆիլմերը-մեր-մասին-մաս-երկրորդ> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁶⁶ Serouj Baghdasarian, Facebook post, The screenshot of the game before the edits, 9 October 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10160589952269343&set=pcb.10160589956949343> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁶⁷ STEAM, Maroon Berets: 2030, 19 May 2022, updated on 14 January 2023, https://store.steampowered.com/app/1825380/Maroon_Berets_2030/?fbclid=IwAR3Y-K4j_D-OsyNqoAbV7sjjD9T_uaP4N8fCz_sfu_vLjYsB_bGwOnENLcY (accessed on 2 May 2023); Jakub Mirowski, Maroon Berets: 2030 - How to Sell Bad Propaganda in Even Worse Game, 16 January 2023, <https://www.gamepressure.com/newsroom/maroon-berets-2030-bad-propaganda-in-an-even-worse-video-game/z24f5c> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

alongside our Azerbaijani brothers.”¹⁶⁸ He actually refers to the takeover of Baku by the Caucasian Islamic Army in 1918, when the massacres of Armenians in Baku were carried out and when the Azerbaijani government with the help of Turkey tried to subject Karabakh to its rule.¹⁶⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, on the occasion of this festival, welcomed the organiser and initiator of TEKNOFEST, Selçuk Bayraktar, the producer of “Bayraktar” striking drones, which played a crucial role in Azerbaijan’s victory in 44-day war, being used against the military as well as the civilian population and civilian infrastructures. President Aliyev asserted that Azerbaijani and Turkish “peoples are always selflessly ready to take every step to protect and ensure their national pride. Selçuk Bey is also a good example for young people. I am sure that our young people will try to be like Selçuk Bey.”¹⁷⁰

99. In June, after the interview of the State Minister of Nagorno-Karabakh Artak Beglaryan to RIA Novosti on 3 June, Azerbaijan blocked the website of RIA Novosti in Azerbaijan.¹⁷¹ The Azerbaijani media reacted to the interview with proposals to remove the remaining Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as impose the Azerbaijani power over Armenians.¹⁷²

Fabrication of the history

100. Azerbaijan’s policy towards Armenians and Armenia is based on statements that Armenian history is fake, Armenians are newcomers in the region, though these assertions are rebutted merely referring to the Greek geographer Strabo (63 BC – c. 24 AD), who speaks about Armenia and Armenians in his book of “Geography,”¹⁷³ and event looking at the geographical term Armenian Plateau or Armenian Highlands covering the region.¹⁷⁴

101. Azerbaijan’s president Aliyev, basically, denies the existence of the Armenian statehood as well as Armenians in the region of Caucasus and Armenian Plateaux as indigenous people and claims both - the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia as “ancient Azerbaijani lands.”

¹⁶⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan Attended TEKNOFEST Azerbaijan Festival in Baku, 28 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56245> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁶⁹ Демоян Гайк, «Турция и Карабахский вопрос в конце XX - начале XXI веков. Историк-сравнительный анализ», Yerevan, 2006, pp. 41-42, <http://armenianhouse.org/demoyan/turkey/index.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁷⁰ Azertag.az, Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan Attended TEKNOFEST Azerbaijan Festival in Baku Video, 28 May 2022, [https://azertag.az/en/xeber/Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan attended TEKNOFEST Azerbaijan festival in Baku VIDEO-2155061](https://azertag.az/en/xeber/Presidents%20Ilham%20Aliyev%20and%20Recep%20Tayyip%20Erdogan%20attended%20TEKNOFEST%20Azerbaijan%20festival%20in%20Baku%20VIDEO-2155061) (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁷¹ Ra.am, Полное интервью госминистра Арцаха Артака Бегларяна агентству РИА НОВОСТИ 03.06.2022, 11 June 2022, <https://www.ra.am/archives/66114/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Panarmenian.net, Издание РИА Новости удалило интервью с Бегларяном после блокировки в Азербайджане, 10 June 2022, <https://www.panarmenian.net/rus/news/300839/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁷² Tatev Haryapetyan, Telegram post, 3 June 2022, <https://t.me/TatevHayrapetyan/21> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

¹⁷³ Strabo, Geography, Book XI, Chapter 14, published in Vol. V of the Loeb Classical Library edition, 1928, https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/11N*.html#ref1 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁷⁴ Britannica, Armenian Highland, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Armenian-Highland> (accessed on 12 February 2023).

102. On 25 November, president Aliyev called the education in Armenia “poisonous.” According to Aliyev, “they [Armenians] have invented so many legends about their history and their historical personalities that they started to believe in these fairy tales. All their history and all their historical products are fake. They take the history of other nations and present it as their own history.”¹⁷⁵ He added that the 44-day war was a chance for Armenians “to get rid of their manipulation with international public opinion, to invent stories about their great history and great nation.”¹⁷⁶ He further threatened Armenians to “get rid of this poisonous brainwashing,” “to change the whole paradigm of their education,” and “their ideological grounds... Otherwise, they [Armenians] will be lost entirely.”¹⁷⁷

Denial of existence of Nagorno-Karabakh

103. Azerbaijan rejects the presence of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, and the latter’s existence as any kind of independent entity or “administrative territory,” claiming that “Armenians have no historical basis for living there as well as shall not have a right to self-determination.”¹⁷⁸ By denying the Armenian presence in Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan creates grounds for using the terms “illegal armed groups,”¹⁷⁹ “occupants” against whom Azerbaijan carries out “anti-terrorist operation”¹⁸⁰ or “self-defence,” as well as for destroying, damaging, converting the Armenian cultural heritage appeared under the Azerbaijani control.

104. On 12 January, Aliyev took pride for destroying the new parliamentary building of Nagorno-Karabakh in Shushi that had been in building process before the 44-day war.¹⁸¹ On 2 May, he explicitly stated: “Our main duty was to expel the Armenians from our lands.”¹⁸² Throughout the year Aliyev repeatedly stated that Azerbaijan had “expelled the enemy from our historical lands in a matter of 44 days.”¹⁸³

¹⁷⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto “Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy,” 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Jam News, Aliyev on Armenian-Azerbaijan Border, Nagorno-Karabakh Status: We Are in Our Territory, 23 July 2021, <https://jam-news.net/aliyev-on-armenian-azerbaijan-border-nagorno-karabakh-status-we-are-in-our-territory/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, 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, 24 September 2021, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/53197> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Opening Ceremony of First Stage of “Smart Village” Project in Zangilan District, 27 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56524> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁷⁹ Haqqin.az, Кто – Азербайджан или Россия – будет разоружать незаконные вооруженные формирования в Карабахе?, 22 November 2022, <https://haqqin.az/news/266718> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸⁰ Report.az, Qarabağdaki "nazir oyunu" - Bakının səbri tükənir, anti-terror əməliyyatı qaçılmazdır – ŞƏRH (Baku's patience is running out, anti-terrorist operation is inevitable), 24 November 2022, <https://report.az/analitika/zeherlenme-dalgasi-tehran-yediyi-haqlari-qusacaq> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Local TV Channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸² Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended the Inauguration of Residential Complex for Families of Martyrs and War Disabled - Updated, 2 May 2022, <https://apa.az/en/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-and-first-lady-mehriban-aliyeva-attended-the-inauguration-of-residential-complex-for-families-of-martyrs-and-war-disabled-updated-375021> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸³ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Viewed Progress of Restoration Work at Aghdam Juma Mosque, 14 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55438> (accessed on 26 January 2023); Report.az, Ilham Aliyev and Mehriban Aliyeva Visit Memorial Plaque Dedicated to Remembrance Day in Qaraxanbayli, 27 September 2022, <https://report.az/en/domestic-politics/ilham-aliyev-and-mehriban-aliyeva-visit-commemorative-plaque-dedicated-to-remembrance-day-in-qaraxanbayli> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57801> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Samarkand Hosts 9th Summit of Organization of Turkic States, 11 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57816> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of

105. Throughout the year, president Aliyev continuously repeated his slogan¹⁸⁴ of the 44-day war “Karabakh is Azerbaijan!” expressed at various events such as visits to the territories taken under Azerbaijani control as a result of the war,¹⁸⁵ addressing the nation on the occasion of Novruz holiday on 20 March,¹⁸⁶ at the 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shushi on 22 April where he also encouraged the audience to chant it “all together,”¹⁸⁷ in his address to the Special Forces on 30 April,¹⁸⁸ at the aerospace and technology festival organised with Turkey in Baku on 28 May,¹⁸⁹ addressing the Azerbaijani armed forces on 27 June,¹⁹⁰ at a ceremony of an urban planning and architecture forum on 5 October,¹⁹¹ at a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) councils of heads of state meeting on 14 October.¹⁹²

106. Throughout 2022, president Aliyev continued referring to separate cities and villages emphasizing that, they are “ancient Azerbaijani lands.” Shushi city was declared a cultural capital of Azerbaijan and a number of events were organized there¹⁹³ as well as in Karvachar (Kalbajar) and Berdzor (Lachin).¹⁹⁴

107. Still on 31 December 2021, president Aliyev declared 2022 the “Year of Shusha” in Azerbaijan.¹⁹⁵ On 31 March Turkish city of Bursa, at an extraordinary ministerial meeting of the International Organization of Turkic Culture, known as TURKSOY, Shushi was declared the “Cultural Capital of Turkic World.” According to Azerbaijani Minister of Culture Anar Karimov, “TURKSOY’s choice proved once again that Shusha belongs to the Turkic world.”¹⁹⁶

Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Made a Speech at the Event Marking the 30th Anniversary of Establishing the New Azerbaijan Party, 21 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57919> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Visited Military Unit of Defense Ministry’s Special Forces, 30 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55917> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Viewed Progress of Restoration Work at Aghdam Juma Mosque, 14 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55438> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, The Message of Congratulation from Ilham Aliyev to the People of Azerbaijan on the Novruz Holiday, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55659> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸⁶ President of Azerbaijan, The Message of Congratulation from Ilham Aliyev to the People of Azerbaijan on the Novruz Holiday, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55659> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Gave a Speech the 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Visited Military Unit of Defense Ministry’s Special Forces, 30 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55917> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁸⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan Attended TEKNOFEST Azerbaijan Festival in Baku, 28 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56245> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁹⁰ President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar district, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁹¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attend the Opening Ceremony of the Urban Planning and Architecture of Azerbaijan Forum, 5 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57481> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attend Opening Ceremony of First Rowing Training Session in Sugovushan Settlement, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55658> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

¹⁹² President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Meeting of CIS’s Councils of Heads of State in Astana, 14 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57566> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁹³ President of Azerbaijan, Address by the President Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 1 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55195> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Gave a Speech at 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁹⁴ President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar District, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁹⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev during a Trip to Lachin, 21 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58559> (accessed on 2 May 2023);

¹⁹⁶ AZƏRTAC, Anar Kərimov: TÜRKSOY-un seçimi Şuşanın məhz türk aləminə məxsus olduğunu bir daha sübut etdi, 31 March 2022, https://azertag.az/xeber/Anar_Kerimov_TURKSOY_un_sechimi_Susanin_mehz_turk_alemine_mexsus_olduğunu_bir_daha_subut_etdi-2073587 (accessed on 2 May 2023); Mushvig Mehdiyev, Caspian News, Shusha Declared “Cultural Capital of Turkic World,” April 4, 2022, <https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/shusha-declared-cultural-capital-of-turkic-world-2022-4-1-15> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

- 108.** On 20 March, president Aliyev stated that the “so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast functions here for many years during the Soviet era for purely political purposes” and considered it injustice.¹⁹⁷ On the same day, president Aliyev announced that Mataghis village of Martakert region is “the ancient land of Azerbaijan.”¹⁹⁸
- 109.** On 12 April, president Aliyev asserted that “there is no and will not be an administrative territory called Nagorno-Karabakh.”¹⁹⁹
- 110.** On 22 April, Aliyev called Nagorno-Karabakh an “artificial entity” in Azerbaijan.²⁰⁰
- 111.** On 27 May, president Aliyev again declared that Armenians were newcomers in the region. According to his narrative, Armenians were “settled in Azerbaijan and Karabakh... after the Russo-Iranian war” when “Armenians were deported *en masse* from Iran and Eastern Anatolia in the early 19th century.”²⁰¹ He went on asserting that the “establishment of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast in 1923... aimed at planting a ticking bomb in the soul of Azerbaijan, blowing it up at any moment and destroying our people.”²⁰²
- 112.** In May and June, president Aliyev affirmed he had “solved the Karabakh conflict after the war” or “by military means” and that “the administrative territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, this name does not exist in the territory of Azerbaijan.”²⁰³
- 113.** In June, July and November, Aliyev threatened with “no peace” if Armenia does not “admit that there is nothing about Karabakh” or “there is no status of Nagorno-Karabakh” referring to the negotiation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan.²⁰⁴
- 114.** In October, president Aliyev continued denying the human rights of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh declaring that “we are not going to discuss how we will organize their life on our territory with any international player. Karabakh is Azerbaijan. The Second Karabakh War proved it on the ground... issues related to our internal affairs we never discuss with international institutions or with any country, regardless of the size and potential of that country.” Aliyev continued justifying the war against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 by it having been “conducted on the territory of Azerbaijan.”²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁷ President of Azerbaijan, The Message of Congratulation from Ilham Aliyev to the People of Azerbaijan on the Novruz Holiday, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55659> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of First Quarter of 2022, 12 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55780> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁰⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Gave a Speech at 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁰¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening Ceremony of First Stage of “Smart Village” Project in Zangilan District, 27 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56208> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.; President of Azerbaijan, President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar District, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁰⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the IX Global Baku Forum, 16 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56442> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of Six Months of This Year, 15 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56665> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto “Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy,” 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁰⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attend the Opening Ceremony of the Urban Planning and Architecture of Azerbaijan Forum, 5 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57481> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

115. A significant event that demonstrated the root reason for denial by Azerbaijan of the existence of Nagorno-Karabakh was the forceful deportation of the Armenians of Berdzor town, Aghavno and Sus villages in August, initiated a year earlier than it was intended to hand in by the ceasefire statement of November 10, 2020.

116. On 20 July, it was reported to president Aliyev that the “Armenian names have been changed to Azerbaijani on three maps,” meaning Apple, Here and Yandex, and it was planned to “fight with Google” on that matter.²⁰⁶

117. On 12 August, president Aliyev reaffirmed that “Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan” and added that “the Armenians living in Karabakh will have no status, no independence and no privilege,” but their rights will be protected “just as the rights of Azerbaijani citizens,” obviously meaning no respect for at least civic and political rights. Despite Aliyev’s promises, the above-mentioned town and villages were handed over to Azerbaijan after all the Armenians were relocated to Armenia,²⁰⁷ given the pertinent risks for their lives in light of Azerbaijan’s continual aggression.

118. On 8 November, Aliyev reaffirmed: “Before the Patriotic War, all my steps served the sole purpose of liberating our lands and expelling the enemy from our lands, and we succeeded in doing that... I said several times that each of us should bring the day of liberation, this sacred day closer with our work, and we brought it closer and closer. We dealt such a crushing blow to the enemy that they are still unable to recover from it.”²⁰⁸

Denial of existence of Armenia

119. Azerbaijan systematically denies the existence of the Armenian statehood, asserts the territories being “ancient Azerbaijani land” not only in Nagorno-Karabakh, but also in the Republic of Armenia *per se*. In Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia is considered an “Azerbaijani historical land”²⁰⁹ in school textbooks, and that “Azerbaijani lands should not be hostage to Armenians.”²¹⁰

120. The fact finding activities during the 44-day war by the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Arman Tatoyan, revealed maps carried by the Azerbaijani military personnel in their notebooks. In these maps, most parts of Armenia, with the exception of some western regions, are shown to belong to “historic Azerbaijan.” All the geographic toponyms were changed into Azerbaijani names. The maps present those territories as “still occupied” which evidences the goal of the Azerbaijani military to “liberate” those lands from Armenians. The notebooks also contained expressions inciting anti-

²⁰⁶ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Attended the Inauguration and Ground-breaking Ceremonies of New Enterprises in Sumgayit Chemical Industry Park, 20 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56704> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁰⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Television Interviewed İlham Aliyev in Basgal Settlement of İsmayılı District, 12 August 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56906> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁰⁸ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57801> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁰⁹ Xenophobia Prevention Initiative, Cognition of the World: 4 Grade Textbook (English), <http://azerichild.education/en/class-3-poznanie-mira.html>, (Original in Russian, <http://azerichild.education/pdf/quot-poznanie-mira-quot-hayat-bilgisi-fanni-uzra-3-cu-sinif-ucun-darslik.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023)), 2017, pp. 63, 80-81.

²¹⁰ Azerbaijan Ministry of Culture and Tourism, MƏKTƏBLİ OXUCULARIN VƏTƏNPƏRVƏRLİK TƏRBİYƏSİ (metodik vəsait), Baki, 2009, p. 13: “Torpaqlarımızsa şəhid olmamalıdır! Babalarımız bu torpağı quduz düşmənlərin əlindən ona görə qorumayıblar ki, onu əsrin ermənilik bəlasına qurban verək. Şəhidlər xiyabanında türk balalarının qəbir daşları ona görə sıralanmış ki, hansı bir rus əsgərisə “siz özünüzü öldürməyin, rəhbərləriniz çoxdan Qarabağı satıblar” desin,” <https://clb.az/files/mv/vetenperver1.pdf> (accessed on 3 May 2023).

Armenian hatred such as “this country is mine, yours, ours,” “the honorable citizen shall not tolerate desecration of the symbols,” etc.²¹¹

121. Having partially succeeded in ethnically cleansing Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenians as a result of the 44-day war, Azerbaijan targeted the territory of the Republic of Armenia, at different times trying to capture pieces of the land, mostly focusing on strategic heights to take the control over bigger areas. Since the tripartite ceasefire statement from 10 November, 2020, Azerbaijan had organized several attacks – penetrating and occupying the inner territories of Armenia, such as in Sev Lich and Ishkhanasar in Syunik on May 12 and November 16, 2021. Throughout the year of 2022, president Aliyev’s speeches were filled with assertions proving the furtherance of his desire to take control over some territories of Armenia.

122. Azerbaijan’s president Ilham Aliyev started the year with his address to the Azerbaijani people on the occasion of the day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, emphasising that he “does not even include and has never included Armenia in the category of a neighbor.”²¹²

123. On 12 January, president Aliyev turned to Syunik province, capital city Yerevan, lake Sevan and Hrazdan river of Armenia saying: “our historical lands of Zangazur [Syunik], as well as Goycha [Lake Sevan] were severed from us and annexed to Armenia,” “the city of Yerevan [capital of Armenia] was ceded to Armenia,” “Zangi river, which the Armenians now call the Razdan, is the historical name.”²¹³ In the same interview to the Azerbaijani local TV channel, president Aliyev asserted that Azerbaijan already uses the territory, “the airspace of Armenia as a corridor without its permission.” Referring to “Zangazur corridor” expression president Aliyev emphasized his efforts to include it in “international lexicon.”²¹⁴

124. On 2 February, at the Youth Forum on 25th anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth president Aliyev claimed that “Zangazur [Syunik marz of Armenia] was taken from us [Azerbaijan] and annexed to Armenia.”²¹⁵

125. In March, photos were circulated on social media where, the Azerbaijani “Lankaran-Tea” company released a special tea edition in honor of the 100th anniversary of signing the Treaty of Kars (the treaty that established the borders between Turkey and the three Transcaucasian republics of the Soviet Union), depicting Sevan and Syunik (calling “Goycha” and “Zangazur Magals”), the sovereign territories of the Republic of Armenia, as well as its capital, Yerevan, on the packages. The cause for concern was that these pictures have been published on the official page of the Turkish Ambassador to Azerbaijan C. Bagci on Twitter.²¹⁶

²¹¹ Arman Tatoyan, Facebook post, Maps, 4 April 2022, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0VRNk6k1ts45Yf7aGk3E7CEXJEp3hXesboaAEz4Z3H8KHfNKw7fmGoFyXsr6LmduEl&id=100017676420633 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²¹² President of Azerbaijan, Address by the President Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 1 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55195> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²¹³ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev was Interviewed by Local TV channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Azertac.az, President Ilham Aliyev Attended Youth Forum on 25th Anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth, 2 February 2022, <https://azertac.az/en/xeber/1997516> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²¹⁶ Varuzhan Geghamyan, Facebook post, 13 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/varuzhandragoman/posts/629972215068645> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

126. On 22 April, at the Congress of World Azerbaijanis organised in occupied Shushi, president Aliyev repeated that “Zangazur was severed from the rest of Azerbaijan and handed over to Armenia” just like “Irevan [Yerevan] was ceded to Armenia.”²¹⁷

127. On 29 April, at an international conference at ADA University president Aliyev claimed that “there have been many maps since 1918 where Yerevan was a part of Azerbaijan” and that “Zangazur was part of Azerbaijan” as well.”²¹⁸

128. On 27 May, president Aliyev again said that “Armenia cannot be considered a military, political, economic power, or even a mediocre state” after praising Azerbaijan as being a “land of stability and security.”²¹⁹ He repeated that Azerbaijan had “handed over our ancient city Irevan [Yerevan] to Armenia,” “Zangazur was severed from us as well” and added a new term “our historical land of Western Zangazur” (referring to the territory of the Republic of Armenia), which “was separated from Azerbaijan and annexed to Armenia.”²²⁰

129. On June 16, at the opening of the IX Global Baku Forum, president Aliyev highlighted that it is “not fair” that there is no “Zangazur corridor,” but there is a corridor connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia,²²¹ thus claiming for a passage between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan through the territory of Armenia. Until the end of the year, Azerbaijan has been actively promoting “Zangazur corridor,” as being necessary for the regional development, including among international partners,²²² also implying it to be extraterritorial, under Azerbaijani control.

130. The parallels drawn between the Lachin Corridor and the so-called “Zangazur corridor” repeated at different discourses usually do not take into consideration of the political-geographic differences. Particularly, Nagorno-Karabakh is an enclave encircled and isolated by hostile government of Azerbaijan, and Lachin Corridor is the only life road that allows for communication between the Armenian people in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia as well as provides a connection with the outside world. Meanwhile, Nakhchivan is not an isolated, does not have any threats from neighbors. It borders with Turkey and Iran, and actually already has a road connecting with Azerbaijan through the territory Iran. Meanwhile, the issue of unblocking of communications existing in the

²¹⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Gave a Speech at 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023); *Armiya.az*, Удар по армянской пропаганде чайной коллекцией, 14 March 2022, <http://armiya.az/ru/news/185403/Удар-по-армянской-пропаганде-чайной-коллекцией> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Monument Watch, Azerbaijan Declares Yerevan, Sevan and Syunik “Azerbaijani Heritage,” 19 March 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/azerbaijan-declares-yerevan-sevan-and-syunik-azerbaijani-heritage/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²¹⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Speech of Ilham Aliyev at the International Conference on “South Caucasus: Development and Cooperation” Was Held at ADA University, 29 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55909> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²¹⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening Ceremony of First Stage of “Smart Village” Project in Zangilan District, 27 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56208> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the IX Global Baku Forum, 16 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56442> (accessed on 2 May 2022); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of Six Months of This Year, 15 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56665> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57801> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²²² President of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Television Interviewed Ailham Aliyev in Basgal Settlement of Ismayili District, 12 August 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56906> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States Summit Gets Underway in Samarkand, 16 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57224> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Takes Part in Plenary Session of 6th Summit of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in Astana, 13 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57553> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Samarkand Hosts 9th Summit of Organization of Turkic States, 11 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57816> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Soviet period are part of the tripartite statement from 10 November, 2020, which are currently being negotiated.

131. On 14 July, president Aliyev signed a decree on “Celebration of the 140 years of Creation of Irevanian [Yerevan] State Azerbaijani Dramatic Theatre.” According to the decree, theatre started operating in “in Irevanian magal, famous for being one of the important scientific, educational and cultural centres, where Azerbaijanis originally lived.” The decree did not refrain from mentioning the “Armenian vandalism” and added that the theatre is “part of our historic destiny of our compatriots in our indigenous Azerbaijani lands.”²²³

132. On 20 July, the government of Azerbaijan made a decision to register the names of the birthplaces of those born in Armenia using the “historical Azerbaijani names of the places” rather than the Armenian toponyms in restoration of citizenship or marriage certificates.²²⁴ For instance, Jermuk is called “Istisu,” Sisian – “Qarakilsə,” Syunik village Vaghatur – “Vağudi,” Vardenis – “Basarkeçer,” Gegharkunik villages Norabak – “Azizli,” Verin Shorzha – Yukhari Shorzha, etc. The same approach is pursued with regard to Nagorno-Karabakh. For instance, Martakert is called Ağdərə, Martuni is called Xocavənd, Shushi – “Shusha,” Stepanakert – “Kankendi,” etc.²²⁵ The purpose of this tactic was twofold – on the one hand, to remove the Armenian traces from the region by all means possible, and on the other hand, to materialize the claims on the territories of the Republic of Armenia, calling it Western Azerbaijan.

133. On 20 October, a weightlifting club with the name “Zangazur” was opened in the area that Azerbaijan had taken control as a result of the 44-day war. Presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey participated in its opening ceremony.²²⁶

134. On 25 November, İlham Aliyev further denied the Armenian sovereignty announcing that “we have discussions on the Zangazur corridor with Russia, not with Armenia, because Armenia is a satellite country. It’s a dependent country. Its independence is very symbolic, and we will not waste time negotiating with them.”²²⁷ He added that after the discussions on “Zangazur corridor” with Russia, Armenia will not “be able to block this project.”²²⁸ Within the same speech, president Aliyev repeated that “all their [Armenian] history and all their historical products are fake. They take the history of other nations and present it as their own,” which is “poisonous conscience,” and that “the war for them [Armenians] is a chance to get rid of that” and “their manipulations to invent stories about their great history and great nation.”²²⁹

²²³ Day.az, Будет отмечено 140-летие Иреванского государственного азербайджанского драматического театра - Распоряжение Президента Ильхама Алиева, 14 July 2022, <https://news.day.az/officialchronicle/1478824.html> (accessed on 12 February 2023).

²²⁴ Apa.az, Ermənistanda qeydə alınmış nikah sənədlərinin və digər akt qeydlərinin bərpası qaydası dəyişir, 20 July 2022, <https://apa.az/az/sosial/ermenistanda-qeyde-alinmis-nikah-senedlerinin-ve-diger-akt-qeydlerinin-berpasi-qaydasi-deyisir-714008> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Aliqmedia, Հայաստանում ծնված ադրբեյջանցիների ծննդավայրերի անունները կփոխվեն, 20 July 2022, <https://www.aliqmedia.am/2022/07/20/73383> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²²⁵ Tatoyan Foundation. Centre for Law and Justice, The Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan Presents Armenian Communities with False Azerbaijani Names. “Tatoyan” Foundation Draws Appeals to the International Community, 28 December 2022, <https://tatoyanfoundation.org/adrbejani-pn-n-hayastani-hamaynkhnerh/?lang=en> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²²⁶ European Weightlifting Federation, Presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey Attended Opening Ceremony of “Zangazur Dost” Weightlifting Club in Zangilan, 21 October 2022, <https://ewf.sport/2022/10/21/presidents-of-azerbaijan-and-turkiye-attended-opening-ceremony-of-zangazur-dost-weightlifting-club-in-zangilan> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²²⁷ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto “Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy,” 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

135. Turkey fully supported Azerbaijan regarding this issue as well, including in the bilateral process with Armenia. For instance, Turkish president Erdogan told the journalists that Turkey raised the claim for “Zangazur corridor” during his meeting with Armenians Prime Minister in October 2022.²³⁰

136. President Aliyev repeatedly emphasized that the reopening of Lachin Corridor and ensuring connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia in the 1990s war was a negative development by which “Armenians achieved their dream.”²³¹

137. Evidently, on December 12, the Azerbaijani president took a “corrective action” and blocked Lachin Corridor through staging demonstration of Azerbaijani activists raising unjustified environmental issues,²³² which deprived Nagorno-Karabakh people of food, gas, electricity and internet, supplied by Armenia through the corridor.

138. On 24 December, the president of Azerbaijan, at his meeting with the “Western Azerbaijan Community” announced that “Armenia was never present in this region before. “Present-day Armenia is our land” which according to Aliyev, “is a historical fact.”²³³ According to Aliyev, the fact of “Western Azerbaijan” being the “historical land of Azerbaijan” is evidenced by “the 20th century map displayed in this building,” where his meeting was taking place, and that “the Western Azerbaijanis will return to their native lands with great desire and enthusiasm” just like those Azerbaijani who had never seen Nagorno-Karabakh but who had been settled in the areas occupied by Azerbaijan in the 44-days war, including the “kids and youth who had never seen those lands.”²³⁴ Aliyev continued that Armenians “never had a state in this territory, in the South Caucasus,” and added that Azerbaijan “must present these facts in a focused and organised manner.” He further asserted that it is crucial that “the Western Azerbaijan Community functions in a more organised manner” and reaffirmed the coordination of this organization by the Azerbaijani state. He announced the fact that “state bodies have provided and will continue to provide their support,” that Aliyev himself “will issue further instructions,” that “the community should have an international agenda to communicate to the world, just as we did with Karabakh,” and that “our history books should be updated.” To further rewrite the history and incorporate the falsified facts into the international agenda, Aliyev told he has planned to hold “an international conference on Western Azerbaijan in Baku once a year or every two years. We will invite scientists, archaeologists and historians from the countries we consider our friends so that we can hold a prestigious international conference.” President Aliyev also called it an “unforgivable action” that “our historical city, Irevan [Yerevan]” was presented to Armenia. He qualified another action as wrongful and erroneous that “Zangazur, another historical land of ours, was severed from Azerbaijan and annexed to Armenia.” As a culmination of his speech, president Aliyev stated that Armenians

²³⁰ Ermenihaber.am, Էրդողանը՝ Փաշինյանի հետ հանդիպման և «Չանգեզուրի միջանցքի» մասին, 14 October 2022, <https://www.ermenihaber.am/am/news/2022/10/14/Էրդողան-Փաշինյան/238513> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²³¹ President of Azerbaijan, President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar District, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev during a Trip to Lachin, 21 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58559> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Made a Speech at the Event Marking the 30th Anniversary of Establishing the New Azerbaijan Party, 21 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57919> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²³² Amnesty International, 9 February 2023, Azerbaijan: Blockade of Lachin Corridor Putting Thousands of Lives in Peril Must be Immediately Lifted <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/02/azerbaijan-blockade-of-lachin-corridor-putting-thousands-of-lives-in-peril-must-be-immediately-lifted> (accessed on 3 May, 2023).

²³³ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with a Group of intellectuals from Western Azerbaijan, 24 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58470> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Ilham Aliyev Viewed Conditions Created at Administrative Building of Western Azerbaijan Community, 24 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58330> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²³⁴ Ibid.

“expelled all other ethnicities from there [Armenia] and established a state for themselves in someone else’s land.” He repeated: “Present-day Armenia is our land. When I repeatedly said this before, they tried to object and allege that I have territorial claims. I am saying this as a historical fact.”²³⁵

139. President of Azerbaijan finalised the year of 2022 with repeating that “Zangazur corridor will definitely be opened, whether Armenia wants it or not.”²³⁶

Threats of the use of force

Hate and threat rhetoric by the Azerbaijani president

140. Throughout 2022, Azerbaijan continued glorifying the use of force in 2022 to “solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” by “liberation of the ancient Azerbaijani lands from enemy,” in this case by “liberation” meaning the ethnic cleansing of the territories that fell under the Azerbaijani control. President Aliyev had emphasized many times that Azerbaijan had “started the war” since the peaceful negotiations with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs “were not effective” since it had not led to the vacation of the Armenians from “the Azerbaijani lands.” This comes in parallel with the denial of the existence of Nagorno-Karabakh and its right to self-determination, whereas the negotiations under the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries had determined and the parties had accepted the three principles - self-determination, territorial integrity and non-use and threat of force in the process of the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

141. The year started with the president Aliyev asserting that Azerbaijan “will continue to increase the military strength.”²³⁷ Azerbaijan further increased its military budget for 2022 and 2023.²³⁸

142. On 12 January, in his interview to the local TV channels, president Aliyev rejected the peaceful negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs saying that it “should not be dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because it has been resolved” and accepts that “no one would allow us the opportunity to liberate our lands by force.”²³⁹

143. On 30 January, in another interview with a Russian TV channel, president Aliyev repeated that Azerbaijan had solved the conflict “militarily and politically.”²⁴⁰

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Address of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 31 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58523> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²³⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Address by the President Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 1 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55195> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²³⁸ Caspian News, Gunay Hajoyeva, 2 Azerbaijan Increases Defense & Security Budget for 2023, 6 October 2022, <https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/azerbaijan-increases-defense-security-budget-for-2023-2022-10-26-0> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Eurasianet, After War Victory, Azerbaijan Keeps Increasing Military Spending, 12 May 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/after-war-victory-azerbaijan-keeps-increasing-military-spending> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²³⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Because We Will not Allow it. President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Local TV channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁴⁰ President of Azerbaijan, “Rossiya 24” TV Channel Broadcast “Formula of Power” Program Dedicated to 30th Anniversary of Restoration of Azerbaijan’s State Independence and 60th Birthday of President Ilham Aliyev, 30 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55317> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

144. In February, Aliyev said that the conflict “would not be solved through meaningless and empty negotiations,”²⁴¹ and called the resort to force was a “necessary measure” for resolving the conflict.²⁴²

145. In March, Aliyev addressing his nation on the occasion of Novruz reaffirmed that “no negotiations or political steps brought us any closer to our goal,” therefore, “all our Armed Forces fulfilled the historical mission” and “liberated our homeland.”²⁴³

146. In April, addressing the world Azerbaijanis, president Aliyev affirmed that Azerbaijan had “solved the conflict by military and political means,” added that during the 44-day war he has appealed to the Armenian leadership to provide a “timeline of when it [Armenia] would vacate our lands” and that “as soon as it happened, we would stop the war.” Aliyev emphasized that by 44-day war “we [Azerbaijanis] have driven the enemy out of our lands.” He added that he had said before that “we [Azerbaijanis] will liberate our ancestral lands at any cost,” and that they waged war not only against Armenia but also against “the Armenians of the world.”²⁴⁴ He continued reminding that “we [Azerbaijanis] united like a fist and inflicted such crushing blows on the enemy that they are still unable to recover.”²⁴⁵

147. In April, president Aliyev continued threats of use of force against Armenia if the latter did not “grant us passage through Zangazur” and added that “we will achieve what we want sooner or later anyway.”²⁴⁶ Reminding Armenia of the 44-days war, Aliyev threatened that if Armenia refuses to concede to the deprivation of any status of Nagorno-Karabakh, then, “we will not recognise the territorial integrity of Armenia and will officially declare that.”²⁴⁷

148. On 29 April, at the International conference on “South Caucasus: Development and Cooperation” in Baku Aliyev continued his threats stating that Armenians “should put aside all illusions, abandon such thoughts as rebuilding the army, bringing the population to 5 million and, having accumulated strength, return the land. Otherwise, it will become the official end of their statehood.”²⁴⁸

149. In May, president Aliyev called to read all his speeches in the last 10 years reaffirming: “I said that international law does not work... If necessary, we must drive the enemy out of our lands by force. I said it and I did it.” He added that by use of such force “we have resolved this issue, and the whole world accepts it, whether Armenia wants it or not. We have resolved the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,” as a result of which “Nagorno-Karabakh, this name does not exist.”²⁴⁹ In the same manner, Azerbaijan

²⁴¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended Youth Forum on 25th Anniversary of Day of Azerbaijani Youth, 2 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55348> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

²⁴² Statements of the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia on the Occasion of Signing the Declaration on Allied Interaction between Azerbaijan and Russia, President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and President Vladimir Putin Have Made Press Statements, 22 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55497> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

²⁴³ President of Azerbaijan, The Message of Congratulation from Ilham Aliyev to the People of Azerbaijan on the Novruz Holiday, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55659> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁴⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Gave a Speech at 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁴⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Visited Military Unit of Defense Ministry's Special Forces, 30 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55917> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁴⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of First Quarter of 2022, 12 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55780> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁴⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Gave a Speech at 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha, 22 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55859> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁴⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Speech of Ilham Aliyev at the International Conference on “South Caucasus: Development and Cooperation” was Held at ADA University, 29 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55909> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁴⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attended Opening Ceremony of First Stage of “Smart Village” Project in Zangilan District, 27 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56208> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

attempts to force militarily an opening of a corridor through the territory of Armenia. As president Aliyev emphasized on 27 May, “the opening of the Zangazur corridor... we are achieving this, as I said we would. So we are dictating the agenda. How? Of course, at the expense of the consequences of the war. Because we are a victorious state and Armenia is a defeated state. This reality must be accepted by everyone, and it is. Of course, this factor is in the forefront during Azerbaijani-Armenian contacts.”²⁵⁰

150. On 16 June, at the opening ceremony of the IX Global Baku Forum, president Aliyev continued threats to use force against Armenia if the latter does not give a corridor through its southern province, of Syunik. Aliyev justified these threats with closing the Lachin Corridor that, the only way that connects Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and to the world. Otherwise, according to president Aliyev, “it will be difficult to talk about peace” if Armenia does not provide a “corridor” to Azerbaijan. He also threatened Armenia with the “new confrontation” for raising the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh calling it “absolutely counterproductive and dangerous for Armenia itself.” He further stated that “if they want another war, it will be a catastrophe for them and they clearly understand it and I think that the government and the revanchist forces in Armenia clearly understand that will be the end of their statehood.”²⁵¹

151. Also, he mentioned about the Azerbaijani “iron fist” in regard with the process of demarcation of borders, in case if Armenia does not give up the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁵²

152. On June 27, president Aliyev announced that “we want the realities of war to be accepted by all” and called on Armenians “not forget this [44-day] war, neither themselves, nor their generations. Let them know that Azerbaijan is a strong state.”²⁵³

153. On 15 July, president Aliyev threatened Armenia in case it continued raising the issues of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the involvement of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs as mediators. He called it “dangerous for Armenia” and threatened that “if these harmful tendencies are not nipped in the bud, they may have consequences one day... we see them, detect them, and warn. Let everyone draw a conclusion from our warnings, as they say. So much on this issue.”²⁵⁴

154. On 21 September, president Aliyev again asserted that “we [Azerbaijanis] have liberated our lands by force” and “we are proud of it.”²⁵⁵ He emphasized: “no-one returned these lands to us through negotiations.”²⁵⁶ Aliyev stated again and again that as a result of that war, the people of Azerbaijan “expelled the enemy from our native land.”²⁵⁷

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the IX Global Baku Forum, 16 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56442> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Opening Ceremony of the IX Global Baku Forum, 16 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56458> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁵² President of Azerbaijan, President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of a Military Base in Kalbajar District, 27 June 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56537> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of Six Months of This Year, 15 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56665> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁵⁵ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev during a Trip to Lachin, 21 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58559> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Apa.az, President Ilham Aliyev raised Azerbaijani flag in city of Lachin, 21 September 2022, <https://apa.az/en/official-news/president-ilham-aliyev-raised-azerbaijani-flag-in-city-of-lachin-updated-385315> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Have Visited the Fuzuli District, 27 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57387> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

155. On 8 November, on the day of celebration of his victory in 44-day war, in the occupied Shusha, president of Azerbaijan Aliyev announced that the “state budget for the next year has reached a record high, including the funds allocated for military purposes” for the purpose of forcing Armenia to “fully withdraw its armed forces from Karabakh,” “to make the Zangazur corridor available to us.” He added that “the current Azerbaijan Army is stronger than the Azerbaijan Army two years ago, and everyone should know this. Armenia and everyone else should know this!”²⁵⁸ Aliyev emphasized that “Karabakh is our [Azerbaijani] land,” again threatened that “if they [Armenians] rely on anyone, they will face another tragedy.”²⁵⁹ He added that “if we were afraid of someone, we would never have started” the war, and that “my steps served sole purpose of liberating our lands and expelling the enemy from our lands.” Aliyev continued that if the handover of the rest of the territories by the 9 November Declaration did not take place peacefully, they would in any ways be taken by Azerbaijan: “we would have smashed their heads.”²⁶⁰

156. On 17 November, president Aliyev when receiving the EU delegation conveyed a message of condemnation of the fact that his policy was compared to that of the ISIS. More specifically he stated that “the country [Armenia] which wants peace should refrain from very dangerous rhetoric, which Armenian officials afforded recently, comparing Azerbaijan to ISIS and Al-Qaeda, I think is a very dangerous rhetoric... Mr. Pashinyan [Prime Minister of Armenia] when he uses this wording, he should know that we hear it, and what will be our reaction he should also think about.”²⁶¹

157. On 25 November, referring to the “fake Armenian history” and the 44-day war, Aliyev stated that “I was trying to explain; I was trying to say that we will never tolerate this situation, that our patience is coming to an end, and that we will destroy you [Armenia]. This is my quote. If the war starts, we will destroy you. And it was not a kind of sign of some bravery or propaganda. This was a reality. We knew what we could do and what they were capable of. And even if they had physical military support from other countries, that would not have stopped us. We were motivated. We were ready to die rather than continue like that.”²⁶²

Hate and threat rhetoric spread by other high-ranking officials

158. Racism and hatred towards Armenians, demonization, terrorizing speeches, intention to destroy are not limited to the president of Azerbaijan, but encompass high level politicians and even diplomats, further evidencing the gravest form of discrimination against the Armenian people and actually - the denial of their peaceful co-existence. Those were particularly intensified in connection with Azerbaijani offensives on the border of Armenia and on the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh.

²⁵⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57801> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Delegation Led by Special Envoy of European Union for Eastern Partnership, 17 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57891> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁶² President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto “Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy,” 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

159. On 26 March, an Azerbaijani member of parliament (MP), Vugar Iskenderov, emphasized “the hypocrisy of Armenia, the treachery of the Armenian leaders, how they betray their owners. Our despicable neighbors have shown those features during the Russian-Ukrainian tension.”²⁶³

160. On 27 July, Assistant to Azerbaijani President, Colonel-General Maharram Aliyev, announced that “If Armenia does not implement the statement, no one can guarantee that they won’t have bigger problems. I think that the more Armenia continues its efforts [not accepting Azerbaijan’s terms], their current miserable condition will be deteriorating.”²⁶⁴

161. On the same day the head of the State Security Service of Azerbaijan, Colonel General Ali Nagiyev, warned that “revanchist forces in Armenia have not yet abandoned their provocative intentions and the opposition of this country is making serious attempts to undermine the process of normalizing Azerbaijani relations,” but ensured that “as a result of the vigilance of the Azerbaijani special services, any possible negative situations associated with this will be strongly prevented.”²⁶⁵

162. On 2 August, the Azerbaijani MP, Fatma Yildirim, stated that “mine terror is one of the main indicators of Armenian terrorism.” She pointed at “mining of territories,” “the destruction of Karabakh lands” by Armenians throughout the recent 30 years.²⁶⁶ This statement came in parallel with the Azerbaijan’s coordinated armed attacks against Nagorno-Karabakh on 1-3 August.

163. On 4 August, another Azerbaijani MP, Fazil Mustafa, announced that “Azerbaijan considers the issue [the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict] to be an internal one. This is our territory. If the Armenians want to live here, they must accept our terms. If they want to resist, we will crush their heads....”²⁶⁷

164. On 5 August, an MP from ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party, Aziz Alekberli, asserted that “historical experience shows that Armenians are psychologically ill society,” therefore, the coexistence in peace with them is “practically impossible,” and that Armenians have “never been able to live peacefully with their neighbors.” He went on rejecting the existence of Armenia pointing out “Western Azerbaijan - present Armenia” pointing that “our [their] ancestors lived in this area for millennia.” He stated, in particular: “The Western Azerbaijan issue is a national one, this is the historical land of Azerbaijan until the last inch of geography. Not only Irevan Khanate, but also Karabakh Khanate in the example of West Zangazur, Nakhchivan Khanate in the example of Daralayaz district [covering Armenia’s Vayots Dzor marz], Dilijan Gorge [Dilijan is a town in Armenia’s North] and Ganja Khanate in the example of Shamshaddil Sultanate, mountainous part of Borchal are located in this area.” He glorified the president of Azerbaijan and the victory in 44-days war and encouraged to do the same for struggle for “Western Azerbaijan” [Armenia]: “In the 44-day Patriotic War, we, as a nation, united like an iron fist and won the victory with the iron will and determination demonstrated by the victorious Supreme Commander-in-chief. We must demonstrate the same national unity in the

²⁶³ Report.az, “Qərbdə, Rusiyada Ermənistanın xəyanətkarlığı ənənəyə çevirdiyini yaxşı bilirlər, 26 March 2022, <https://report.az/xarici-siyaset/qerbde-rusiyada-ermenistanin-xeyanetkarligi-eneneye-cevirdiyini-yaxsi-bilirler> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁶⁴ Report.az, Məhərrəm Əliyev: “Ermənistan Bəyanatı icra etməsə, böyük problemlərin yaranmayacağına kimsə zəmanət verə bilməz,” 25 July 2022, <https://report.az/region-xeberleri/meherrem-eliyev-ermenistan-beyanati-icra-etmese-boyuk-problemlerin-yaranmayacagina-kimse-zemanet-vere-bilmez> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁶⁵ Silkway News English, Head of Special Services of Azerbaijan Warns: “Revanchist Forces in Armenia Can Undermine Peaceful Process in Karabakh,” 27 July 2022, <https://www.silkway.news/head-of-special-services-of-azerbaijan-84453> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁶⁶ Apa.az, Fatma Yıldırım: Mina terroru erməni terrorizminin əsas göstəricilərindən biridir, 2 August 2022, <https://apa.az/az/sosial/fatma-yildirim-mina-terroru-ermeni-terrorizminin-esas-gostericilerinden-biridir-716063> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁶⁷ Reyting.az, Fazil Mustafa: “Erməniyə deyilir ki, alternativ yol çəkilib, şələ-şülənizi yığıb Laçından çıxın,” 4 August 2022, <https://reyting.az/slayd/85835-fazil-mustafa-ermeniye-deyilir-ki-alternativ-yol-cekilib-sele-sulenizi-yigib-lacindan-cixin.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

struggle for Western Azerbaijan.” Alekberli quoted Aliyev, “our distinguished president” on his “wise saying” that “the international law is not a power; the power is the international law.” According to the MP, Azerbaijan “must expose Armenian lies and falsifications to the end.”²⁶⁸

165. On the same day, an MP, Vahid Ahmedov called on Azerbaijan to “restore its borders [...] through war, force” since “no land is given just like that.” He also threatened Armenia that if it “fails to establish normal relations with Turkey-Azerbaijan within 5 years, its future in the region as a state is under question then.”²⁶⁹

166. On 8 August, an MP, Fazil Mustafa, after noting that “the West Azerbaijani community was created. An important process has been launched,” emphasized that “we must constantly create moral and psychological problems for Armenia” and “keep claims alive in the Armenian space,” “at the negotiating table in diplomatic circles and international organizations.” He recommended that “necessary funds should be allocated for creating television, radio, internet resources” for this purpose. He also emphasized the “need to create teams named “Irevan” and “Zangazur” [as a] promotion of the idea of western Azerbaijan [which] would have a good effect,” to name “streets, parks metro” as “Zangazur and Irevan,” just like the name “Karabakh” was promoted. According to Mustafa, the “football team “Karabakh” is our pride” and “there was no socio-political organization in the world that promoted the Karabakh case of Azerbaijan as much as this team.”²⁷⁰

167. On 5 September, an MP, Fazail Agamali, while answering the question “What do you think, will Armenians live in our territories accepting Azerbaijani rules?” stated: “Armenians will not stay on those territories. They will emigrate, they will leave Karabakh. That emigration has already started. The vast majority of the people under the age of 50 will leave within a year. In the best case scenario only the elder people will remain in Karabakh. In that case the Peacekeepers don’t need to stay in Karabakh. Armenia won’t to get rid of the Russian influence. If Armenians take direction towards West, they will emigrate to France or the USA. They will live in different parts of the world. Thus, Armenia will stay without Armenians. We will return to our ancestral lands without shooting and giving martyrs.”²⁷¹

168. On 8 September, an MP from the ruling party, Anar Isgandarov, stated: “Armenian is cruel, merciless, more fascist than fascist! There is no mercy, no justice. In fact, they are so merciless and cruel that they eat not only people standing on two legs, but also the graves of people who have passed away for hundreds of years. Armenia is alien to this territory, it is not the owner of this territory, it is not here! It should not remain in history not only because of its absence, but also because of its merciless and cruel nature.”²⁷²

169. On 13 September, the day of offensive launched by Azerbaijan against Armenia, the Chair of the Parliamentary Defence, Security and Anti-corruption Committee, Ziyafet Asgarov, accused the

²⁶⁸ Apa.az, “Qərbi Azərbaycan İcması”nın sədri: “Biz öz tarixi yurdlarımıza mütləq qayıdacağıq” – MÜSAHİBƏ, 5 August 2022, <https://apa.az/az/daxili-siyaset/qerbi-azerbaycan-icmasinin-sedri-biz-oz-tarixi-yurdlarimiza-mutleq-qayidacagiq-musahibe-716377> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁶⁹ Pankpost.az, 5 August 2022, <https://www.bakupost.az/antiterror-emeliyyati-davam-etmelidir-vahid-ehmedov> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁷⁰ Moderator.az, Deputatdan ilginclik təklif: “Azərbaycan” əvəzinə “Zəngəzur” daha diqqətçəkici olmazdı?, 8 August 2022, <https://moderator.az/az/cemiyet/540504/deputatdan-ilginclik-azereyl-evezine-zengezur-daha-diqqetcekici-olmazdimi/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁷¹ Pravda, “Fazail Agamali: Armenians Will Not Stay on Those Territories. They Will Emigrate, They Will Leave Karabakh,” 5 September 2022, <https://pravda.az/news/91734> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁷² Demokrat.az, “Ermənilər yüz illər boyu insanların qəbirlərini gərəşənlər kimi eşiblər” — Deputat, 8 September 2022, <https://demokrat.az/az/news/122223/ermeniler-yuz-iller-boyu-insanlarin-qebirlerini-goresenler-kimi-esibler-deputat> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

OSCE Minsk Group for “creating absurd ideas about the “status” of Nagorno-Karabakh and considered raising the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as a “provocation” by Armenia which is a “proof that there is no point in talking to them [Armenians] through political and diplomatic means, therefore, from now on, only the language they understand will be spoken [the iron fist of Azerbaijan].”²⁷³

170. On the same day, another member of Azerbaijani parliament, Anar Isgandarov, referring to the territories of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh said that “there is West Zangazur as well as East Zangazur. We protect and defend our territorial integrity.” He added that the “enemy [Armenians] is ruthless, as cunning as it is cruel, and can penetrate all kinds of frost...we already know Armenians and their cruel faces are familiar to us. We will never forgive them.”²⁷⁴

171. On the same day, another Azerbaijani MP, Fazail Agamali, called Armenians “a barbaric, and fascist race,” and unequivocally called for the eradication of Armenia as a state.²⁷⁵

172. On 15 September, during the protests of the Armenian community in Washington D.C. in front of the embassy of Azerbaijan demanding to end the shelling of civilians, the first Secretary of the embassy of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Novruzov, explicitly threatened to sexually assault Armenian protesting women and repeatedly said “I will fuck you.” He also stole and angrily crushed and stomped on a sign that read “Aliyev is guilty of war crimes.”²⁷⁶

173. On 16 September, another MP, Vugar Iskenderov, stated that “the brain of Armenians is poisoned to the level that they live with the fantasies of Greater Armenia.”²⁷⁷

174. On 19 September, a female member of the parliament of Azerbaijan from the ruling “New Azerbaijan” party, Malahat Ibrahimgizi, called the protests “operations of Armenian fascism,” the participants - “Armenian vandals,” and emphasized that “throughout history, treachery, hypocrisy, deceitfulness have been formed as national characteristics for the Armenian people living as parasites in the arms of other nations and states.”²⁷⁸

²⁷³ Telegraf, Ermənistan bu yolu seçib: onların anladığı dildə danışacağıq - Komitə sədri, 13 September 2022, <https://telegraf.com/news/siyaset/340649.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁷⁴ Democrat.az, “Təxribatlar Ermənistanın sonunu yaxınlaşdırır” — Deputat, 13 September 2022, <https://demokrat.az/az/news/122769/texribatlar-ermenistanin-sonunu-yaxinlasdirir-deputat> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁷⁵ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁷⁶ Zartonk media, Instagram post, video, 17 September 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CinL2UsDm4D/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁷⁷ Azpolitika.info, “HAZIRDA ERMƏNİSTANIN BAŞINA DƏYƏN “DƏMİR ŞAPALAQ”DIR...” – “Bu təxribatların arxasında da müəyyən qüvvələr var, İrəvan yenə məşadır,” 19 September 2022, <https://azpolitika.info/?p=688741> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), para. 42, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

²⁷⁸ Bakivaxti.az, Ermənilər həmişə başqa xalqların qoltuğunda parazit kimi yaşayıb – Deputat, 19 September 2022, <https://bakivaxti.az/ru/posts/detail/ermeniler-hemise-basqa-xalqlarin-qoltugunda-parazit-kimi-yasayib-deputat-1663573268> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

175. On the same day, actually a few days after the aggression, the Azerbaijani pro-governmental media announced the formation of a “Goycha-Zangazur Republic,” which included Gegharkunik and Syunik marzes of Armenia and aiming at uniting the Turks in the world.²⁷⁹ Most of the websites that had initially posted the announcement, deleted it the same day. Meanwhile, a campaign started for discrediting the idea of “Goycha-Zangazur Republic,” claiming it harmful to the larger goal of Western Azerbaijan.²⁸⁰

176. On 11 October, an MP, Elman Mamedov, declared: “The whole territory of today’s state so-called “Armenia” is our historic land.” He added: “We can claim that territory, the whole Western Zangazur, as well as other regions. Armenia does not have money to compensate for the war crimes of the last 30 years, therefore, they must give us part of their territory instead.”²⁸¹

177. On the same day, the ambassador of Azerbaijan to France tweeted: “These bombings bear the genetic marks of Armenian efforts: cynicism and treachery in design, secrecy in preparation, brutality in execution. All the victims saw their dreams shattered by the cruelty of Armenian terrorism.”²⁸² This outrageous post was even criticised by the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA) which announced: “This tweet bears the hallmark of biological racism. French law condemns this type of remark. It is probably worth reminding an ambassador in office of this.”²⁸³

178. On 12 December, an MP, Aziz Alakbarov (Alekberli), now the chairman of the “Board of Western Azerbaijan Community,” made statements that the territory of the Republic of Armenia “is the historical land of Azerbaijan,” that Armenia’s history began just “200 years ago” and that Armenians in the area were the result of the resettlement.” He went on blaming “Armenian gangs” for having “committed acts of genocide against Azerbaijanis” at the beginning of the 20th century, and later throughout the history. Then he referred to the various places in Armenia and claimed that Armenians had just renamed the names of those “ancient Azerbaijani” towns, villages, mountains and rivers.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ Eurasianet, The Rise and Fall of Azerbaijan’s “Goycha-Zangazur Republic,” 22 September 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/the-rise-and-fall-of-azerbaijans-goycha-zangazur-republic> (accessed on 2 May 2023); 7Times, Göyçə-Zəngəzur Respublikası yaradıldı – BƏYANAT, 19 September 2022, <https://7times.az/goyce-zengezur-respublikasi-yaradildi-beyanat-2> (accessed on 2 May 2023); ExpatGuideTurkey, Ece Nagihan, Turkey is the First State to Recognize the Goyce-Zengezur Turkish Republic!, 22 September 2022, <https://expatguideturkey.com/turkey-is-the-first-state-to-recognize-the-goyce-zengezur-turkish-republic> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁸⁰ Eurasianet, The Rise and Fall of Azerbaijan’s “Goycha-Zangazur Republic,” 22 September 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/the-rise-and-fall-of-azerbaijans-goycha-zangazur-republic> (accessed on 2 May 2023); 7Times, Göyçə-Zəngəzur Respublikası yaradıldı – BƏYANAT, 19 September 2022, <https://7times.az/goyce-zengezur-respublikasi-yaradildi-beyanat-2> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁸¹ Pravda.az, Elman Məmmədov: “Ermənistan təminat ödəyə bilmirsə, bütövlükdə Qərbi Zəngəzuru versin,” 11 October 2022, <https://pravda.az/news/94523> (accessed on 12 February 2023).

²⁸² Rahman Mustafayev, Twitter post, 11 October 2022, <https://twitter.com/rahman2609m/status/1579777609634045952> (accessed on 2 May 2023): “Ces bombardements portent les marques génétiques des entreprises arméniennes: le cynisme et perfidie dans la conception, le secret dans la préparation, la brutalité dans l’exécution. Toutes les victimes ont vu leurs rêves brisés par la cruauté du terrorisme arménien.”

²⁸³ LICRA, Twitter port, 14 October 2022, <https://twitter.com/LICRA/status/1580906725208576007?fbclid=IwAR3uwkbaLWYhISskSEOpVNxrAut-uk8DWBY9mAZHuuBqCW0o3bPJxQNjx14> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁸⁴ News.az, Aziz Alekberli: Western Azerbaijan Community Aims to Achieve Restoration of Rights of Azerbaijanis Expelled from Their Ancestral Lands in Last 200 years (INTERVIEW), 12 December 2022, <https://news.az/news/aziz-alekberli-western-azerbaijan-community-aims-to-achieve-restoration-of-rights-of-azerbaijanis-expelled-from-their-ancestral-lands-in-last-200-years-interview> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

179. On 30 December, the same MP, Alakbarov noted that the “Western Azerbaijan Community” was established with a purpose “to internationally restore the rights of Azerbaijanis” who “were deported from the territory of present-day Armenia [...] as a result of Armenian terrorism,” and “to convey the truths about the historical crimes committed against ethnic Azerbaijanis to the world community.” He referred to the “national solidarity” that was “demonstrated in the 44-day war” and expressed hope that such solidarity “will also be demonstrated in the struggle for our historical lands, and in the near future we will return to Zangazur [Syunik marz of Armenia], Goycha [lake Sevan], and Yerevan.”²⁸⁵

Questioning the peacekeeping mission in Nagorno-Karabakh

180. Azerbaijan sees the presence of Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh in a negative light since for the time being it is the only international presence ensuring the security of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, despite its actual failures to ensure the peace and safety for the local people. Thus, the Azerbaijani leader and various authorities are quite explicit in its intent to cleanse Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenians in the absence of peacekeepers.

181. In January 2022, president Aliyev complained that it is “irritating” that “the number of arrivals” in Nagorno-Karabakh “controlled by Russian peacekeeping forces is very different from the number of departures. More people are leaving” but most of the “inbound cars... are not checked” by the Russian peacekeepers, which, according to Aliyev, leads to conclude that “Russian peacekeeping forces are trying to make the entrance easy and create certain problems for those leaving” which is “not acceptable” for Azerbaijan.²⁸⁶

182. In early November, an Azerbaijani state television AZ.TV prepared a video report with the title “No Russian soldier will remain in Karabakh: we know well what they are doing,” where the reporter states that the Russian peacekeepers must leave in 2025, but this process must be accelerated by a decision of official Baku. The report then threatens with the use of force showing video episodes from the 44-day war adding that Baku’s silence should not be accepted as weakness. The report also emphasized that “neither the West, nor the Russian side will be allowed to disrupt Baku’s plans.”²⁸⁷

183. On 8 November, addressing the nation on the occasion of the 44-day war second anniversary, president Aliyev specified that the Russian peacekeepers are stationed in Nagorno-Karabakh temporarily and threatened that if Armenians “rely on anyone they will face another tragedy.”²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Apa.az, Azerbaijani MP: I Believe That We Will Return to Zangazur, Goycha in the Near Future, 30 December 2022, <https://apa.az/en/social/azerbaijani-mp-i-believe-that-we-will-return-to-zangazur-goycha-in-the-near-future-392832> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁸⁶ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev was Interviewed by Local TV channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁸⁷ AZ.TV, “No Russian soldier Will Remain in Karabakh. We Know Well What They Are Doing” - video report on Tatev Hayrapetyan Facebook post, 6 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=432612295729223> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁸⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57857> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

184. In mid-November, Azerbaijani ICTINAL TV presented a satirical song in the Azerbaijani and Russian languages targeting the peacekeepers with the main call to withdraw the peacekeeping contingent. According to the song, which is performed by the same singer in the anti-Armenian song performed with children earlier, “already two years since tourists have been stationed in Karabakh... Coming as guests in our home they have stood on the corridor through which they transfer weapons to our enemies... Build houses, meet the separatists...” The song adds that “the visa of the tourist will expire soon and let everyone get visa from the tour agency for visiting Karabakh” and that “the last word on this land belongs to Azerbaijan.”²⁸⁹

Military build-up with Turkey and joint threats

185. Peaked in 2020 with the Turkey’s support to Azerbaijan during the 44-day war through intelligence,²⁹⁰ military command personnel and command support,²⁹¹ military equipment,²⁹²

²⁸⁹ ICTINAL TV, Satirical Song against Peacekeepers in Azerbaijani - video report on Tatev Hayrapetyan Facebook post, 17 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=500405258812541> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁹⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey Made Press Statements, 10 December 2020, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/48792> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Levent Kenez, Nordic Monitor, VP Confirms Turkish Intelligence Was Involved in Nagorno-Karabakh War, Refuting Long-denied Claim, 3 December 2021, <https://nordicmonitor.com/2021/12/vice-president-confirms-turkish-intelligence-involved-in-nagorno-karabakh-war-refuting-long-denied-claim/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁹¹ Geopolitical Cyprus, EastMed & Middle East Insights, 29 September 2020, <https://geopoliticalcyprus.org/2020/09/29/update-nagorno-karabakh/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Взгляд, Кто из турецких генералов руководил атакой на Карабах, 12 November 2020, <https://vz.ru/world/2020/11/12/1069822.html?fbclid=IwAR1PA--9vYjGOCuo3yciyeej146qlsoJijz4l4sTyagXV3YaexamLn024G8> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Turkish Azerbaijani joint military parade in Baku to celebrate the victory in 44-days war, Anadolu Agency, Azerbaijan'da Zafer Geçidi Töreni, 10 December 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43omC50IGaw> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Turkish military rewarded for participating in 44-days war, Sabah, Azerbaycan” dan Türk Hava Kuvvetleri personeline “savaş hizmetleri madalyası,” 21 August 2021, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/amasya/2021/08/21/azerbaycandan-turk-hava-kuvvetleri-personeline-savas-hizmetleri-madalyasi> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hayk Khachikyan, Razminfo, Turkey’s participation in the war Part 2: UAVs, 1 March 2021, <https://razm.info/149700> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Razminfo, Turkey’s participation in the 44-day War in Karabakh: Part 3 – Bahtiyar Eysay, 18 March 2021, <https://razminfo.wordpress.com/2021/03/22/turkeys-participation-in-the-war-part-3-bahtiyar-ersay/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁹² Sebastien Roblin, Forbes, Tanks Ablaze As Azerbaijani Forces Attack Armenian Troops In Disputed Nagorno-Karabakh, 27 September 2020, https://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastienroblin/2020/09/27/tanks-ablaze-as-azerbaijani-forces-attack-armenian-troops-in-disputed-nagorno-karabakh/?fbclid=IwAR1F638UfQz50qVZZJfXlk6GgAcOJIE0hqcFX3p_Xq3YsoZw5p0HIV4OSml&sh=4dce512a2f90 (accessed on 2 May 2023); Manu Gomez, Twitter post - map, 27 September 2020 https://twitter.com/GDarkconrad/status/1310162211583807494?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1310162211583807494%7Ctwgr%5Eshare_3&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fcdn.embedly.com%2Fwidgets%2Fmedia.html%3Ftype%3Dtext%2Fhtmlkey%3D3ce26dc7e3454db5820ba084d28b4935schema%3Dtwitterurl%3Dhttps%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2Fgdarkconrad%2Fstatus%2F1310162211583807494image%3D (accessed on 2 May 2023); Government of Canada, Statement from Minister Champagne on Suspension of Export Permits to Turkey, 5 October 2020, <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2020/10/statement-from-minister-champagne-on-suspension-of-export-permits-to-turkey.html>; TRT HABER, Azerbaycan Cumhurbaşkanı Aliyev TRT Haber” e konuşt, 5 October 2020, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/azerbaycan-cumhurbaşkanı-aliyev-trt-habere-konustu-520996.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Abdullah Bozkurt, Twitter post, Video, 7 November 2020, <https://twitter.com/abdbozkurt/status/1325161083238146054> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Christoph Koettle, Twitter post, Photos, 7 October 2020, <https://twitter.com/ckoettl/status/1314269194779856903> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Christiaan Triebert, Twitter, photo, 7 October 2020, <https://twitter.com/trbrtc/status/1313903827435892737> (accessed on 2 May 2023); CNN, مقابلات: رئيس أذربيجان: معارك ضد أرمينيا F-16 التركية لا تشارك في المعارك ضد أرمينيا F-16, 8 October 2020, <https://arabic.cnn.com/world/video/2020/10/08/v95938-azerbaijani-president-denies-turkey-helping-azerbaijani-forces> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Razminfo, Turkey’s participation in the 44-day War in Karabakh: Part 1: F-16s, 15 January 2021, <https://razminfo.wordpress.com/2021/01/18/turkeys-participation-in-the-war-part-a-f-16s/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hayk Khachikyan, Razminfo, Turkey’s Participation in the war Part 2: UAVs, 1 March 2021, <https://razm.info/149700> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

recruitment, training and transfer of mercenaries from the Turkish controlled regions of Syria,²⁹³ in 2022, the close partnership between these two countries continued being enhanced.²⁹⁴

186. On 1 February, Azerbaijan’s parliament ratified the declaration on alliance between Azerbaijan and Turkey signed in Shushi, appeared under Azerbaijani control after the 44-day war. This declaration intended to strengthen the mutual support regionally and internationally as well as to enhance the two countries’ relations in military, defence industry, technologies, energy, transportation, economic and humanitarian relations, as well as to act jointly in the case of a threat or an attack on the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of any of the parties, or the security of their internationally recognized borders.²⁹⁵

187. In March, a protocol between Azerbaijan and Turkey was submitted to Azerbaijan’s parliament ratification, according to which two countries had agreed to conduct joint police operations and measures against “subversive activities.” The protocol provides Turkey to deploy

²⁹³ The Jerusalem Post, Is Turkey planning to recruit Syrians to fight Armenia?, 26 September 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/is-turkey-planning-to-recruit-syrians-to-fight-armenia-643628> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Bethan Mckernan, Syrian rebel fighters prepare to deploy to Azerbaijan in sign of Turkey’s ambition: Volunteers in Syria’s last rebel stronghold claim Turkish firm signing up fighters, The Guardian, 28 September 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition> (accessed on 2 May 2023); EurAsia Daily, Afrin Post: Турция открыла в Сирии два пункта набора боевиков в Азербайджан, 28 September 2020, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2020/09/28/afrin-post-turciya-otkryla-v-sirii-dva-punkta-nabora-boevikov-v-azerbaydzhan> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Bethan Mckernan, The Guardian, Syrian recruit describes role of foreign fighters in Nagorno-Karabakh, 2 October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/02/syrian-recruit-describes-role-of-foreign-fighters-in-nagorno-karabakh> (accessed on 1 February 2023); Lindsey Snell, Syriacpress, Turkey’s Syrian Mercenaries in Azerbaijan “Feel Tricked” as Bodies Pile Up, 30 September 2020, <https://syriacpress.com/blog/2020/10/02/turkeys-syrian-mercenaries-in-azerbaijan-feel-tricked-as-bodies-pile-up/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Elizabeth Tsukov, Twitter post, Video, 3 October 2020, <https://twitter.com/Elizrael/status/1312409487404404736?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Foreign Policy, Syrians Make Up Turkey’s Proxy Army in Nagorno-Karabakh, 5 October 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/05/nagorno-karabakh-syrians-turkey-armenia-azerbaijan/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Azatutyun/English, Snell. Erdogan sent more than 15000 mercenaries to Libya, and got no international criticism, why wouldn’t he send them to fight Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh?, Facebook video, 25 October 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=718362778776579> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Bel Trew and Rajaai Bourhan, The Independent, “We don’t even know where Azerbaijan is”: The Syrian mercenaries driven by poverty to die in a distant war, 9 October 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/armenia-azerbaijan-syria-war-fighting-mercenary-russia-b912446.html?fbclid=IwAR17u2NZsvZMnvn1uMh3I9ubUdFEjwAWZdnR-BI3qPOpeNbvlygSnMcIbVY> (accessed on 2 May 2023); France 24, Videos shared on social media show Syrians sent to fight in Nagorno-Karabakh, 26 October 2020, <https://observers.france24.com/en/20201026-videos-shared-social-media-show-syrians-sent-fight-nagorno-karabakh?fbclid=IwAR0z2qLmC9WTWZ-TFWbDrKPO1kiYmMsh8WSA7c3ZOIMQCijHGnljfuPc3IA> (accessed on 2 May 2023); UN OHCHR, Mercenaries in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone must be withdrawn – UN experts, 11 November 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/11/mercenaries-and-around-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-zone-must-be-withdrawn-un?LangID=E&NewsID=26494> (accessed on 2 April 2023); SOHR, Exclusive testimony | Defector from “Al-Amshat” faction says that nearly \$150,000 stolen by “Abu Amsha” from mercenaries’ salaries he sent to Azerbaijan, 23 February 2021, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/206292/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); “Grey Wolves” militants in Artsakh, Republic of Artsakh, Telegram, Video, 11 October 2020 (Grey Wolves), <https://t.me/reartsakh/4731> (accessed on 5 May 2023); Group of CSOs in Armenia, Human Rights Violations During the 44-days war in Artsakh, Fact-Finding Report, Yerevan 2022, pp. 232-261, https://www.osf.am/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Fact-Finding-Report_FINAL_web.pdf (accessed on 5 May 2023).

²⁹⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Foreign Minister of Türkiye, 5 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55580> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani and Turkish Presidents Attended the Opening Ceremony of the Rize-Artvin Airport, 14 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56027> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Met with Azerbaijani Athletes Who Excelled during the 5th Islamic Solidarity Game, 22 August 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56986> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Foreign Minister of Türkiye, 5 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55580> (accessed on 26 January 2023);

²⁹⁵ Anadolu, Landmark Shusha Declaration between Türkiye, Azerbaijan turns year-old, On June 15, 2021, Document Took Bilateral Relations between Ankara, Baku to Level of Alliance, 15 June 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/landmark-shusha-declaration-between-turkiye-azerbaijan-turns-year-old/2614301> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Tass, Парламент Азербайджана утвердил Шушинскую декларацию о союзнических отношениях с Турцией, 1 February 2022, <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/13581465> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

police to Azerbaijan, *inter alia*, for supporting President Ilham Aliyev in the event of civil unrest or anti-government protests.²⁹⁶

188. On 21 July, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said at an interview to TRT HABER, that even though Turkey has started a bilateral process with Armenia, it is, in fact, trilateral, since Turkey “aligns every step with Azerbaijan, whether Armenia wants it or not,” and Azerbaijan with Turkey “are one nation, two states.”²⁹⁷

189. On 15 September, a few days after Azerbaijan’s attack on Armenia, the head of the Turkish Party “Büyük Birlik,” Mustafa Destici, warned the government of Armenia “to finally gather their wits and courage” and “not [to] forget that the Turkic people can easily destroy Armenia both geographically and historically. Our patience is running out.”²⁹⁸

190. On 25 September, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, addressing the Turkish community in Los Angeles, stressed that Armenia should sign the peace treaty with Azerbaijan the way it is proposed by Azerbaijan (rejecting the right to self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh people, giving Azerbaijan an extraterritorial corridor through Syunik marz of Armenia) as a precondition to reach peace and stability in the region, and emphasized that Armenia is an “isolated country.”²⁹⁹

191. On the same day, the Armenian protesters in Stockholm heard “death to the Armenians” on the main square, saw “Grey Wolves” salutation signs.

192. On 10 October, Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, met with representatives of the Turkish community in France calling on to “act against the Armenian Diaspora in a more coordinated manner.”³⁰⁰

193. As published in October, in line with the Turkish military expertise, all-new Commando units were created in areas with difficult terrain, the personnel of which underwent preparation courses in Turkey under the direct involvement and guidance of Turkish military specialists.³⁰¹ Also, Azerbaijan reached an agreement to purchase BARKAN unmanned ground combat vehicle from the Turkish defence company HAVELSAN. The first sample of BARKAN was rolled out in March-April 2022.³⁰²

²⁹⁶ Nordic Monitor, Abdullah Bozkurt, Turkey May Send its Police to Azerbaijan to Support President Aliyev, 30 March 2022, <https://nordicmonitor.com/2022/03/a-new-deal-suggests-turkey-may-send-its-police-to-azerbaijan-to-support-president-aliyev/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁹⁷ Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, TRT Haber “de Gündemi Değerlendiriyoruz, YouTube video, 21 July 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvNI7zm1YWs> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, Հայաստանի հետ սկսված գործընթացը եռակողմ է, ասել է թուրքիայի արտգործնախարարը, 21 July 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/668887/հայաստանի-հետ-սկսված-գործընթացը-եռակողմ-է-ասել-է-թուրքիայի-արտգործնախարարը/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁹⁸ Mustafa Destici, Twitter post, video, 15 September 2022, https://twitter.com/mustafa_destici/status/1570379659476619265?s=46&t=Z2hvdWtNR20JU1kzOjLBPw&fbclid=IwAROGhXZxZ0uN80Lv0XK3-UC9fP1dAxGL1ZwVQRGd9a4cSI9V7H0foNpuRkE (accessed on 2 May 2023).

²⁹⁹ Report, Cavusoglu: Armenia Should Sign Peace Agreement Proposed by Azerbaijan, 25 September 2022, <https://report.az/en/region/cavusoglu-armenia-should-sign-peace-agreement-proposed-by-azerbaijan/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁰⁰ Lusine Djanyan, Facebook post, 25 September 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/lusine.djanyan/posts/pfbid02wh5FX9BL3RM2Sy2QtGraJKkNP9oBKbB8iA2oAoAk1yq7S8nC2euwW7CCKLK6W4ddI> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Lusine Djanyan, Facebook post, 10 October 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/lusine.djanyan/posts/pfbid037bJrk1DRFQgydyXerPywHQyWNeczyeYJQGYUBbb1ZQHEWJz5jG44nJg9aJ1bHzLI> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁰¹ Caspian News, Gunay Hajoyeva, 2 Azerbaijan Increases Defense & Security Budget for 2023, 6 October 2022, <https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/azerbaijan-increases-defense-security-budget-for-2023-2022-10-26-0/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁰² Ibid; Report, Azerbaijan Reaches Agreement on Purchasing BARKAN Ground Combat Vehicle from Türkiye, 25 October 2022, <https://report.az/en/military/azerbaijan-reaches-agreement-on-purchasing-barkan-ground-combat-vehicle-from-turkiye/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

194. On 10 November, the president of Turkey Erdogan, stated that the normalisation of the Armenian-Turkish relations is conditioned by “Armenia developing relations with Azerbaijan at the positive direction.” As Erdogan put it, “we are trying to obtain a friend, not an enemy.”³⁰³

195. On 25 November, Aliyev emphasized that Azerbaijan regularly has “more than ten joint military training with Turkey during one year.” He added that “the Turkish army is not only the Turkish army, but it is our army, and our army is not only our army, but it is the Turkish army. All those who plan provocations on our border trying to frighten us should never forget it.”³⁰⁴

Ongoing terror policies and practices

196. In 2022, Azerbaijan continued applying practices to humiliate and terrorize Armenians with the purpose of disrupting their livelihood and forcing them to leave their homeland, thus accomplishing the policy of ethnic cleansing. Such terror was applied not only to the residents living along the contact line in Nagorno-Karabakh where Azerbaijani armed forces appeared as a result of war or along the borderline of Armenia with Azerbaijan, but also reached to Armenians travelling through the roads within Nagorno-Karabakh and connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia.

197. Terror practices used by Azerbaijan included the servicemen pointing their guns, yelling, throwing stones against the Armenian cars,³⁰⁵ pointing weapons at the civilians passing through the roads and insulting them, driving against the civilian cars by the Azerbaijani military trucks and causing accidents to the civilian cars falling in the gorge around the road,³⁰⁶ hindering the agricultural works,³⁰⁷

³⁰³ Anadolu, Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Tahıl koridoru konusunda lider siyasetinin gereğini gerçekleştirdik, Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, tahıl koridorunun yeniden açılmasına ilişkin, "Bu bir lider siyasetidir. Bu lider siyasetinin gereğini de Sayın Putin ile gerçekleştirdik." Dedi, 10 November 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-tahil-koridoru-konusunda-lider-siyasetinin-gereğini-gerçekleştirdik/2734141> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁰⁴ President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto “Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy,” 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁰⁵ Human Rights Defender 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, 2 January 2022, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2081 (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանցիները Ստեփանակերտ-Գորիս ավտոճանապարհին քարերով հարվածել են հայ վարորդի ավտոմեքենային, 10 January 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանցիները-ստեփանակերտ-գորիս-ավտոճանապարհին-քարերով-հարվածել-են-հայ-վարորդի-ավտոմեքենային.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁰⁶ Hetq, Ադրբեջանական ավտոշարայունը վթարի է ենթարկել Արցախի բաղաբաղու մեքենան, 6 May 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/144256> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 6 May 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid06ev83X9ynVcFUrDct6HaF7fqDd5yUwus5CTFBBs7iwrS1QyDBKiKh1cXpg3zDThvI> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

³⁰⁷ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ադրբեջանական զինված ծառայողների հանցավոր արարքները խաղաղ բնակչության նկատմամբ թե՛ Զայաստանում, թե՛ Արցախում բնույթով նույնն են. Արման Թաթոյանն Արցախի գործընկերոջ հետ այցելել է Թաղավարդ, Կարմիր Շուկա, Աղավտ և մի շարք այլ գյուղեր, 17 February 2022, <https://ombuds.am/am/site/ViewNews/2133> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Azatutyun, «Ժողովուրդը մնացել ա կրակի մեջ, ինչ անեն, ոնց անեն՝ չգիտեն». Եղահողիներն անտորջ վիճակում են, 3 August 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXCvY1OlzhY> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

damaging agricultural equipment,³⁰⁸ stealing cattle,³⁰⁹ using violence and threats against the farmers doing agricultural works,³¹⁰ threatening the villagers through loudspeakers in Armenian language to force them to leave their homes,³¹¹ kidnapping civilians,³¹² routinely firing in the air,³¹³ releasing lights in the evenings and at nights at the direction of civilians, including inside their houses,³¹⁴ shooting in the direction of schools,³¹⁵ throwing the organs of the slaughtered animals into the water which the civilians use for drinking leading to mass poisoning,³¹⁶ burning wheels and rolling down the valley causing fire on the hills.³¹⁷

198. Intimidation of Armenian civilians have been especially intensified during the agricultural season and harvest. The Azerbaijani military sometimes enters the gardens and under the threat of using weapons, force the participants of the harvest to leave the place. As a result of such behavior, two villagers, engaged in cattle breeding in Martakert and Martuni regions of Nagorno-Karabakh, were killed.

199. As a result of sporadic attacks throughout the year in different directions of the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and in border areas of Armenia and Azerbaijan, two Armenian villagers were

³⁰⁸ Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանը հրադադարի ռեժիմը խախտել է նաև Ասկերանի շրջանում, 10 January 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանը-հրադադարի-ռեժիմը-խախտել-է-նաև-ասկերանի-շրջանում.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁰⁹ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Arman Tatoyan, Facebook post, 13 January 2022, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=999675733964965&id=100017676420633 (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական բանակի ստորաբաժանումները կրակ են բացել գյուղատնտեսական աշխատանքներ իրականացնող քաղաքացիների ուղղությամբ, 22 November 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-բանակի-ստորաբաժանումները-կրակ-են-բացել-գյուղատնտեսական-աշխատանքներ-իրականացնող-քաղաքացիների-ուղղությամբ.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³¹⁰ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Arman Tatoyan, Facebook post, 13 January 2022, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=999675733964965&id=100017676420633 (accessed on 1 February 2023).

³¹¹ Loudspeakers with Calls to Leave Were Heard in Nor Shen, Ashan, Parukh, Khramort Communities, Artsakhspeaks, Ադրբեջանցի զինծառայողները փորձել են կրակահերթերով ահաբեկել Արցախի Նորշեն գյուղի բնակիչներին, 5 March 2022, <https://artsakhspeaks.am/ադրբեջանցի-զինծառայողները-փորձել-են/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Video with the Calls to Leave, Prosecutor's Office of Artsakh, Խրամորթյան տեսագրություն – 3, YouTube video, 26 February 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB8QoNh2eE8&t=83s> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³¹² Hetq, Տեղ գյուղի բնակիչն ադրբեջանական զինծառայողները հունվարի 13-ին ակնհայտ անօրինական ազատությունից զրկել ու առևանգել են. ՄԻՊ, 15 January 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/140080> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³¹³ Artsakhspeaks, Ադրբեջանցի զինծառայողները փորձել են կրակահերթերով ահաբեկել Արցախի Նորշեն գյուղի բնակիչներին, 5 March 2022, <https://artsakhspeaks.am/ադրբեջանցի-զինծառայողները-փորձել-են/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³¹⁴ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ադրբեջանական զինված ծառայողների հանցավոր արարքները խաղաղ բնակչության նկատմամբ թե՛ Հայաստանում, թե՛ Արցախում բնութագրվում են. Արման Թաթոյան Արցախի գործընկերոջ հետ այցելել է Թաղավարո, Կարմիր Շուկա, Աղավնո և Վի շարք այլ գյուղեր, 17 February 2022, <https://ombuds.am/am/site/ViewNews/2133> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Norabak and Nerkin Shorzha villages of Gegharkunik province of Armenia, Medialab, Ադրբեջանցիներն անվաղողեր են այրել ու գորել ծորը. Նորաբակում բռնկված հրդեհը մարել չի հաջողվում, 2 September 2022, <https://www.mediahub.am/post/8b4a08d7508f710ff110f85af7967434> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

killed,³¹⁸ other civilians were injured,³¹⁹ houses were damaged,³²⁰ cars were set on fire or damaged,³²¹ kindergartens' work was disrupted, children intimidated and evacuated, agricultural works were disrupted,³²² cattle were injured, agricultural equipment was damaged,³²³ workers were injured, forced to cease their activities at stone factory and get evacuated,³²⁴ etc.³²⁵

200. As of 13 November 2022, the Human Rights Ombudsman of Nagorno-Karabakh published consolidated data, according to which since 9 November 2020 there have been recorded 121 cases of crime leading to material and human damage, 18 people were killed (3 civilians, 15 military), 132 people were subjected to attempted murder (54 civilians, 78 military), 67 people were shot and subjected to physical violence (16 civilians), 5 of 8 persons who accidentally appeared in the territories under the control of Azerbaijan were returned with obvious traces of violence, torture and fractures.

³¹⁸ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 16 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsakhOmbuds/posts/502131858613461> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³¹⁹ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim Report on Violations of the Rights of Artsakh People by Azerbaijan in February - March 2022, Stepanakert 2022; UN Doc A/76/802-S/2022/314 (14 April 2022), <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2073760.html> (accessed on 5 May 2023), pp. 8, 11; Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական զինուժը խրամորթի ուղղությամբ կրակ է բացել խաղաղ բնակիչների ուղղությամբ. Տուժել է մեկ քաղաքացի, 12 November 2022, https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-զինուժը-խրամորթի-ուղղությամբ-կրակ-է-բացել-խաղաղ-բնակիչների-ուղղությամբ-տուժել-է-մեկ-քաղաքացի.html?fbclid=IwAR1xiEttk994KbUUYwful_PJORtWNRyuliqQg_4-eBkChVKoogP9VI6B_FY (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²⁰ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 11 February 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/4556946581101387> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, կրկին թիրախավորվել է թաղավարդ համայնքի խաղաղ բնակչությունը, 18 February 2022, <https://prosecutor.nk.am/կրկին-թիրախավորվել-է-թաղավարդ-հա> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական զինուժն անկանոն կրակահերթ է բացել թաղավարդ-Կարմիր շուկա համայնքների ուղղությամբ, 28 July 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-զինուժն-անկանոն-կրակահերթ-է-բացել-թաղավարդ-կարմիր-շուկա-համայնքների-ուղղությամբ.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²¹ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 10 January 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid024vYwn3ewBd3hbqoqmCAKcSkDj1g1T2jqv5BCrBasMcdkzH7hHiCqaNGdvHTLGsrI> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Aliqmedia, Կրակել են Կարմիր Շուկայի մոտակա դիրքերից, 24 January 2022, <https://www.aliqmedia.am/2022/01/24/45262> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²² Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ադրբեջանական զինված ծառայողների հանցավոր արարքները խաղաղ բնակչության նկատմամբ թե՛ Զայաստանում, թե՛ Արցախում բնութայով նույնն են. Արման Թաթոյան Արցախի գործընկերոջ հետ այցելել է թաղավարդ, Կարմիր Շուկա, Աղավն և մի շարք այլ գյուղեր, 17 February 2022, <https://ombuds.am/am/site/ViewNews/2133> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանցիները կրակել են տրակտորիստի ուղղությամբ, 6 November 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանցիները-կրակել-են-տրակտորիստի-ուղղությամբ.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական բանակի ստորաբաժանումները կրակ են բացել գյուղատնտեսական աշխատանքներ իրականացնող քաղաքացիների ուղղությամբ, 22 November 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-բանակի-ստորաբաժանումները-կրակ-են-բացել-գյուղատնտեսական-աշխատանքներ-իրականացնող-քաղաքացիների-ուղղությամբ.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Սահմանային խախտումներ մարտունու և մարտակերտի շրջաններում. թիրախում խաղաղ բնակչություն և, 25 November 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/սահմանային-խախտումներ-մարտունու-և-մարտակերտի-շրջաններում-թիրախում-խաղաղ-բնակչություն-է.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²³ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 10 January 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid024vYwn3ewBd3hbqoqmCAKcSkDj1g1T2jqv5BCrBasMcdkzH7hHiCqaNGdvHTLGsrI> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական զինված ուժերը հրագնելով կրկին կրակել են հողագործությամբ զբաղվող արցախցիների ուղղությամբ, 15 February 2022, <https://prosecutor.nk.am/ադրբեջանական-զինված-ուժերը-հրագնել/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական զինուժը խրամորթի ուղղությամբ կրակ է բացել խաղաղ բնակիչների ուղղությամբ. Տուժել է մեկ քաղաքացի, 12 November 2022, https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-զինուժը-խրամորթի-ուղղությամբ-կրակ-է-բացել-խաղաղ-բնակիչների-ուղղությամբ-տուժել-է-մեկ-քաղաքացի.html?fbclid=IwAR1xiEttk994KbUUYwful_PJORtWNRyuliqQg_4-eBkChVKoogP9VI6B_FY (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 5 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid02rTUDKj1sB5yqbUh1WwtmbhTtxt863LqsecuzUMcKeTUtQmEzX3Tcnfc5K0JCNmcl> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²⁴ Prosecutor of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական մարտական դիրքից կրակել են քարամշակման կետում աշխատող բանվորների վրա, 5 February 2022, <https://prosecutor.nk.am/ադրբեջանական-մարտական-դիրքից-կրակ/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Factor, Ադրբեջանական դիրքերից կրակ են բացել Սոթքի հանքավայրի ուղղությամբ. կա վիրավոր, 7 May 2022, <https://factor.am/508522.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²⁵ Civic Hub NGO, Interactive Map of Azerbaijani Terror Policies against Artsakh, including updates, <https://civichub.am/en/map>

Among the mentioned persons, a resident of the Martuni region Artak Manasyan, born in 1989, died a few months later, 13 residential buildings were targeted, 8 agricultural machines, 22 vehicles, 16 other objects were damaged or destroyed, 5 gardens were burnt.³²⁶

201. Azerbaijani forces carried on constant shootings in the direction of the civilian communities both in Nagorno-Karabakh³²⁷ and in Armenia.³²⁸ Attacks were also directed at Sotq mining area of Gegharkunik marz of Armenia in the vicinity of which the Azerbaijani forces have been located since 2020.³²⁹

202. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia also recorded that the Azerbaijani forces illegally stationed in the vicinity of the school of Shurnukh village of Syunik marz of Armenia have written

³²⁶ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 16 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsakhOmbuds/posts/502131858613461/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²⁷ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim Report on Violations of the Rights of Artsakh People by Azerbaijan in February - March 2022, Stepanakert 2022, UN Doc A/76/802-S/2022/314 (14 April 2022) pp. 8-11, UN doc, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2073760.html> (accessed on 6 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանը հրադադարի ռեժիմը խախտել է նաև Ասկերանի շրջանում, 10 January 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանը-հրադադարի-ռեժիմը-խախտել-է-նաև-ասկերանի-շրջանում.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Artsakhpress, ВС Азербайджана обстреляли автомобиль в селе Кармир Шука: МО Арцаха, 10 January 2022, <https://artsakhpress.am/rus/news/156753/karmir-shukayi-uxutyamb-krak-e-bacvel-hrdehvel-e-mankapartez-i-haracic-taratsqum-kayanvats-qaxaqaciakan-andzin-patkanox-avtomegenan-pb.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 11 February 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/4556946581101387> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական զինված ուժերը հրազենով կրկին կրակել են հողագործությամբ զբաղվող արցախցիների ուղղությամբ, 15 February 2022, <https://prosecutornk.am/ադրբեջանական-զինված-ուժերը-հրազեն/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hetq, Թաղավարդ և Կարմիր շուկա գյուղերի ուղղությամբ կրակոցները գերթն ամեն օր են. ՄԻՊ, 16 February 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/141245> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, կրկին թիրախավորվել է Թաղավարդ համայնքի խաղաղ բնակչությունը, 18 February 2022, <https://prosecutornk.am/կրկին-թիրախավորվել-է-թաղավարդ-ի-> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական զինուժն անկանոն կրակահերթ է բացել Թաղավարդ-Կարմիր շուկա համայնքների ուղղությամբ, 28 July 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-զինուժն-անկանոն-կրակահերթ-է-բացել-թաղավարդ-կարմիր-շուկա-համայնքների-ուղղությամբ.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Azatutyun, «Ժողովուրդը մնացել ա կրակի մեջ, ինչ անեն, ոնց անեն՝ չգիտեն». եղահողոցներն անորոշ վիճակում են, 3 August 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXCVY1OlzhY> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 5 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid02rTUDKj1sB5yqbUh1WwtbnhTtxt863LagsecuzUMKeTUtnQmEzX3Tcnfc5K0JcNmcl> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանցիները կրակել են տրակտորիստի ուղղությամբ, 6 November 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանցիները-կրակել-են-տրակտորիստի-ուղղությամբ.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական զինուժը խրամորթի ուղղությամբ կրակ է բացել խաղաղ բնակիչների ուղղությամբ. Տուժել է մեկ քաղաքաց, 12 November 2022, https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-զինուժը-խրամորթի-ուղղությամբ-կրակ-է-բացել-խաղաղ-բնակիչների-ուղղությամբ-տուժել-է-մեկ-քաղաքացի.html?fbclid=IwAR1xiEtkk994KbUUYwful_PJORTWNRyuliqQg_4-eBkChVKoogP9V16B_FY (accessed on 2 May 2023); MoD of Russia, Информационный бюллетень Министерства обороны Российской Федерации о деятельности российского миротворческого контингента в зоне нагорно-карабахского конфликта (на 19 ноября 2022 г.), 19 November 2022, https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/bulletins/more.htm?id=12445877@egNews (accessed on 2 May 2023); Artsakh TV news, Interview with the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Կրակոց՝ տրակտորիստի ուղղությամբ, Facebook video, 17 November 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=418232457027441> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական բնակիչ ստորաբաժանումները կրակ են բացել գյուղատնտեսական աշխատանքներ իրականացնող քաղաքացիների ուղղությամբ, 22 November 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-բնակիչ-ստորաբաժանումները-կրակ-են-բացել-գյուղատնտեսական-աշխատանքներ-իրականացնող-քաղաքացիների-ուղղությամբ.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Սահմանային խախտումներ Մարտուտու և Մարտակերտի շրջաններում. թիրախում խաղաղ բնակչությունն է, 25 November 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/սահմանային-խախտումներ-մարտուտու-և-մարտակերտի-շրջաններում-թիրախում-խաղաղ-բնակչությունն-է.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²⁸ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Azerbaijani Authorities Are Responsible for Killing 2 RA Servicemen and Wounding Other Servicemen, Disrupting Security of Armenian Civilian Population, 11 January 2022, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2085 (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Arman Tatoyan, Facebook post, 22 May 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1076307502968454&set=a.363684047564140&type=3&theater> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on the Visits by the Working Group Lead by the HRD to Gegharkunik and Tavush Provinces (July-August), Yerevan 2022, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/fd29830766027e9c10fcfaec2effee4f.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³²⁹ Factor, Ադրբեջանական զինվորից կրակ են բացել Սոթքի հանքավայրի ուղղությամբ. կա վիրավոր, 7 May 2022, <https://factor.am/508522.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

“Önce vatan.” “Önce vatan” is a pan-turkic nationalistic slogan meaning “Forward Homeland” or “Homeland First” denying the equality of other groups or nations with Turks.³³⁰

203. In addition to the regular shootings by the Azerbaijani armed forces, several major episodes of wide-scale use of force by Azerbaijan occurred in 2022. As a matter of fact, those were often preceded with spreading disinformation about Armenians (either in Nagorno-Karabakh or in Armenia) starting the offensive, while Azerbaijan being on the defensive side. Also, according to observations, the timing of operations launched by Azerbaijan was somehow tied with the international diplomatic efforts, likely trying to influence their process or the outcome of negotiations.

204. On 31 December, addressing the nation on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, Aliyev stated that “several military operations conducted this year once again proved the high combat readiness of our army. Operation Farrukh, Operation Revenge, and the military clashes along Azerbaijan's border with Armenia in September this year brought us another brilliant victory. As a result of the border clashes, Azerbaijan has gained a foothold in many strategically advantageous positions.”³³¹

Special operations to galvanize ethnic cleansing

Parukh in Nagorno-Karabakh (March 2022)

205. From 6 March, Azerbaijani armed forces launched attacks with high calibre weapons against various communities of Nagorno-Karabakh and as of 12 March, have fired a total of 50 projectiles from 60 mm calibre mortar launchers. During this whole period Azerbaijani forces continued firing from firearms targeting homes and other civilian objects. The main targets were Khramort, Khnapat, Parukh,³³² Nakhijevanik communities of Askeran region and Karmir Shuka, Taghavart, Khnushinak communities of Martuni region of Nagorno-Karabakh.³³³

206. On 24 February, Azerbaijani forces occupying the immediate vicinity of Khramort village, about 500 m away on the surrounding hills, started spreading statements in the Armenian language by loudspeakers demanding Armenians to leave the village, threatening to use force if they did not leave. “You are in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Any action carried out here is regulated by the laws of Azerbaijan. Everything you do without official permission is illegal. The agricultural work you are currently carrying out is illegal. Do not prepare for war, do not try to create a border in our territory! If you want to stay and live here, obey the laws of Azerbaijan! Taking into account your safety, we demand to stop the work and leave the area immediately, otherwise force will be applied

³³⁰ Hetq, Ադրբեջանական ՉՈՒ անօրինական տեղակայվել է Շուռնուխի դպրոցի դիմաց, 26 November 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/150560> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³³¹ President of Azerbaijan, Address of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 31 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58523> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³³² These villages are located in the vicinity of the Russian-Turkish Armistice Control Center; Russian MoD, Russian-Turkish Armistice Control Center Opened in Azerbaijan, 30 January 2021, https://eng.mil.ru/en/russian_peacekeeping_forces/news/more.htm?id=12341496@egNews (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³³³ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim Report on Violations of the Rights of Artsakh People by Azerbaijan in February - March 2022, Stepanakert 2022, UN Doc A/76/802-S/2022/314 (14 April 2022) p. 7, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2073760.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

on you, the responsibility for the losses will fall on you. Do not endanger the lives of our family members. Leave the area! Leave the area!”³³⁴

207. The video with the calls to Armenians to leave were actively circulated in the Azerbaijani media. Caliber.az, which belongs to the apparatus of the president of Azerbaijan,³³⁵ published the video with the caption: “The message of our army to the village of Pirlyar, Khojaly region. Soft power in action. It is high time to start working with the locals.”³³⁶

208. On 6 March, Azerbaijani military shot in the direction of Khramort village using different caliber firearms.³³⁷ According to the village head, Zorik Abrahamyan, the fire continued for about 5-6 minutes before the arrival of the Russian peacekeepers.³³⁸

209. On 7 March, at around 17:00, a mortar launcher was used in the same area, the projectiles exploded near the village cemetery.³³⁹

210. On 8 March, at 01:00, the only pipeline supplying gas to Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia was damaged in the section appeared in area under the Azerbaijani control in the vicinity of Shushi, which left the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh without gas, leaving 120,000 people without heating in the conditions of sub-zero temperatures and snow, creating issues of hot water and food supply.³⁴⁰

211. The residents of Stepanakert’s district adjacent to Shushi testified that loud explosion was heard at night at about the same time when the gas supply was cut off.³⁴¹ Yet, Azerbaijan obstructed the specialists of “Artsakh gas” CJSC, Nagorno-Karabakh law enforcement and Russian peacekeepers to access, investigate the reasons of the gas cut-off and to repair the gas pipeline.³⁴²

³³⁴ See the video with the calls to leave taken by the local residents, ԱՀ Ղատախազություն, Խրամորտյան տեսազրույթուն – 3, 26 February 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB8QoNh2eE8&t=83s> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim Report on Violations of the Rights of Artsakh People by Azerbaijan in February - March 2022, Stepanakert 2022, UN Doc A/76/802-S/2022/314 (14 April 2022) p. 17, <https://www.ecoi.net> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³³⁵ Factor, Роскомнадзор заблокировал Caliber.az, 28 April 2022, <https://factor.am/ru/22081.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, Tigran Grigoryan, The New Escalation in Nagorno-Karabakh is Part of Azerbaijan’s Long-term Strategy, 11 March 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/653296/the-new-escalation-in-nagorno-karabakh-is-part-of-azerbaijans-long-term-strategy/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³³⁶ Caliber.az, Facebook post, Video with the calls to leave, 26 February 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=361354478963864> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Caliber.az, «Если хотите жить здесь, соблюдайте азербайджанские законы» - ВИДЕО, 26 February 2022, <https://caliber.az/post/61336/?fbclid=IwAR1kLgsRzpE4cCGrwjZETFiBdfiB7ALTfKIRVeikOjR1dcOmTuCs9ba9uo> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³³⁷ Hetq, Azerbaijani Forces Fire on Armenian Positions Near Artsakh's Khramort Village 6 March 2022, <https://hetq.am/en/article/141913> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Videos with the shootings being heard, Prosecutor of Artsakh, Facebook post, video 1, 6 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=448097277014667> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Prosecutor of Artsakh, Facebook post, video 2, 6 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1100731794049278> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 7 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/4628290540633657> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

³³⁸ Pastinfo, Աղբրեցանական դիրքերից մոտ 5-6 րոպե ինտենսիվ կրակել են գյուղի ուղղությամբ. Խրամորտի գյուղապետ, 6 March 2022, <https://www.pastinfo.am/hy/news/2022/03/06/wbzc653rn/1359538> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³³⁹ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Gegham Stepanyan, Facebook post, 7 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/4628290540633657> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

³⁴⁰ Ibid

³⁴¹ Artsakhgas, Կթարի հետևանքով ժամանակավոր դադարեցվել է գազամատակարարումը, 8 March 2022, <http://artsakhgaz.am/announce/626> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim Report on Violations of the Rights of Artsakh People by Azerbaijan in February - March 2022, Stepanakert 2022, UN Doc A/76/802-S/2022/314 (14 April 2022) p. 12, UN doc, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/319/20/PDF/N2231920.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁴² Ibid.

212. In parallel, Azerbaijani forces continued armed attacks on the villages. From 8 to 11 March, they directed intensive armed attacks against Khramort, Khnapat, Parukh villages using 60 mm and even 120 mm mortars.³⁴³ Nakhijevanik village was also targeted.³⁴⁴ Azerbaijani forces continued their call to the civilians of these villages to leave.³⁴⁵ A civilian was wounded in Khramort on 10 March.³⁴⁶ A 120 mm mortar was launched at the direction of a school in Taghavart, children were evacuated from the villages.³⁴⁷

213. The attacks and gas deprivation were accompanied by the spread of disinformation from the Azerbaijani online platforms that the Russian peacekeeping contingent was withdrawing from Nagorno-Karabakh with the purpose of participating in the war in Ukraine.³⁴⁸ The information was denied by the Security Council of Nagorno-Karabakh on 10 March³⁴⁹ and Azerbaijani experts later in the month.³⁵⁰ Such information was spread with the purpose of intimidating the Armenian people in Nagorno-Karabakh as if they were left without any protection from international forces.

³⁴³ Artsakh press, Artsakh Shelled by Azeri Forces All Night in Latest Ceasefire Breach, 10 March 2022, <https://artsakhpress.am/eng/news/160018/vsyu-noch-vooruzhenniye-siliy-azerbaiydzhana-periodicheski-narushali-rezhim-prekrashcheniya-ognya-armiya-oboroniy-respubliki-arcakh.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական կողմի հերթական սադրանքները, 11 March 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-կողմի-հերթական-սադրանքները.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hetq, Azerbaijani Troops Fire on Artsakh Villages, 10 March 2022, <https://hetq.am/en/article/142044> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Հրահրված պահպանման ռեժիմի խախտումը իսապատի և Փառուխի ուղղությամբ, 11 March 2022, <https://rb.gy/xztcyb> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ականանտեր և խոշոր տրամաչափի հրաձգային զենքեր՝ Արցախի խաղաղ բնակչության նկատմամբ, 11 March 2022, <https://rb.gy/xztcyb> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hetq, Azerbaijani Shelling Targets Artsakh Villages, 12 March 2022, <https://hetq.am/en/article/142142?fbclid=IwAR3bM6mVQSeXGOyUxw842hFgR2i8WaODVfzfyUcM5L32icGPK6pb1HhrY#.Yiz3dn1aaS4.facebook> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hetq, Ի՞նչ տեղի ունեցավ Արցախում եւ Արցախի շուրջ 2022 թվականին (հունվար-մարտ), 27 December 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/151663> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁴⁴ Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ղևակոծվել է Լախիջեվանիկ համայնքի վարչական տարածքում գտնվող այգում կայանված գյուղատնտեսական տեխնիկան, 10 March 2022, <https://prosecutornk.am/զևակոծվել-է-լախիջեվանիկ-համայնքի-վ> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁴⁵ Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Ադրբեջանական կողմի հերթական սադրանքները, 11 March, 2022, <https://police.nk.am/news/view/ադրբեջանական-կողմի-հերթական-սադրանքները.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Residents of the villages testifying on the attacks, calls to leave and other intimidation tactics: Civilnet, Արցախ. Արդենում մտածում են ինքնապաշտպանության մասին, 9 March 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zor5e121dh4> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, Խրամորթը՝ ադրբեջանական ձայնագրությունների ու ակամների թիրախում, 10 March 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLod-XQYGOg> (accessed on 2 May 2023); The Armenian Report, Armenian Villagers in Artsakh Where Azerbaijani Forces Are Currently Bombing and Threatening to Occupy, 14 March 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Nqblia_XLY (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁴⁶ Police of the Ministry of the Interior of Artsakh, Facebook post, 10 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsakhPolice/posts/36576956555768> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Video on the attack and the wounding of the civilian in Khramort, Zartonk Media, Facebook post, video, 10 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ZartonkMedia/videos/538832857508366> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁴⁷ Zartonk Media, Facebook post, 10 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ZartonkMedia/photos/a.2108679539214335/4904774056271522/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Zartonk Media, Facebook Post, video, 11 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ZartonkMedia/videos/499519388390322> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civic.am, Խրամորթի դպրոցն այսօր փակ է, մինչև առավոտյան ժամը 11:00-ն Ադրբեջանի զինծառայողներն անընդմեջ կրակել են գյուղի ուղղությամբ. Խրամորթի դպրոցի տնօրեն, 10 March 2022, <https://civic.am/society/27190-xramorti-dprocn-aysor-pak-e-minchev-arawotyan-jamy-1100-n-adrbejani-zincarayoxnern-anyndmej-krakel-en-gyuxi-uxxutyamb.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁴⁸ Aliqmedia, Արցախից որեւէ խաղաղապահ դուրս չի բերվում, 10 March 2022, <https://www.aliqmedia.am/2022/03/10/52498/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Jam news, Baku Claims Russian Peacekeepers Relocated from Karabakh to Ukraine, Moscow Denies Reports, 30 March 2022, <https://jam-news.net/baku-claims-russian-peacekeepers-relocated-from-karabakh-to-ukraine-moscow-denies-reports> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁴⁹ Security Council of Artsakh, Հարդրողագրություն, 10 March 2022, <https://secco.nk.am/en/post/haghvordagrvothyvoun-1> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁵⁰ Jam news, Baku Claims Russian Peacekeepers Relocated from Karabakh to Ukraine, Moscow Denies Reports, 30 March 2022, <https://jam-news.net/baku-claims-russian-peacekeepers-relocated-from-karabakh-to-ukraine-moscow-denies-reports/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, A New Wave of Violence in Karabakh, 10 March 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyimXKN8vAk> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

214. On 11 March, the Facebook page of the National Assembly of Nagorno-Karabakh was subjected to a hacker attack.³⁵¹ The message left read as follows: “We call on the Armenians to leave the occupied territories within 168 hours, otherwise, all Armenian servicepersons will be destroyed.”³⁵² This came a day after the special sitting of the National Assembly of Nagorno-Karabakh on 10 March, which condemned the Azerbaijani attacks.³⁵³

215. On 19 March, after more than 10 days of the cut-off, the gas supply was restored as a result of negotiations of the Armenian government and Russian peacekeepers with Azerbaijan.³⁵⁴ In two days, however, on 21 March, Azerbaijan again cut off the gas supply to Nagorno-Karabakh. Gas supply was restored only on 28 March,³⁵⁵ towards the end of the military operation.

216. According to human rights defenders and experts in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, the analysis of facts reveals that during the reconstruction works or under their guise, the Azerbaijani side has installed a valve on the gas pipeline to close it at any time.³⁵⁶ This scenario was actually proved later, in December 2022, when Azerbaijan blocked the Lachin Corridor and constantly was cutting the gas supply to Nagorno-Karabakh.

217. This time too, the cutting of gas supply was followed by armed attacks against the Armenian villages. On 24 March, at 16:00, Azerbaijani forces launched attacks at the direction of Parukh village of Askeran region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Women and children were evacuated from Khramort village for the second time.³⁵⁷

218. On 25 March, the Azerbaijani forces attacked the Armenian villages from different calibre weapons and Turkish “Bayraktar” striking drones, as a result of which 15 Armenian servicepersons were wounded and three were killed.³⁵⁸

³⁵¹ Hetq, Արցախի Ազգային ժողովի ֆեյսբուք էջը ենթարկվել է թշնամու հակերային հարձակման, 11 March 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/142125> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁵² Message left for the Armenians at the hacked Facebook page of Artsakh National Assembly, Irina Safaryan, Twitter post, photos, 11 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/Isafaryan/status/1502346348540084233> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁵³ Factor, Արցախի Հանրապետության Ազգային ժողովը խստիվ դատապարտում է Ադրբեջանի ագրեսիվ և անարդարական գործողությունները, 10 August 2022, <https://factor.am/485754.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

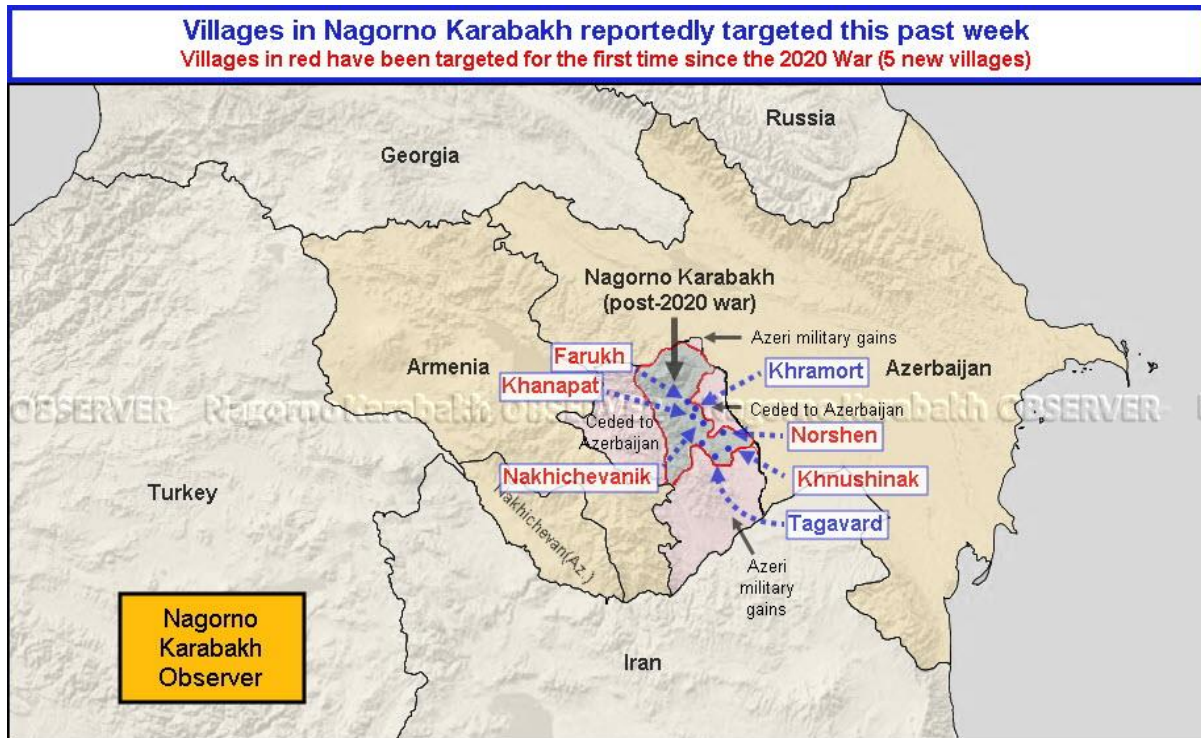
³⁵⁴ Hetq, Արցախում վսասկած զազատարի վերանորոգման աշխատանքները սկսվել են, 16 March 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/142307> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hetq, Արցախում գազամատակարարումը կվերականգնվի մարտի 19-ից, 18 February 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/142406> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁵⁵ Hetq, Արցախի ամբողջ տարածքում գազամատակարարումը վերականգնվել է, 29 March 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/142810> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

³⁵⁶ Human Rights Defender of Armenia and Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, The Joint Statement of the Human Rights Defenders of Armenia and Artsakh, 22 March 2022, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2174?fbclid=IwAR2niPGcsAYSK7M4Cqa4MuS357gOByWa_yZBONCoViK4ADdhmMLQon9nKoE (accessed on 2 May 2023); Oc-media, Ani Avetisyan, In Deep Freeze, Nagorno-Karabakh Finds Itself without Gas Again, 22 March 2022, https://oc-media.org/in-deep-freeze-nagorno-karabakh-finds-itself-without-gas-again/?fbclid=IwAR3He-9NK-C_XkwSPutTqYK4W7ykbjuqlevp2Zom1aL35VdvWqhQAEY6tOs (accessed on 2 May 2023); Weather in Artsakh on 23 March, Irina Safaryan, Twitter post, photo, 23 March 2023, <https://twitter.com/isafaryan/status/1506559502753181696?s=12&fbclid=IwAR2hQqfzrpAHJ6YH44pwDndrZISKJLx-oE6U9pbSRZeapeGNk7i9sfSJK9M> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, Azerbaijan Attempts to Freeze Armenians out of Karabakh, 22 March 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CA6igJcBr9Q> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁵⁷ NKR InfoCenter, Facebook post, 24 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsakhInformation/posts/278900131093447> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁵⁸ France 24, Russia Accuses Azerbaijan of Violating Nagorno-Karabakh Ceasefire, 26 March 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220326-russia-accuses-azerbaijan-of-violating-nagorno-karabakh-ceasefire> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Azatutyun, Իրադրությունը շփման գծի ամբողջ երկայնքով հարաբերական կայուն է. ՊԲ, 27 March 2022, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31772635.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Armenpress, 3 Armenian Contract Servicemen Killed in Artsakh as a Result of Baku's Use of Bayraktars TB2, 25 March 2022, <https://armenpress.am/arm/news/1078958/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); MoD of Russia, Информационный бюллетень Министерства обороны Российской Федерации о деятельности российского миротворческого контингента в зоне нагорно-карабахского конфликта (на 26 марта 2022 г.), 26 March 2022, https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/bulletins/more.htm?id=12414883%40egNews&fbclid=IwAR3TF_59V6anTI2vr6-



Map of attacks on 5 new villages in Nagorno-Karabakh

Source: Nagorno Karabakh Observer on Twitter, 12 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/NKobserver/status/1502395875078942721/photo/1>

219. After invading the village of Parukh, on 26 March, the Azerbaijani armed forces continued their movement in different directions of the Karaglukh height, located just above the village.³⁵⁹ As a result, Parukh appeared surrounded by the Azerbaijani armed forces and the residents were not able to return to their homes.³⁶⁰

220. In April, president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev confirmed that Azerbaijan had organised these attacks.³⁶¹ He said that deprivation of gas for one week was not a humanitarian catastrophe and that by restoring the gas supply Azerbaijan just showed a “good will. If we didn't want to, we wouldn't restore it.”³⁶² He also added that the reason of restoring the gas supply that Azerbaijan had itself cut off was to show the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh “that they must and will live under the

[5QsKqjr66WzW1szip9GHY8aXAaKSDStmfbLzZCjC](https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/bulletins/more.htm?id=12414982%40egNews) (accessed on 2 May 2023); MoD of Russia, Информационный бюллетень Министерства обороны Российской Федерации о деятельности российского миротворческого контингента в зоне нагорно-карабахского конфликта (на 27 марта 2022 г.), 27 March 2022, https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/bulletins/more.htm?id=12414982%40egNews (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁵⁹ NKR InfoCenter, Facebook post, 26 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsakhInformation/posts/280236594293134> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁶⁰ Armen Khachikyan, Facebook post with a map, 30 March 2022, https://www.facebook.com/armen.khachikyan/posts/pfbid02A1Juy3gerNz6joDZyd6dAoDFyPU5rb5vLh2PUPqAGhCnXyoGKUurLkAbAz_dawCel (accessed on 2 May 2023)

³⁶¹ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of First Quarter of 2022, 12 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55780> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Caliber.az, С места событий: оперативная ситуация у села Fərrux, 5 April 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ub0lnhi-Eb0> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁶² President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Chaired Meeting on Results of First Quarter of 2022, 12 April 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55780> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Azerbaijani flag. The sooner they understand this, the better for them. This is why we did that. We showed humanism.”³⁶³

Lachin, Aghavno and Sus in Lachin Corridor (August 2022)

221. On 1-3 August, Azerbaijan launched another armed attack against Nagorno-Karabakh, using weapons of various calibers, grenade launchers, and attack unmanned aerial vehicles.³⁶⁴

222. On 2 August, Azerbaijan demanded through the Russian peacekeepers to organise the connection of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia through a different route instead of the regular road within the Lachin Corridor.³⁶⁵ Though construction of a different route was envisioned by the tripartite statement of 10 November 2020,³⁶⁶ its plan was supposed to be outlined within 3 years - by November 2023.

223. Given Azerbaijan’s urgent demand for changing of the route, which came at least a year before the agreed deadline, Armenia accelerated the construction of the road on its territory, however it was not possible to ensure the due relocation of the utility communications, including the pipeline, high voltage electricity transmission lines and fiber optic cables, which fully stayed under Azerbaijani control.³⁶⁷

224. On 3 August, the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan announced that the Armenian forces had attempted “to capture Kykhkyz hill” as a response to which and the death of an Azerbaijani soldier, Azerbaijan had carried out the armed operation.³⁶⁸

225. Along with Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Army’s denial of this information,³⁶⁹ the investigative media “Hetq” published satellite images confirming that it was Azerbaijan who initiated the armed attack.³⁷⁰

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, The Human Rights Defender Called upon the Ambassadors of the Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries to Make Maximum Efforts in the Direction of Truly Guaranteeing the Right to Life of the Peaceful Population of Artsakh, 3 August 2022, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2313 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁶⁵ Panorama, Չարությունայինը հրավիրել է Անվտանգութեան խորհրդի ընդլայնված նիստ, 2 August 2022, <https://www.panorama.am/am/news/2022/08/02/Արցախ-Ան-Նիստ/2714446> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Москва-Баку, Ильхам Алиев требует срочного вывода незаконных армянских вооружённых формирований из Карабаха. 5.08, 5 August 2022, 02:00 minute, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exepCtnGWHM> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁶⁶ Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation, 10 November 2020, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384>, point 6., (accessed on 4 May 2023).

³⁶⁷ JAM news, “Residents forbidden to burn down houses”: about Karabakh villages that will come under Azerbaijani control,” 11 August 2022, <https://jam-news.net/forbidden-to-burn-houses-about-karabakh-towns-that-will-come-under-the-control-of-azerbaijan> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

³⁶⁸ Москва-Баку, Ильхам Алиев требует срочного вывода незаконных армянских вооружённых формирований из Карабаха. 5.08, 5 August 2022, 02:00 minute, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exepCtnGWHM> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Tass, В Минобороны Азербайджана заявили о взятии нескольких высот в Нагорном Карабахе, 3 August 2022, <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/15386907> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Television Interviewed Ilham Aliyev in Basgal Settlement of Ismayili District, 12 August 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56906> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁶⁹ News release of Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Army, Official Facebook page, 5 August 2022, https://www.facebook.com/artsakhdefencearmy/posts/5764775990221390/?paipv=0&eav=AfY3YKuCicKnuSwE5cD2Tiuga7LGA6g-zeielx2mVGJ_7403iCou_Ss7-6Mr2gp8zc&_rdr (accessed on 5 May 2022).

³⁷⁰ Hetq, ՊԲ ստորաբաժանումները չեն խախտել հրադադարի պահպանման ռեժիմը. ՊԲ-ն հերքում է Ադրբեյջանի ՊՆ-ի հաղորդագրությունը, 5 August 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/147105>; <https://hetq.am/hy/article/147071> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hetq, Թշնամու բարոգչամբեման ստում է. արբանյակային լուսանկարները հերքում են Ադրբեյջանի ՊՆ-ի պնդումը, 3 August 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/147071> (accessed on 2 May 2023); MoD of Russia, Информационный бюллетень Министерства обороны Российской Федерации о деятельности российского миротворческого контингента в зоне нагорно-карабахского конфликта (на 03 августа 2022 г.), 3 August 2022, https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/bulletins/more.htm?id=12431535@egNews (accessed on 2 May 2023).

226. In parallel with the attack, Azerbaijan launched a widespread anti-Armenian information campaign.³⁷¹

227. On 3 August, starting from 09:00, the Azerbaijani forces employed grenades and striking UAVs against the defence army as a result of which two Armenian servicepersons died and 19 wounded.³⁷²

228. Azerbaijani Telegram channels spread messages encouraging Azerbaijanis to “turn on their fake numbers and start the psychological terror towards the children of bitches,” “to spread panic among the monkeys” and to “find out whether there are military posts among them [civilians], food and water reserves, whether women and children were evacuated etc.” The message added that the received information should be transferred to the security services and the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan.³⁷³

229. On 4 August, Gudrat Hasanguliyev, a member of the parliament of Azerbaijan, confirmed the policy of Azerbaijan to ethnically cleanse Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenians stating that until Armenia stops supporting “the bloody separatism of Karabakh” Azerbaijan “should not recognize their [ethnic Armenians] right to have a peaceful life” and that under the current situation, it is not possible for Armenians to live in Azerbaijan.³⁷⁴ Hasanguliyev also added that president Aliyev intends to establish Azerbaijan’s sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh not wishing “to keep this problem for future generations. Tomorrow Erdogan will meet with Putin, and this issue will be discussed again. Long live the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan!”³⁷⁵

230. As a result of this armed attack, Azerbaijan took control of several strategic heights, which, according to Azerbaijani sources, allowed them to visually control several villages in Nagorno-Karabakh and part of Stepanakert - Martakert highway.³⁷⁶

231. On 12 August, president Aliyev called on the Armenians living in Berdzor (Lachin) town, Aghavno and Sus villages inside the Lachin Corridor, who according to him are “war criminals,” claiming that they “should leave” by the end of August. He also threatened with the Azerbaijani army in case they did not leave their homes by the voluntarily set deadline. He stated: “No one can stop us. Who can stop an army of 100,000 troops? Let’s wait until the end of the month.”³⁷⁷

³⁷¹ Tatev Hayrapetyan, Facebook post, 12 August 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/HayrapetyanTat/posts/pfbid0akSWsXZBzJoiELmv9jcf8dR4z2dVsiG5REEMfjfuEWxnMZY9XgjrFRSCKyVAphA2l> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁷² Armenpress, Two Contract Servicemen Killed as a Result of Azerbaijani Aggression, 3 August 2022, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1089584.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Eurasianet, In Renewed Fighting, Azerbaijan Captures Additional Territory in Karabakh, 4 August 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/in-renewed-fighting-azerbaijan-captures-additional-territory-in-karabakh> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁷³ Ophelia Simonyan, Facebook Post, Reference to a Telegram channel, 3 August 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1288967404843367&set=a.105905713149548> (accessed on 2 May 2023); NSS of Artsakh calling on the population to be cautious about Azerbaijani disinformation and online threats, NKR InforCentre, Facebook Post, 4 August 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsakhInformation/posts/pfbid0SyBdgsML8EH1NcGLXKwnYkKdSwbbnpzxcCwsG5CvSo6Y4TgUjpnBBfjXWY4aMUQ6l> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁷⁴ Gununsesi, “Baş verənlər Ermənistanı novbəti xəbərdarlıqdir” - Qüdrət Həsənguliyev, 4 August 2022, <https://www.gununsesi.info/bas-ver%C9%99nl%C9%99r-erm%C9%99nistana-novb%C9%99ti-x%C9%99b%C9%99rdarlıqdir/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Armenian Weekly, Dr. Benyamin Poghosyan, What the Recent Escalation in Nagorno Karabakh Tells Us about the Strategy of Armenia and Azerbaijan, 8 August 2022, https://armenianweekly.com/2022/08/08/what-the-recent-escalation-in-nagorno-karabakh-tells-us-about-the-strategy-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan/?fbclid=IwAR04ydg2WGylVxQp9EYj5NWK6-v4SW3cpVf8dTqLsf1SAHkV_ymWJ3ZuA64 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁷⁷ President of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan Television Interviewed Ailham Aliyev in Basgal Settlement of Ismayili District, 12 August 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56906> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev during a Trip to Lachin, 21 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58559> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

232. Armenian population of Berdzor town, Aghavno and Sus villages were forced to leave their homes in order to avoid the atrocities by the Azerbaijani forces.³⁷⁸

233. On 31 December, Azerbaijan's president praised the fact that the act of deportation was carried out "well ahead of schedule, on August 26," which, according to him, was "an outstanding achievement."³⁷⁹

Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik marzes in Armenia (September 2022)

234. After the Brussels meeting between the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the EU of 31 August,³⁸⁰ Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defence spread information on the Armenian armed forces firing at the direction of Azerbaijan's military positions, while the Ministry of Defence of Armenia denied such information.³⁸¹

235. On 5 September, clashes were reported where one Armenian soldier was shot dead in the direction of the eastern border of Armenia adjacent to Kelbajar region of Azerbaijan.³⁸²

236. On the same day, after calling on Armenia to "respond to Turkish and Azerbaijani calls for peace" and mentioning "Zangazur corridor"³⁸³ the Turkish-Azerbaijani forces began the "TurAz Qartalı 2022" (TurAz Eagle 2022) Joint Flight-Tactical Exercises in Azerbaijan. The military exercises were planned to last till 16 September³⁸⁴ and included land and air forces, special units, intelligence units, and missile and artillery units, using Turkish F-16s and special-purpose fortification equipment.³⁸⁵

237. On 10 September, the Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan, Zakir Hasanov, instructed the armed forces "to be ready to suppress "any provocation immediately and decisively."³⁸⁶

238. The Foreign minister of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, stated that "if the issues of "Zangazur corridor" is not solved by diplomatic means it can be solved by force."³⁸⁷

³⁷⁸ Civilnet, Azerbaijan's Army Enters Berdzor, Aghavno and Nerkin Sus, 26 August 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/672414/azerbaijans-army-enters-berdzor-aghavno-and-nerkin-sus> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁷⁹ President of Azerbaijan, Address of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on the Occasion of the Day of Solidarity of World Azerbaijanis and the New Year, 31 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58523> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁸⁰ EU Council, Press statement by President Charles Michel Following the Trilateral Meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 31 August 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/08/31/press-statement-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia-31-august-2022/>.

³⁸¹ News Release of Ministry of Defence of Armenia from 2 September 2022, <https://mil.am/en/news/10982> (accessed on 5 May 2023)

³⁸² MoD of Armenia, Release, 6 September 2022, <https://www.mil.am/en/news/10990> (accessed on 2 May 2023); MoD of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan army's Positions Subjected to Intensive Fire in Recent Days: Defense Ministry, 6 September 2022, <https://news.az/news/azerbaijan-armys-positions-subjected-to-intensive-fire-in-recent-days-defense-ministry> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁸³ Daily Sabah, Armenia Should Respond to Peace Calls from Türkiye, Azerbaijan: Akar, 6 September 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/armenia-should-respond-to-peace-calls-from-turkiye-azerbaijan-akar> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁸⁴ Anadolu, Diyar Gulgogun, Türkiye, Azerbaijan start joint military drill, TurAz Qartalı 2022 in Azerbaijan will last until Sept. 16, 5 September 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/turkiye-azerbaijan-start-joint-military-drill/2677343> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁸⁵ Daily Sabah, Türkiye, Azerbaijan Begin Joint Military Drill in Azerbaijan, 6 September 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkiye-azerbaijan-begin-joint-military-drill-in-azerbaijan> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁸⁶ MoD of Azerbaijan, An Official Meeting Was Held in the Ministry of Defense, 10 September 2022, <https://mod.gov.az/en/news/an-official-meeting-was-held-in-the-ministry-of-defense-42227.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁸⁷ Lragir, Բաքուն սադրա՞ւթ Է Լախապատրաստում, 10 September 2022, <https://www.lragir.am/2022/09/10/737672/?fbclid=IwAR1RneOag3w1FJjGwqScSLk4OkNI1o0Yby4trw4qXSVTZwpmkC9ldFc-CS8> (accessed on 2 May 03).

239. Taking into account the pattern of the ongoing information warfare, since the beginning of September 2022 the experts already warned that Azerbaijan was preparing grounds for an armed attack against Armenia or Nagorno-Karabakh.³⁸⁸

240. On 12 September, it was reported that from 04:00 to 04:30 the Azerbaijani forces opened fire against villages of Karmir Shuka and Taghavard in Nagorno-Karabakh's Martuni region, using various types and various caliber small arms and heavy machine guns, in result of which two residential houses in Karmir Shuka and one in Taghavart were damaged.³⁸⁹

241. On 13 September, around 00:05, the Azerbaijani armed forces directed intensive armed attack at the directions of Sotq, Vardenis, Artanish of Gegharkunik marz and Goris, Kapan, Ishkanasar of Syunik marz of Armenia, using artillery, mortars and UAVs targeting both the military and civilian objects.³⁹⁰ Azerbaijani forces also directed attacks against Jermuk city of Vayots Dzor marz of Armenia – a popular health resort.³⁹¹

242. The intense armed attack continued for about two days as a result of which Azerbaijani forces occupied large areas of the eastern and south-eastern parts of Armenia.³⁹²

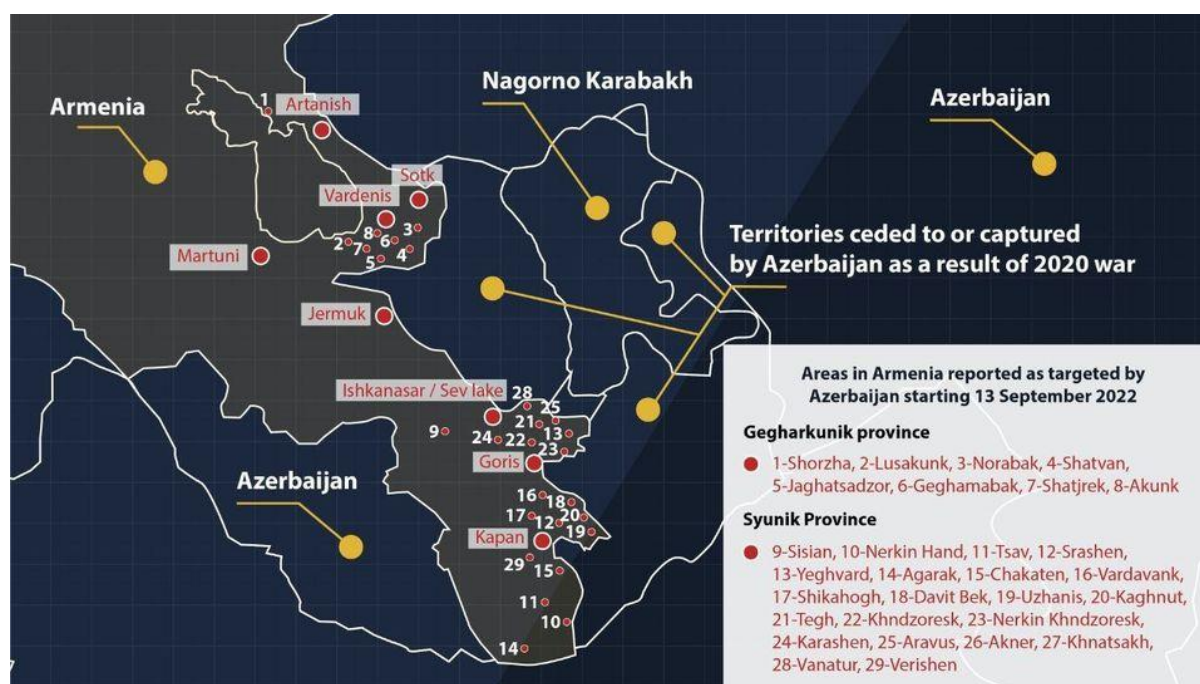
³⁸⁸ Civilnet, Ադրբեջանը հող Է նախապատրաստում Հայաստանի ու Արցախի դեմ հերթական սադրանքի համար, 5 September 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/673190/ադրբեջանը-հող-Է-նախապատրաստում-հայաստանի-ու-արցախի-դեմ-հերթական-սադրանքի-համար/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Tatev Hayrapetyan, <https://t.me/TatevHayrapetyan/263> (accessed on 2 May 2023.); Tatev Hayrapetyan, 12 September 2022, <https://t.me/TatevHayrapetyan/268> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Haqqin.az, Как Азербайджану избавиться от армянских вооруженных формирований в Карабахе?, 12 September 2022, <https://haqqin.az/investigations/259626> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Azerbaijani experts predicting the attacks by Azerbaijan as the use of the convenient moment by president Aliyev as aa means to impose “peace,” BBC Russian Service, “Вакуум силы”: что известно о боях на границе Армении и Азербайджана и как это повлияет на Карабах, 13 September 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-62894247.amp> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Ampop, Ադրբեջանի զավթողական գործողությունները ՀՀ սուվերեն տարածքում և Արցախում 2020թ. Նոյեմբերի 9-ից հետո, (updated), 29 September 2022, <https://ampop.am/azerbaijan-aggressive-actions-in-the-sovereign-territory-of-the-republic-of-armenia-and-artsakh/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁸⁹ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Facebook post, 12 September 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid0iBGt33z6QTrKaiPZ8KmFdVcnYxQHtUCKjQ5KkLcGhVXQeLWYKp1FmqNuAqoGDg3VI> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁹⁰ MoD of Armenia, Statement of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, 13 September 2022, <https://mil.am/en/news/11009> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁹¹ BBC Russian Service, “Вакуум силы”: что известно о боях на границе Армении и Азербайджана и как это повлияет на Карабах, 13 September 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-62894247.amp> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Ampop, Ադրբեջանի զավթողական գործողությունները ՀՀ սուվերեն տարածքում և Արցախում 2020թ. Նոյեմբերի 9-ից հետո, (updated), 29 September 2022, <https://ampop.am/azerbaijan-aggressive-actions-in-the-sovereign-territory-of-the-republic-of-armenia-and-artsakh/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Video with the attacks from Jermuk city e.g., Daily Storm, Telegram post, 13 September 2022, <https://t.me/stormdaily/50353> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Photos: Hetq, Ձերմուկը՝ ադրբեջանական ուժերի հարձակումից հետո (լուսանկարներ), 15 September 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/148328> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, Հայաստանում հավատարմագրված դեսպաններն այցելել են Ձերմուկ, 16 September 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/675197/հայաստանում-հավատարմագրված-դեսպաններն-այցելել-են-ջերմուկ/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁹² Satellite images of areas occupied near Jermuk as of 8 October 2022, Civilnet, Ձերմուկի հատվածում ադրբեջանական առաջխաղացումը՝ ըստ արբանյակային լուսանկարների, 12 October 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/news/678721/ջերմուկի-հատվածում-ադրբեջանական-առաջխաղացումը-ըստ-արբանյակային-լուսանկարների> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Ampop, Ադրբեջանի զավթողական գործողությունները ՀՀ սուվերեն տարածքում և Արցախում 2020թ. Նոյեմբերի 9-ից հետո (updated), 29 September 2022, <https://ampop.am/azerbaijan-aggressive-actions-in-the-sovereign-territory-of-the-republic-of-armenia-and-artsakh/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).



Map of areas in Armenia targeted by Azerbaijan in September 2022

Source: Scholars of Armenian Studies issue statement on the latest aggression by Azerbaijan on Armenia, The Armenian Weekly, 15 September 2022, <https://armenianweekly.com/2022/09/15/scholars-of-armenian-studies-issue-statement-on-the-latest-aggression-by-azerbaijan-on-armenia>

243. According to the fact-finding examinations journalists, the maps depicting occupation of the Armenian territories by Azerbaijan demonstrate that the September 2022 aggression was the “organic continuation of the 2021 May aggression in parallel of which Azerbaijan had built a dense road network leading to its military positions in the occupied territories and limiting the opportunities of the Armenian armed forces.”³⁹³

244. According to official information, 224 Armenian servicepersons were killed on the territory of Armenia, and three were missing.³⁹⁴ According to the monitoring by Armenian media Razminfo, the number of the losses on the Azerbaijani side was 81.³⁹⁵

245. During 13-15 September, at least 7,600 persons were displaced from Gegharkunik, Syunik and Vayots Dzor marzes of Armenia. The majority of them were women, children, elderly people, and persons with disabilities, among them 1,437 children and 99 persons with disabilities.³⁹⁶

246. The attacks with less intensity continued throughout September, and the embassies of France, US, UK in Armenia published security alerts as of 23 September warning not to travel to the areas of

³⁹³ Ampop, Ադրբեջանի զավթողական գործողությունները ՀՀ սուվերեն տարածքում և Արցախում 2020թ. Նոյեմբերի 9-ից հետո, 29 September 2022 (updated), <https://ampop.am/azerbaijan-aggressive-actions-in-the-sovereign-territory-of-the-republic-of-armenia-and-artsakh> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

³⁹⁴ Investigative Committee of Armenia, Facebook post, 19 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ArmlInvestigative/posts/605340621395615> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁹⁵ Razminfo, Ադրբեջանի կորուստները 2022 թվականին (updated). 4 January 2023, <https://razm.info/153727> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Razminfo, List by names, 2022թ. Ադրբեջանի կորուստների անվանացանկ, 15 January 2023, <https://razm.info/153758> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁹⁶ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/fc7d77e1dcd3e0573173dfa7314e6c46.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Armenia, specifically the whole eastern border, whole Syunik province, eastern, southern and some northern parts of lake Sevan.³⁹⁷

247. President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, confirmed in his speeches that Azerbaijan had carried out the aggression on 13 September with specific military and political purposes.

248. On 21 September, referring to the attacks, Azerbaijan's president Aliyev reaffirmed that "no one and nothing, no statements or calls could stop us because we are on our land."³⁹⁸ He also accused Armenia of its "impression that all of Karabakh and Zangazur would remain theirs" and added that "in the absence of border delimitation, no one can claim where the border passes."³⁹⁹ Apparently, for Aliyev where the border is not clear, it is undoubtedly an Azerbaijani land where the Azerbaijani military can be sanctioned to use force and commit crimes against the Armenians.

249. On 8 November, Aliyev announced that "They should remember that playing with fire will cost them dearly." He stated "...the Farrukh operation, the Revenge operation, the 13-14 September events on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border – all these should serve as another lesson for Armenia. We have taught them this lesson, and we hope that they finally understand it, bend their necks and deal with their internal affairs, not set their sights on our lands, not set their sights on Karabakh. Karabakh is our land." He also emphasized that the "Revenge Operation" led the Azerbaijani forces to occupy "key strategic heights" from which they can see Armenian cities and lake Sevan.⁴⁰⁰ He said. "If anyone there, be it the government, the opposition or some element sent or trained from abroad, wants to have some bad intentions against us again, they will see our fist again. The history of the last two years has shown this clearly. Russian peacekeepers are stationed there temporarily, the 10 November 2020 Statement specifies their term, and if they rely on anyone, they will face another tragedy," the Azerbaijani leader said.

250. On 11 November, he repeated that Azerbaijan "fought on its lands, defeated the Armenian army and expelled them from" Azerbaijan's "ancestral lands" leading to the Azerbaijani army to be in their "native lands in the direction of the Azerbaijan-Armenia border."⁴⁰¹

251. On 24 December, Aliyev again stated that "we had to carry out military operation on the Azerbaijan-Armenia border [...] to secure more favourable positions] as a result of [which] historical Azerbaijani cities [referring to cities in Armenia proper] are now visible to us."⁴⁰²

³⁹⁷ Embassy of France, Armenie, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/conseils-par-pays-destination/armenie/#securite>; US Embassy, Security Alert – U.S. Embassy Yerevan, Armenia, <https://am.usembassy.gov/security-alert-update/>; UK embassy, Foreign travel advice, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/armenia>.

³⁹⁸ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Has Raised the Flag of Azerbaijan in the Center of the City of Lachin, 21 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57293> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57857> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

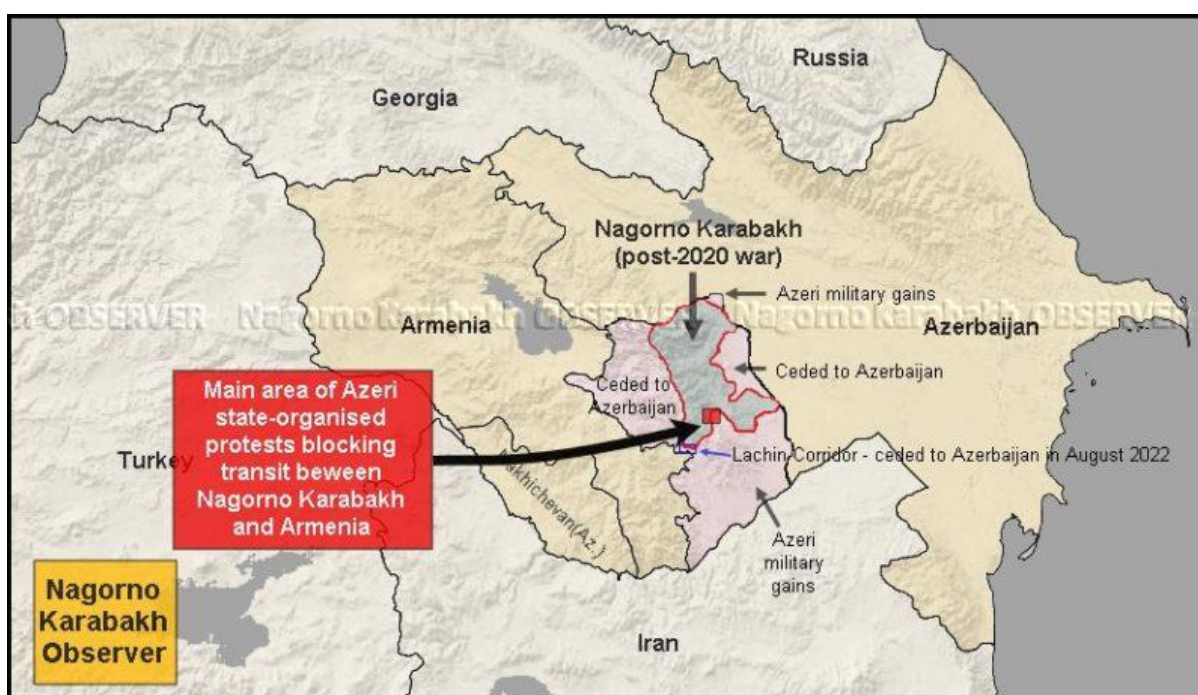
⁴⁰¹ President of Azerbaijan, Samarkand hosts 9th Summit of Organization of Turkic States, 11 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57816> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁰² President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with a Group of Intellectuals from Western Azerbaijan, 24 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58470> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Blockage of Lachin Corridor and the siege of Nagorno-Karabakh (December 2022)

252. On 3 December, a group of Azerbaijanis under an environmental pretext blocked Lachin Corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and to the rest of the world.⁴⁰³ The road was opened the same day, however it appeared to be a rehearsal of a bigger plan.

253. On 12 December 2022, Azerbaijan arranged for a major blockade, cutting off 120,000 Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh from the outside world. A group of Azerbaijanis, calling themselves as “eco activists,” blocked Lachin Corridor again, erecting tents along the road⁴⁰⁴ and preventing anyone and anything from entering or exiting, with the exception of Russian Peacekeeping Contingent. About 3,500 people were not able to travel home and unify with their families on both ends of the Lachin Corridor – Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁰⁵



Map of the blocked Lachin Corridor

Source: Nelly Baghdasaryan, Nagorno Karabakh Republic Presidential Adviser Analyses Blockade, The Armenian Mirror Spectator, 28 December 2022, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2022/12/28/nagorno-karabakh-republic-adviser-analyses-blockade>

⁴⁰³ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Facebook post, 3 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/5377816652347705> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁰⁴ HRW, Azerbaijan: Nagorno-Karabakh Lifeline Road Blocked. Ensure Access to Essential Goods and Services, 21 December 2022, https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/21/azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh-lifeline-road-blocked?fbclid=IwAR3uMoa_kmv0p85cMfA5fwUGnAYA_FT0Du79rNjr8n16ZbLn7WQ0xk7PJm4 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁰⁵ Joint Report of NGOs, Human Rights Violations by Azerbaijan in the Time of Blockade, Stepanakert, January 2023, p. 7, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/991> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

- 254.** On 13 December, Azerbaijan cut off the gas supply. On the same day, Rasim Musabayov, a member of Azerbaijan’s parliament said that “it is needless to remind that Karabakh Armenians receive electricity and gas from Armenia via cables and a pipeline that is under Azerbaijani control.”⁴⁰⁶ On 16 December due to pressure from international community, the gas supply was restored.⁴⁰⁷
- 255.** On 19 December, only on the 8th day of the blockade, after the extensive negotiations the ICRC was able for the first time to transfer a person in a critical medical condition to a medical facility in Yerevan, Armenia. Another patient died in a hospital in Stepanakert as a result of not being transferred to Yerevan on time because of the blockade.⁴⁰⁸ On 24 December, the ICRC was able to transfer only one patient from Stepanakert to Yerevan, a 4-month-old child was in a critical condition for several days and under the supervision of local doctors.⁴⁰⁹
- 256.** As of 29 December, essential commodities were out of stock. Majority of shops became empty with occasional delivery of dairy products being exhausted momentarily.⁴¹⁰ Commuting inside Nagorno-Karabakh was also restricted due to the lack of gas.⁴¹¹
- 257.** Evidence demonstrates that the persons that blocked the Lachin Corridor were not environmental activists, but rather were deployed by the Azerbaijani authorities. As seen in the videos circulated online, the “eco-activists” blocking the Lachin corridor chant political slogans, such as “Karabakh is Azerbaijan!,” wear fur and wave around a dead dove as a sign of “peace.”⁴¹²
- 258.** According to an active environmental organization operating in Azerbaijan, “Qara,” that had protested against leases of forested lands to private owners the year before, “it is obvious that the protest of “eco-activists” in Karabakh has a false agenda,” and that the protest in the Lachin Corridor was organized by the Azerbaijani government.⁴¹³
- 259.** According to the scrutiny of the online profiles of dozens of persons blocking the corridor, all of the examined are connected with the Azerbaijani government, are financed or at least partially financed by state.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁶ Rasim Musabayov, Facebook post, 13 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/musabayovrasim/posts/pfbid0cJSHnm6NN2B3ZYVQrFHFbCik5eM73wPB9FEve8FA4xLqeYmuwdwCyMwN8iSMet1wl> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁰⁷ Joint Report of NGOs, Human Rights Violations by Azerbaijan in the Time of Blockade, Stepanakert, January 2023, p. 3, <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/991> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid

⁴¹² Robert Barseghyan, Facebook post, video, 14 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/robert.barsegyan.3/posts/pfbid02UDxNkng8Yi5swFr9PiYM7n61JToxeuJN27JQWo4nR3oPE6zkCmYFZaDdqm1RPnWQI> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Oc-media, Nagorno-Karabakh under Siege, 18 December 2022, https://oc-media.org/features/nagorno-karabakh-under-siege/?fbclid=IwAR0ONzI4g8XGvSn-T_DzVSHpCSle4cDnAizGLKdkqH4G2PWtYn6d2IYL4xE (accessed on 2 May 2023); Foreign Policy, Lara Setrakian, The West Must Act to Avert War in Nagorno-Karabakh, 26 December 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/12/26/nagorno-karabakh-lachin-corridor-protests-armenia-azerbaijan/?fbclid=IwAR3ajRZAShAicUWr6ElcggJrER0ObypX0oUQZKrh0L0L0qOtPOahiZ-06AU> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴¹³ Civilnet, Who Really Are Azerbaijan’s “Environmental Activists” Blockading Karabakh?, 14 December 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/686152/?fbclid=IwAR0kQvX3rHr4OIYvahZznDwqqUcHHOee7BxEN-Lg4PIVEwoSBFQBBXmOjI> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.; Lindsey Snell, Facebook post, Video showing Riib, part of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, 23 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/lindseysnel/posts/pfbid028To5nnjRjyqovxfBMEFownAsNn7HRyShc5yJ4ZQoZSr9YxbmkG7FG91zEkPeWGIDl> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

260. One of the protesters told REPORT.AZ that the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources had provided tents for them to stay in. Another protester was wearing a jacket from AzerSu, the state water company.⁴¹⁵

261. Many of the protesters are also members of “Grey Wolves” ultranationalist organization and pose with the salutation sign of their organization.⁴¹⁶ One of such persons identified was Telman Qasimov, a well-known military and political expert in Azerbaijan and a former member of the armed forces. He spoke fluent Armenian and appealed to the Armenian people that they would be safe under the Azerbaijani rule. In some of his online photos Qasimov wears the logo of “Grey Wolves.”⁴¹⁷

262. Azerbaijani citizens had the opportunity to visit the occupied areas of Nagorno-Karabakh (e.g. Shushi) only for a few hours, through obtaining a special permit from the government, via state-provided buses and accompanied by police officers. President Aliyev appealed to Azerbaijanis not to enter those areas without advance permission, the access of independent journalists to the protests was prohibited and a number of persons have been arrested after entering the area without advance permission.⁴¹⁸ In the meantime, throughout the blockage of the Lachin Corridor the number of “eco-activists” protesters was growing, which also proves that the “activists” were acting under the patronage of Aliyev’s administration.⁴¹⁹

263. On 24 December, referring to the “developments along the Lachin road,” president Aliyev blamed Armenia’s “foreign patrons, the states behind them have started a smear campaign against Azerbaijan.”⁴²⁰ The president Aliyev then added, “Nobody can influence us. There may be calls, there may be some statements, but we do not need to pay attention to them. We are answering these calls simply out of political courtesy. But this will not change our position in the slightest.”⁴²¹

264. As of 31 December 2022, Lachin Corridor remained blocked.

⁴¹⁵ Eurasianet, Azerbaijanis Again Block the Road to Karabakh, 12 December 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/azerbaijanis-again-block-the-road-to-karabakh> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴¹⁶ Cavid Ismayil, Facebook post, Video, 12 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/100012577984157/videos/689920935976133> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴¹⁷ Civilnet, Who Really are Azerbaijan’s “Environmental Activists” Blockading Karabakh?, 14 December 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/686152/?fbclid=IwAR0kQvX3rHr4OIYvahZZnDwqquUcHHOee7BxEN-Lg4PIVEwoSBFQBBXmOjI> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Lindsey Snell, Facebook post, Photo, 13 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10103646576303760&set=a.829931892780> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hovhannes Harutyunyan, Facebook post, Photo, 21 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10160293299195610&set=a.10150556526280610&type=3> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴¹⁸ Aztoday.az, Müstəqil jurnalistlər Şuşa-Xankəndi yolundakı aksiyaya buraxılmadı, 15 December 2022, <https://aztoday.az/news/204495.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴¹⁹ BBC News Azerbaijani, İşğaldan azad olunmuş ərazilərə icazəsiz getməyə görə həbs və ya cərimə oluna bilərsinizmi?, 10 February 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/azeri/azerbaijan-56015951?fbclid=IwAR0UZHmrWctMMcY5gt-Dj-gD3hDm7krpelsk1w5rJvLAQXhMLb--3ZroT8> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Eurasianet, Азербайджан запускает автобусные туры по Карабаху, 25 January 2022, <https://russian.eurasianet.org/азербайджан-запускает-автобусные-туры-по-карабаху> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, Who Really are Azerbaijan’s “Environmental Activists” Blockading Karabakh?, 14 December 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/686152/?fbclid=IwAR0kQvX3rHr4OIYvahZZnDwqquUcHHOee7BxEN-Lg4PIVEwoSBFQBBXmOjI> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴²⁰ President of Azerbaijan, Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with a Group of Intellectuals from Western Azerbaijan, 24 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58470> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

⁴²¹ “Another provocation against us is being prepared in the UN,” Aliyev says, 26 December 2022, <https://mediamax.am/en/news/foreignpolicy/49835> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

Inhumane and degrading treatment of Armenian captives

265. Despite the International Court of Justice (ICJ) order for the Armenian detainees “not to be subjected to inhumane or degrading treatment based on their national or ethnic origin while being detained by Azerbaijan,”⁴²² in 2022, as discussed in the current report, Armenian PoWs and civilians captured both within the context of the 44-day war and the Azerbaijani aggression of 13 September 2022 against Armenia continued to be subject to extrajudicial executions, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment.

Captives from hostilities of 2020

266. Within merely two days of the offensive by Azerbaijan against Armenia in September, Azerbaijani forces committed a number of war crimes which were rather indicative of its policy of hatred towards the Armenian people. In addition to directing attacks against medical vehicles,⁴²³ journalists,⁴²⁴ civilians and civilian objects, indiscriminate attacks in civilian communities,⁴²⁵ including schools.⁴²⁶ Azerbaijan exercised torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, mutilation of the dead bodies, executions of Armenians. As with the 44-day war of 2020, videos of those scenes were proudly and promptly posted on Azerbaijani social media platforms in parallel with the ongoing armed attacks.

267. Even the names of the social media channels had racist motivations. For instance, some videos were spread through a Telegram channel called “khacherubka” (хачерубка), which is a derivative of Armenian “khach” (cross) and Russian “rubka” (grinder or grinding). “Хач” is a denigrating term usually used by ultra-nationalist Russians towards persons of Armenian descent (particularly in the context of ex-Soviet nations), while the word “рубка” translates into English as “grinding,” so, the name of the Telegram channel means “grinder or grinding of Armenians.”⁴²⁷

⁴²² ICJ, Order on the Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan), 7 December 2021, <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/180/180-20211207-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴²³ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), para. 71, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Defender of Armenia, The Human Rights Defender’s Office is Carrying out Fact-finding Activities on the Targeting of Civilian Infrastructure during the September 13 Aggression of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces in the Republic of Armenia, 13 September 2022, para. 71, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2341 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴²⁴ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), paras 75-76, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Radar Armenia, Արեւելանական ՉՈՒ-ն Սոթթում թիրախավորել է լրագրողների խմբին, 14 September 2022, <https://radar.am/hy/news/social-2526323813/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Armenpress, Սոթթում թիրախավորել են հայ և արտասահմանցի լրագրողների, 14 September 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFfcTqvsuW4&t=3s> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴²⁵ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), paras 99-128, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴²⁶ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), paras 81-86, 92-94, Appendices 2-10, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴²⁷ Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Arzu Geybullayeva, Bahruz Samadov, How Azerbaijan’s Telegram Channels Fuel Intimidation. With Little Oversight, Toxic Disinformation and Threats Thrive on the Encrypted Platform, 25 October 2022, <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/how-azerbaijans-telegram-channels-fuel-intimidation> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc public report on consequences of Azerbaijani military attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), p. 56 (closed for general public).

268. There was a case when, after killing a serviceman of the Armenian armed forces, the Azerbaijani serviceman took a picture and video of him, then sent the photo to his wife via WhatsApp as well as published the video and the photo on WhatsApp's "story" section.⁴²⁸

269. The disseminated videos of war crimes also included those taken during the 44-day war being presented as new videos as a tool to further terrorize Armenians.⁴²⁹

270. Videos of torture and mutilation of Armenians found public excitement, praise and encouragement among the Azerbaijani social media users, were accompanied with entries such as "the best Armenian is a dead Armenian, "we must kill all Armenians: children, women, the elderly, without repentance or compassion. The most important thing now is to get rid of these cattle, otherwise it will be too late." Those insulted and called the tortured and the dead Armenians in the videos "Armenian terrorists."⁴³⁰

271. In one of such videos uploaded on social media platforms we see Armenian soldiers, PoWs, on the ground handcuffed and blindfolded being hit and called "dishonorable son of a bitch... dishonorable" in the Azerbaijani language.⁴³¹

272. In another video, we see ten Armenian PoWs on the ground, some of them wounded, and Azerbaijani military kicking, filming them and forcing one of them to say: "Hello Garanboy!"⁴³²

273. The third video shows Armenian captured soldiers in trenches with their hands tied behind their backs, some of them injured. The man filming calls them "scums," asks one of the captives "What is your name" in Azerbaijani, then, sings "Oh my little chicks," lyrics from a popular soviet Azerbaijani children's song "*Cib, cib, jujelerim*." Another Azerbaijani soldier says that he is from the Special Forces "Spetsnaz." At the end of the video the cameraman kicks soil onto the captives' faces and calls them "fucker of whatever you have."⁴³³

274. In the fourth video, an Azerbaijani serviceman films an Armenian soldier to repeat "Long live the child of Baku! Long live the child of Savetsky [Soviet]!"⁴³⁴

275. In the fifth video, we see Armenian PoWs blindfolded and handcuffed in a vehicle and Azerbaijani military insulting them "dishonourable" and forcing to repeat "Karabakh is Azerbaijan!"⁴³⁵

276. Azerbaijani armed forces treated with specific cruelty the Armenian female servicepersons. Videos were circulated on social media where corps of Armenian servicepersons were shown. Among these corps, the Azerbaijani military filmed the body of an Armenian servicewoman with her genitals and breasts naked, her undershirt hanging on the side of her body, her hands placed above her head, her finger cut and placed in her mouth sticking out of it. One of her eyes is closed, while the other has

⁴²⁸ Tatoyan Foundation. Centre for Law and Justice, Azerbaijani servicemen sent the photo and video of the killed Armenian soldier to his wife via WhatsApp, published in "Story." "Tatoyan" Foundation presented a new fact from the last war, 28 September 2022, <https://tatoyanfoundation.org/news-3/?lang=en> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴²⁹ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), para. 21, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴³⁰ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), para. 34, Appendix 1, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴³¹ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), p. 48 (closed for general public).

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

a reverted eyeball planted over her closed eyelid. Her throat is cut. A message is left on her chest and stomach saying “YASMA” (a code name for the Azerbaijani special forces). The cameraman kicks her body, calls her “promiscuous” and says “good job!” Then he turns to the body of another woman showing part of her stripped body on camera and saying “Look at this disgrace!”⁴³⁶ A third woman was filmed by the Azerbaijani forces who was also laying naked down to her underwear over another body and with remaining civilian clothes. The video with the women was widely circulated in Azerbaijani social media, the first servicewoman was identified, her older photos were edited into the mutilated version and turned into a caricature, with her finger cut and eye removed.⁴³⁷ Not only were these videos widely, discussed, praised online among Azerbaijani users, but they were also saved in personal phones and disseminated.⁴³⁸ In addition, Armenian men were also targeted on social media by Azerbaijanis as “sitting on the couch” and “sending Armenian women” to the battlefield instead of himself. In contrast, the “YASMA sends Armenian women to God.”⁴³⁹

277. Videos were also circulated and actively discussed among pro-Azerbaijani online platforms where a group of eight Armenian PoWs were executed by Azerbaijani armed forces. At least three men open fire at the disarmed and lined up PoWs. The video was identified to have been taken near Ishkhanasar of Syunik marz of Armenia on 13 September.⁴⁴⁰

278. In another video, one dead and two wounded Armenian PoWs are seen, the latter being tortured by YASMA. One of the torturers who says “*Siktir aminı siktigimin köpeği*” (“Fuck you, fucking dog”) had a Turkish accent.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), Appendix 1, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

գնել ու թռել են գերեվարվածների մեջքերին»։ մայրն ահազանգում է՝ որդու հոգեբանական խնդիրների մասին, 21 November 2022, <https://forrights.am/2022/11/21/արդրեցանցիները-բարձր-տեղ-են-կանգնել/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴³⁸ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, The Policy of Armenophobia of the Azerbaijani Authorities Has Received New Manifestations, Including Religious Affiliation, 8 January 2022, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2078 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴³⁹ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), para. 36, <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴⁰ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Twitter post, 2 October 2022, https://twitter.com/OmbudsArmenia/status/1576523926263693312?fbclid=IwAR3EFr2Fm78JYEY5hUeE9f7_YX8NrGZFT3V-hqJvQJN5LSeKNJ1Xdi7OU0U (accessed on 2 May 2023); Tatoyan Foundation. Centre for Law and Justice, Հայ գերեվարված զինծառայողների զննակահարելու տեսանյութում հանցանքը կատարողները նորաստեղծ արդրեցանական «Կոմանդո» ջոկատի զինվորականներն են, 2 October 2022, <https://tatoyanfoundation.org/hay-gerevarvats-zintsaravoghnerin-gndakaharelu-tesanyutum-hancangy-kataroghneri-norasteghts-adrbejanakan-komando-jokati-zinvorakannern-yen> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hetq, Հայ զինծառայողների զննակահարությունն իրականացվել է Իշխանասարում. Սիրանուշ Սահակյան, 3 October 2022, available at <https://hetq.am/hy/article/148899> (accessed on 2 May 2023); HRW, Video Shows Azerbaijan Forces Executing Armenian POWs. Hold Those Responsible to Account, 14 October 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/14/video-shows-azerbaijan-forces-executing-armenian-pows> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Bellingcat, An Execution Near Sev Lake, 20 October 2020, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2022/10/20/an-execution-near-sev-lake-armenia-azerbaijan/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Siranush Sahakyan interview, Hayeli.am, Հայ ռազմագերիներ. Այլըն ձեռագիր է փոխել. Սիրանուշ Սահակյան, 6:08- minutes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXC_U40daLk (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴¹ Bagramyan 26, Telegram post, video, 11 October 2022, <https://t.me/bagramyan26/41489> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Lindsey Snell, Twitter post, Video, 11 October 2022, <https://mobile.twitter.com/LindseySnell/status/1579864011130437633?fbclid=IwAR0u1wIB1qX5zCT1k91zBJ9lSo9pf61RP1N1DSukyagqNHUvay8CdQVf318> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Factor, Դեպքը տեղի է ունեցել Վերին Շորժայի դիրքերից մեկում. Սիրանուշ Սահակյանը՝ արդրեցանցիների տարածած նոր տեսանյութի մասին, 12 October 2022, <https://factor.am/565853.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

279. When some of the Armenian PoWs were returned in 2022, more torture cases were reported where, for instance, Azerbaijani perpetrators jumped on the backs of the victims.⁴⁴²

280. Some Armenian captives were forced to renounce Christianity and convert to Islam. After refusing to obey, their legs were burned, and they were severely beaten and humiliated.

281. Azerbaijani servicemen burned a part of the body of another captured Armenian serviceman with a lighter, on which they noticed a tattoo in the form of a cross and severely beat him.

282. Crosses possessed by Armenian servicemen were either taken or destroyed evidencing religious hatred in addition to the ethnic ground.⁴⁴³

283. After the two day military action, stickers were created on Telegram depicting the tortured bodies and body parts of Armenian servicepersons and civilians, which were uploaded and used by tens of thousands Azerbaijani users.⁴⁴⁴

284. Azerbaijan claimed it had only 17 Armenian PoWs captures in September 2022. On 4 October, those 17 PoWs were returned upon the US mediation efforts.⁴⁴⁵

285. There is a video on the execution of 8 PoWs,⁴⁴⁶ whose names were not included in Azerbaijani official list of Armenian PoWs. The executed bodies were given to the families and presented as killed in result of the military operation, as legitimate targets.⁴⁴⁷ This actually proves that the number of Armenian captives has actually been larger and, most likely, they have been executed.

286. As with the 44-day war in 2020, Azerbaijan hindered the search of the bodies of the Armenian servicepersons in the aftermath of the September 2022 aggression⁴⁴⁸ and many bodies were returned to their families only after several months. By the end of 2022, there was at least one unreturned body of servicemen killed during the September 2022 aggression against Armenia.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴² ForRights, «Ադրբեջանցիները բարձր տեղ են կանգնել ու թռել են գերեվարվածների մեջքերիս». մայրև ահազանգում է՝ որդու հոգեբանական խնդիրների մասին, 21 November 2022, <https://forrights.am/2022/11/21/ադրբեջանցիները-բարձր-տեղ-են-կանգնել/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴³ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, The Policy of Armenophobia of the Azerbaijani Authorities Has Received New Manifestations, Including Religious Affiliation, 8 January 2022, https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2078 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴⁴ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia, 13-15 September 2022 (updated), <https://ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴⁵ MoD of Armenia, Հաղորդագրություն, 4 October 2022, <https://mil.am/hy/news/11081> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, Azerbaijan Releases 17 More Armenian Prisoners of War, 4 October 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/677822/azerbaijan-releases-17-more-armenian-prisoners-of-war> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴⁶ Siranush Sahakyan interview, Hayeli.am, Հայ ռազմագերիներ. Ալիևը ձեռագիր է փոխել. Սիրանուշ Սահակյան, 4 October, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXC_U40daLk, 6:08 minutes (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴⁷ Siranush Sahakyan interview, Hayeli.am, Հայ ռազմագերիներ. Ալիևը ձեռագիր է փոխել. Սիրանուշ Սահակյան, 6:08 minutes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXC_U40daLk (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴⁸ Armenpress, Azerbaijan Still Prevents Search of the Bodies of Armenian Soldiers Killed during September Aggression, 31 October 2022, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1096128.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁴⁹ Journalists for Human Rights, "I am Looking at the Mountain, My Child Lying There, What Shall I Do": The Father's Only Wish is to Get His Son's Body, 26 December 2022, <https://forrights.am/2022/12/26/%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%B5%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B4-%D5%A5%D5%B4%D5%9D-%D5%BD%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%A8-%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%A5%D5%AD%D5%A5%D5%BD-%D5%A8%D5%B6%D5%A4%D5%A5%D5%B2-%D5%BA%D5%A1%D5%BC%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%AE-%D5%B8/?fbclid=IwAR2z6-vdil4kVjKwS-E0wavnKm0CF17eGO44JaAFMftuVkr4OIw39u9LWY&mbextid=Zxz2cZ> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Captives from hostilities of 2022

287. Despite the explicit stipulation in the 9 November 2020 statement to “exchange the prisoners of war (PoWs), hostages and other captives and bodies of the dead,”⁴⁵⁰ Azerbaijan continued holding Armenian PoWs and civilians in captivity, using them as hostages for political concessions, subjecting them to extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, convicting on fabricated criminal charges without basic fair trial guarantees.

288. The purpose of Azerbaijan to use the Armenian PoWs and captives as hostages for bargaining became clear already in 2021, during the meeting of Turkish and Azerbaijani leaders, when president Erdogan’s wife asked Ilham Aliyev whether he still has Armenian captives, and president Aliyev answered: “Yes, of course, it is in the process” referring to the maps of landmines expected to get from Armenia.⁴⁵¹ The first lady suggests: “Yes, then return them portion by portion, Inshallah, go ahead.”⁴⁵²

289. In 2022, only 13 PoWs from 2020 war were returned by Azerbaijan to Armenia. On 7 February, eight Armenian PoWs were returned with the mediation efforts by the president of France, Emmanuel Macron, and president of the EU Council, Charles Michel.⁴⁵³ On 8 September, five PoWs were returned after the trilateral meeting mediated by Charles Michel on 31 August in Brussels, where president Michel stressed to Azerbaijan “the importance of further release of Armenian detainees.”⁴⁵⁴

290. In 2022, Azerbaijan continued the sham trials against the Armenian captives. In March, it sentenced two more Armenian servicepersons, Ishkhan Sargsyan and Vladimir Rafaelyan, to imprisonment on grave charges, including terrorism and illegal entry into Azerbaijan. They were abducted along with four other servicemen after Azerbaijan had illegally occupied territories at the eastern border of Armenia in May 2021, who however have been released.⁴⁵⁵ As with the previous trials,⁴⁵⁶ the cases were fabricated, arbitrary, minimum guarantees of fair trial were not provided.

⁴⁵⁰ Point 8, Declaration of 9 November 2020, Kremlin.ru, Заявление Президента Азербайджанской Республики, Премьер-министра Республики Армения и Президента Российской Федерации, 10 November 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64384>.

⁴⁵¹ Apa.az, In Exchange for Providing Azerbaijan with Maps of Mines in Aghdam Region, 15 detained Armenians Handed over to Armenia, 12 June 2021, <https://apa.az/en/xeber/foreign-news/in-exchange-for-providing-azerbaijan-with-maps-of-mines-in-aghdam-region-15-detained-armenians-handed-over-to-armenia-351548> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁵² Zartok Media, Aliyev Admits To Keeping More Armenian POWs For Political Purposes, Facebook Video, 16 June 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=4053205631428373> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁵³ Emmanuel Macron, Twitter post, 7 February 2022, <https://twitter.com/EmmanuelMacron/status/1490635204377124866?s=20&t=3mpliBdenh39YZhsHNoBpw&fbclid=IwAR0qPxxwHO-fUZkMRtJ4LzYVTwWUUrXIT5pnCQBzRBjSleCJEhLwWnPqFDIY> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Armenpress, 8 more Armenian PoWs return from Azerbaijan, 7 February 2022, <https://www.armenpress.am/eng/news/1074897.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁵⁴ EU Council, Press statement by President Charles Michel Following the Trilateral Meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 31 August 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/08/31/press-statement-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia-31-august-2022/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); NSS of Armenia, Report, 8 September 2022, <https://www.sns.am/en/news/view/740> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Civilnet, EU, US Welcome Release of 5 More Armenian POWs by Azerbaijan, 9 September 2022, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/673732/five-more-armenian-pows-in-azerbaijan-released/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁵⁵ Azatutyun, Marine Khachatryan, More Armenian POWs Sentenced In Azerbaijan, 7 March 2022, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31741697.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁵⁶ Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Interim Report on Malicious Prosecution by Azerbaijan of Captured Armenian Servicemen and Civilian, Stepanakert 2021, <https://artsakhombuds.am/hy/document/879> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Armenian Weekly, Armenian POWs Stand Trial, 30 August 2021, <https://armenianweekly.com/2021/06/30/armenian-pows-stand-trial> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

291. In 2022, there appeared a mounting evidence that the Armenian captives in Azerbaijan were systematically subject to torture and other ill-treatment and were coerced to false confessions.⁴⁵⁷

292. In November, it became known that the Lebanese-Armenian captive in Azerbaijan, Vicken Eujekjian, was not allowed to talk to his wife in her native language, Arabic, during a short call. According to his wife, during that call Vicken turned to the captives saying: “What else are you going to do to me? I am already dead!”⁴⁵⁸

293. As of October 2022, Azerbaijan has accepted officially that there are 33 Armenian PoWs as a result of the 44-day war and the post-war developments.

294. Additionally, according to the representative of the Armenian PoWs and other captives, Siranush Sahakyan, at least 80 more persons have been captured during the 44-day war - a fact that Azerbaijan does not accept.⁴⁵⁹ Since the cases of those 80 Armenian captives are confirmed by non-refutable evidence in the form of videos, photos, witness testimonies who had seen these people alive in captivity,⁴⁶⁰ the denial by Azerbaijan of their existence additionally defines their enforced disappearances.

Impunity and glorification of perpetrators of racial crimes

295. Azerbaijani servicemen engaged in killing and torturing Armenians have been largely acting within complete impunity, while some of them were even glorified by the Azerbaijani government, which proves Azerbaijani regime’s persistence in its racist policies.

296. On 17 August 2022, the names of the two Azerbaijani servicepersons who had treated inhumanely the bodies of the Armenian servicepersons, Rashad Aliyev (Rəşad Əliyev) and Gardashkhan Abishov (Qardaşxan Abişov) from the State Border Service of Azerbaijan appeared in the decree of the president of Azerbaijan and were awarded medals for “their distinction in ensuring the protection of the state border of Azerbaijan, preserving the territorial integrity and performing the tasks assigned to the border protection authorities.”⁴⁶¹ These persons have been detained in late 2020,⁴⁶² however no information has been available on their criminal proceedings until the news of rewarding.

⁴⁵⁷ Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ad hoc Public Report, Responsibility of Azerbaijan for Torture and Inhumane Treatment of Armenian Captives: Evidence-Based Analysis (The 2020 Nagorno Karabakh War), Yerevan, September 2021, paras 41-42, 87, https://ombuds.am/images/files/5c7485fdc225adfd8a35d583830dcd17.pdf?fbclid=IwAR20Ajo6BxmRFaBSrtbXFqvSyXeM3M-5vZRFgpgCRCo4urVPVE2NPL_VO4g (accessed on 2 May 2023), Human Rights Watch, Azerbaijan: Armenian POWs Abused in Custody Investigate Abuse; Protect All Detainees, 19 March 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/19/azerbaijan-armenian-pows-abused-custody> (accessed on 2 May 2023); 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: Fact-Finding Report, December 2021, https://www.osf.am/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Fact-Finding-Report_FINAL_web.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁵⁸ Asbarez, Jasmine Seymour, Wife of Lebanese-Armenian POW Being Held in Azerbaijan Says She Will “Fight to the End,” 21 November 2022, <https://asbarez.com/wife-of-lebanese-armenian-pow-being-held-in-azerbaijan-says-she-will-fight-to-the-end/?fbclid=IwAR091dbSV-KcyVeLKePxBkKmGuqZrQ1NWSuM9Q6A67UyiPOH7WEDnGfJJS8> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁵⁹ Siranush Sahakyan interview, Hayeli.am, Յայ ռազմագերիներ. Ալիևը ձեռագիր է փոխել. Սիրանուշը Սահակյան, 6:08 minute https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXC_U40daLk (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁶⁰ Medialab, «38 հաստատված գերիներ շարունակում են պահվել Ադրբեջանում, իսկ առկա 80 գերեզարկվածի հրաժարվում են հաստատել.” Սիրանուշը Սահակյան, 18 March 2022, <https://medialab.am/218154> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

⁴⁶¹ Azerbaijan News, Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Sərhəd Xidmətinin hərbi qulluqçularının təltif edilməsi haqqında, 18 August 2022, <https://www.azerbaijan-news.az/az/posts/detail/azerbaycan-respublikasi-dovlet-serhed-xidmetinin-herbi-qulluqcularinin-teltif-edilmesi-haqqinda-1660774164> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁶² The Azeri Times, Four Azerbaijani Servicemen Arrested, 14 December 2020, <https://azeritimes.com/2020/12/14/four-azerijani-servicemen-arrested/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

297. Still in 2016, president Aliyev awarded the Azerbaijani serviceman who had beheaded a Yazidi member of the Armenian armed forces Kyaram Sloyan in 4-day war in April 2016.⁴⁶³

298. An even earlier case related to infamous Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani serviceman, who, during a NATO training in Budapest in 2004, killed an Armenian serviceman with an axe while the latter was asleep. Safarov was convicted in Hungary, and after his repatriation in 2012 to continue his sentence in Azerbaijan, he was received as a national hero, released with a presidential pardon and promoted to a higher rank of major at a public ceremony, granted a flat and paid eight years of salary arrears.⁴⁶⁴ The Ombudsperson of Azerbaijan at the time considered the pardoning of Safarov as an act of “humanism” and acclaimed Safarov as an “exemplary model of patriotism.”⁴⁶⁵ The ambassador of Azerbaijan to the Council of Europe said that before the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the reoccurrence of such incidents was quite possible.⁴⁶⁶

299. On 2 October, The Prosecutor’s office of Azerbaijan announced that the military prosecutor’s office had started a “comprehensive investigation” into the video of the executions of the Armenian servicemen to determine whether it was authentic, and if so “to identify the servicemen shown on them.... As a result of the investigation, legal measures will be taken.”⁴⁶⁷

300. As of 20 October 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan claimed that Azerbaijan had initiated 11 criminal cases against Azerbaijani servicemen for violations of the law during wartime.⁴⁶⁸

301. Generally, since 2020 there is a plenty of evidence on torture, ill-treatment and extrajudicial executions of Armenians, both civilian and military, that those have not only not resulted in investigation or accountability but the Azerbaijani state has even rewarded the perpetrators.⁴⁶⁹

302. Taking into account the state policy of glorification of crimes against Armenians, the systematic use of social media to spread torture and execution videos against the Armenian civilians and servicemen, as well as explicit declarations by the perpetrators of their identities, including their belonging to the special forces of Azerbaijan, there are not much expectations for any accountability by the Azerbaijani state or condemnation by its society of these crimes.

⁴⁶³ Asbarez, Aliyev Awards Officer who Decapitated Artsakh Soldier, 2 May 2022, <https://asbarez.com/aliyev-awards-officer-who-decapitated-artsakh-soldier/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁶⁴ ECHR, Makuchyan and Minasyan v. Azerbaijan and Hungary, Judgment (Application no. 17247/13) 26 May 2020, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-160675%22%5D%7D> (accessed on 5 May 2023)

⁴⁶⁵ ECHR, Makuchyan and Minasyan v. Azerbaijan and Hungary, Judgment (Application no. 17247/13) 26 May 2020, para. 25, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁶⁶ Regnum, Посол Азербайджана в СЕ не советует армянам спать спокойно, пока карабахский конфликт не решен, 20 February 2004, <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/221381.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁶⁷ Trend.az, Azerbaijan’s Prosecutor General’s Office Informs on Video Footage of Servicemen Circulating in Social Media, 2 October 2022, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3651816.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); HRW, Video Shows Azerbaijan Forces Executing Armenian POWs. Hold Those Responsible to Account, 14 October 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/14/video-shows-azerbaijan-forces-executing-armenian-pows> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁶⁸ Bellingcat, An Execution Near Sev Lake, 20 October 2020, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2022/10/20/an-execution-near-sev-lake-armenia-azerbaijan> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁶⁹ Azerbaijan News, Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Sərhəd Xidmətinin hərbi qulluqçularının təltif edilməsi haqqında, 18 August 2022, <https://www.azerbaijan-news.az/az/posts/detail/azerbaycan-respublikasi-dovlet-serhed-xidmetinin-herbi-qulluqcularinin-teltif-edilmesi-haqqinda-1660774164> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Mirroring manipulations of Azerbaijan in response to condemnations for inhumane treatment

303. Meanwhile, propaganda on the state level in Azerbaijan has been used to destruct the society as well as the international community from the Azerbaijani crimes.

304. In response to the international condemnation of the execution of the Armenian PoWs by the armed forces of Azerbaijan, the Assistant to the president of Azerbaijan, Hikmet Hajiyeu, twitted about an alleged “mass grave of Azerbaijani soldiers” since the 1990s war, without showing any proof or any reliable expertise. Yet the news was widely distributed under “#ArmenianVandalism” hashtag. In October, The Swedish news agency BLANKSPOT revealed its analysis of the online traffic and the conclusion that “the Azerbaijani regime uses bots and troll factories to propagate sympathetic views towards the country.”⁴⁷⁰

305. Azerbaijani authorities, primarily Aliyev’s New Azerbaijan party (Yeni Azerbaijan) started a social media campaign against anti-war activists in Azerbaijan in September 2022 with the hashtag “know the traitor” (#xainitanı - traitor).⁴⁷¹

Destruction of cultural heritage

Major patterns of destruction

306. Since the core of the policy of Azerbaijan towards the Armenian people is to deny their indigenous history and present them as newcomers in the region, Azerbaijan pursues a policy of erasure of the Armenian traces in the territories under its control using the following methods: damage to a degree that the historical-cultural property loses its Armenian traces, full destruction of the cultural property, any other conversion or misrepresentation of the Armenian churches and monasteries (e.g. belonging to Russian orthodox church), removal of Armenian crosses and original Armenian scripts, and other uses, such as turning those to cafes, kebab restaurants, mosques, etc.

307. For some monuments Azerbaijan has adopted a distinctive method of appropriation - “Albanization,”⁴⁷² which implies denying their Armenian origin and attributing it to “Caucasian Albania” - an ancient state that existed on the territory of current Azerbaijan – to the northeast of Nagorno-Karabakh. The existence of unique Armenian language inscriptions on the cultural objects does not stop Azerbaijan from denying their Armenian origin, claiming that Armenians have “armenized this Udi church” and that “the inscriptions in Armenian were carved later.”⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ Blankspot.se, Rasmus Canbäck, Data Analysis Shows a Major Victory for Azerbaijan’s Digital Army, 10 October 2022, <https://blankspot.se/data-analysis-shows-a-major-victory-for-azerbaijans-digital-army/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Orer, Aliyev Pays 27 Million Dollars a Year for Lobbying in the USA. Donald Wilson Bush, 10 October 2022, https://orer.eu/2022/10/10/aliyev-pays-27-million-dollars-a-year-for-lobbying-in-the-usa-donald-wilson-bush/?fbclid=IwAR0mFy28mxh7_frtketjFzww7htQwL818Jp-ML_XaATfaBtNQxVSe746UI0 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁷¹ BBC Russian Service, “Знай предателя”: в Азербайджане начали кампанию против оппозиции. Но что-то пошло не так, 25 September 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-62983114> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁷² Dale Berning Sawa, The Guardian, The Ceasefire Agreement with Azerbaijan Comes with Great Risks for Armenia, 19 November 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/19/ceasefire-agreement-azerbaijan-great-risks-armenia> (accessed on 10 April 2023).

⁴⁷³ CBC TV Azerbaijan, Президент Азербайджана и первая леди посетили освобожденные районы, 3:00 minute, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blq-Kn1QnMs> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

308. Destruction of cultural monuments is often accompanied with the widespread construction of new roads, villages, towns, military bases and modifying the landscapes to an extent that those become unrecognizable. This is likely done to detach connections and prevent any desire of the indigenous people to return to their homeland. In some places, the complete destruction of the Armenian monasteries and churches have gone in parallel with construction of mosques in areas where Muslim people have not lived before.⁴⁷⁴

309. Year of 2022 marked with enhancement of the policy of the erasure of the Armenian traces by Azerbaijan, immediately following the ICJ Order from 7 December 2021, which demanded Azerbaijan to “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”⁴⁷⁵

310. On 3 February, the Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan, Anar Karimov told a press briefing that a working group of “local and international experts” has been established which will be responsible for removing “the fictitious traces written by Armenians on Albanian religious temples.”⁴⁷⁶ He said: “We are going to inspect those places with the working group members, and after the inspection, we will consider our next steps.”⁴⁷⁷

311. On 3 August, a new “Western Azerbaijan Community” organization was established, by actually renaming the former Azerbaijan Refugee Society, with a purpose “to internationally restore the rights of Azerbaijanis.”⁴⁷⁸

312. On 29 December, National Academy of Science of Azerbaijan opened three departments devoted to “Western Azerbaijan” (current Republic of Armenia): “History of Western Azerbaijan” in Azerbaijan’s Institute of History, “Western Azerbaijan Folklore” in the Institute of Folklore, and “Toponyms of Western Azerbaijan” in the Institute of Linguistics.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Local TV Channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Have Laid a Foundation Stone for the Mosque to be Built in Sugovushan Settlement, Tartar district, 20 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55655> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Viewed Construction of Zangilan Mosque, 26 May 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56205> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁷⁵ ICJ, Order on the Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan), 7 December 2021, <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/180/180-20211207-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁷⁶ Eurasianet, Heydar Isayev, Azerbaijan Announces Plans to Erase Armenian Traces from Churches, 4 February 2022, https://eurasianet.org/azerbaijan-announces-plans-to-erase-armenian-traces-from-churches?fbclid=IwAR3Gxw9vCCM9QhejTRhuX_vorY5POVTgK_7PTQBzUuaGJvb6w_IeWl0xopc (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁷⁷ Report, Working Group Set up to Restore Armenianized Albanian Temples, 3 February 2022, <https://report.az/en/cultural-policy/embassy-of-pakistan-holds-citrus-festival-in-baku/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); NAS RA, Statement of NAS RA on the Armenian Cultural Genocide Program Implemented by Azerbaijan in Artsakh, 23 February 2022, <https://www.sci.am/m/newsview.php?id=477&arch=&langid=2> (accessed on 2 May 2023); RFE, “Forgeries”: The Armenian Art That Azerbaijan May “Erase” From Churches, 9 February 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/azerbaijan-armenia-churches-inscriptions-erase/31693154.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Raffi Kortoshian, The Endangered Christian Armenian Heritage of Artsakh, Research on Armenian Architecture Foundation, Yerevan 2022, https://raa-am.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Artsakh_Danger.pdf (accessed on 5 May 2023).

⁴⁷⁸ Apa.az, Azerbaijani MP: I Believe That We Will Return to Zangazur, Goycha in the Near Future, 30 December 2022, <https://apa.az/en/social/azerbaijani-mp-i-believe-that-we-will-return-to-zangazur-goycha-in-the-near-future-392832> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Joshua Kucera, Azerbaijan Seeks “Great Return” of Refugees to Armenia, 17 January 2023, <https://eurasianet.org/azerbaijan-seeks-great-return-of-refugees-to-armenia> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

⁴⁷⁹ Monument Watch, Արդեշանի հանրապետության ազդեցիկ քաղաքականության հերթական դրսևորումը, 17 January 2023, <https://monumentwatch.org/hy/alerts/արդեշանի-հանրապետության-ազդեցիկ-քա/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

313. The year of 2022 marked with the investigation by Caucasus Heritage Watch (CHW) - a team of scholars of Cornell and Purdue universities that documented a pattern of deliberate destruction of Armenian cultural heritage in Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (Nakhijevan) – a historical Armenian region that has been turned by Bolsheviks to the Soviet Azerbaijan. The report includes 108 medieval and early modern Armenian monasteries, churches, and cemeteries in Nakhchivan completely destroyed between 1997 and 2011. According to the report, “By 2011, all physical traces of Armenians in Nakhchivan were effectively gone, with rare exceptions appearing to have resulted from oversight rather than intent.”⁴⁸⁰

314. Comprehensive picture of the ongoing destruction, damage and conversion of the Armenian cultural heritage by Azerbaijan is not available at the moment due to the lack of international monitoring activities in the territories under Azerbaijan’s control. However, materials are available through satellite images, as well as videos and photos published by Azerbaijani media evidencing the continuous erasure of the Armenian traces under Azerbaijan’s control.

Destructions and treats observed in 2022

Damage of Surb Amenaprkich Ghazanchetsots Cathedral, Shushi, Shushi region

315. During the war in 2020, Azerbaijan targeted the Surb Amenaprkich (Holy Savior) Ghazanchetsots Cathedral (1868-1887), a landmark of Armenian cultural identity and religious center for Artsakh Armenians in the city of Shushi.

316. In early 2021, Azerbaijan launched a “renovation” of the cathedral to “return it to its original form.”⁴⁸¹ It removed the pile of stones inside the temple, collapsed walls, scaffolding was erected around the temple, the dome of the cathedral was removed, distorting the appearance of the temple, while the painted inscriptions were removed. The removal of the dome and attempts to change its shape aim to deny its “Armenianness,” given that the domes of Armenian churches have a particular shape. According to Monument Watch, the Azeri media presents Ghazanchetsots Cathedral, sometimes as a Russian Orthodox, sometimes as an Udi church, stating that “the Armenians Armenianized that by transforming the dome after the occupation of the city.”⁴⁸²

317. The recent video shows that Ghazanchetsots Cathedral of Shushi town was not only renovated since November 2020, as had been asserted by official Baku, but was further damaged. The fence of the courtyard is destroyed, the gates, khachkars that were standing in the courtyard are displaced, a grass cover has grown in some parts of the roof, which has not been restored since the

⁴⁸⁰ L. Khatchadourian, A. T. Smith, H. Ghulyan, & I. Lindsay. 2022. Silent Erasure: A Satellite Investigation of the Destruction of Armenian Cultural Heritage in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan. Ithaca: Caucasus Heritage Watch, <https://indd.adobe.com/embed/2a6c8a55-75b0-4c78-8932-dc798a9012fb?startpage=1&allowFullscreen=true>, (accessed on 5 May 2023); CHW, Silent Erasure, A Satellite Investigation of the Destruction of Armenian Cultural Heritage in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, 3 October 2022, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/48703f664f2f467b8f4f42008d8c75da> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hyperallergic, US Researchers Confirm 98% of Cultural Armenian Heritage Sites in Nakhichevan Destroyed by Azerbaijan, 16 September 2022, <https://hyperallergic.com/761723/cultural-armenian-heritage-sites-in-nakhichevan-destroyed-by-azerbaijan> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁸¹ Kucera J., Azerbaijan Begins Controversial Renovation of Armenian Church, May 7, 2021, <https://eurasianet.org/azerbaijan-beginscontroversial-renovation-of-armenian-church/>; Humans of Artsakh: From Celebration to Mourning, 24 May, 2021, <https://www.persecution.org/2021/05/24/humans-artsakh-celebration-mourning> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁴⁸² Monument Watch, About the Azerbaijani “Restoration” of Surb Amenaprkich Ghazanchetsots Church in Shushi, 30 May 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/about-the-azerbaijani-restoration-of-surb-amenaprkich-ghazanchetsots-church-in-shushi> (accessed on 13 April 2023).

collapse after the shelling and is not even covered. The ceiling of the church is in disrepair. The church dome is still set aside, the green construction netting is still frayed, and the entire area around the temple is in a state of disrepair.⁴⁸³

Damage of Surb Hovhannes Mkrtych Church, Shushi, Shushi region

318. The domes of Surb Hovhannes Mkrtych Church (Kanach Zham or Green Church), another Armenian church (1847) in Shushi, were destroyed after the war of 2020.⁴⁸⁴

319. As of January 2022, according to a video, published on “Talishskiy Vestnik” Telegram channel, the transept of Kanach Zham church was converted into a café called “Secret.”⁴⁸⁵ In June 2022, photos were circulated on social media, perhaps taken earlier, in winter since there is snow inside the church due to the destroyed the dom. The photos demonstrate the dome was destroyed, the holy throne and the holy altar were damaged, the candlesticks for lighting candles were broken, and the sacred stones of the temple were turned into a pile of garbage.⁴⁸⁶

Damage of Halevor Bridge, Hadrut region

320. The 19th century Halevor (Old) Bridge (1834), 2 km southwest to Mets Tagher village, was found damaged by the CHW as of October 2022, although it is under the threat of destruction, since significant construction activity has been monitored adjacent to the bridge.⁴⁸⁷

“Albanization” of Spitak Khach church, Hadrut, Hadrut region

321. On 8 January, a video was circulated online showing Spitak Khach (White Cross) church (1333)⁴⁸⁸ in Hadrut. The video clearly shows that the cross of the dome removed and it is presented as an “Albanian” church where Udi religious representative conduct a religious ceremony.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸³ Nasimi Aghayev, Twitter post, Photos, 9 July 2021, <https://twitter.com/NasimiAghayev/status/1413558311732006915> (accessed on 11 April 2023); Monument Watch, About the Azerbaijani “Restoration” of Surb Amenaprkich Ghazanchetsots Church in Shushi, 30 May 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/about-the-azerbaijani-restoration-of-surb-amenaprkich-ghazanchetsots-church-in-shushi> (accessed on 11 April 2023); an aerial video as of 22 May 2022, https://t.me/military_arm/13434?single&fbclid=IwAR0IYpXzM09vjsMasjj_Gwy1kqtpfwkYq4cxPJ5Dp4yK6N35xfiXlzIDGMU (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁴⁸⁴ Zartok Media, Report: Azerbaijanis Have Destroyed the Bell Tower & Dome of Shushi’s Armenian “Kanach Zham” Church, Built in 1818, 19 November 2020, <https://bit.ly/3iaSLmv> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁴⁸⁵ Талышский Вестник, Telegram Video “Café Secret” (Kanach Zham), 16 January 2022, https://t.me/Talish_vestnik/20973 (accessed on 11 April 2023); Monument Watch, The Transept of Kanach Zham Church in Shushi Turned into a Café, 23 January 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/the-transept-of-kanach-zham-church-in-shushi-turned-into-a-cafe> (accessed on 13 April 2023).

⁴⁸⁶ Photos at Nagorno-Karabakh Monuments, Facebook post, 4 July 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/NagornoKarabakh.monuments/posts/pfbid01MXCDBGkiN3Zbi7uhWXDoxuwPvzTNRhQhzHz4oGKfphd9NXKFnYKekf9hf3C2bJsl> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁴⁸⁷ CHW, I. Lindsay, A. T. Smith, & L. Khatchadourian, CHW Monitoring Report #4, October 2022, Ithaca: Caucasus Heritage Watch, p. 23, <https://indd.adobe.com/embed/bc52b43e-ea70-4967-9b26-1c57fcfd7ed?startpage=1&allowFullscreen=true> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁴⁸⁸ Monument Watch, Spitak Khach (White Cross) Monastery, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/monument/spitak-khach-white-cross-monastery> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁸⁹ Asbarez, Azerbaijanis Remove Cross from Spitak Khach Church in Occupied Hadrut,” 27 January 2022, <https://asbarez.com/azerbaijanis-remove-cross-from-spitak-khach-church-in-occupied-hadrut/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); REC TIME, Xocavənd rayonu Ağ oğlan qəsəbəsi (HADRUT), 8 January 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UriqUakelks&t=6s> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

“Albanization” of Surb Harutyun Church, Hadrut, and Surb Hovhannes Mkrtych Church, Togh village, Hadrut region

322. On 27 April 2022, Azerbaijani media published news on marking the Holy Easter in Hadrut city of Nagorno-Karabakh having fallen under the Azerbaijani control as a result of 44-days war. The photos demonstrate that the Armenian scripts were erased and the cross was removed from Surb Harutyun church. Azerbaijan’s State Committee for Work with Religious Structures organized a visit of Udi community to Surb Harutyun Church (1621) of Hadrut and Surb Hovhannes Mkrtych Church (early 19th century) of Togh village on the occasion of Holy Easter. “Albanian” religious ceremony was conducted in these Armenian churches.⁴⁹⁰ The photos demonstrate that the Armenian scripts were erased and the cross was removed from Surb Harutyun church.

323. President Aliyev had earlier coined that Surb Hovhannes Church of Togh village in Hadrut as Albanian.⁴⁹¹

“Albanization” of Surb Astvatsatsin Church Tsaghkavank village, Hadrut region

324. On 13 April, a few days before Holy Easter, Azerbaijan’s State Committee for Work with Religious Structures organized a visit of religious representatives of Christian religious communities and various Christian organizations to the Churches of Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother) (1682) in Tsaghkavank (Tsakuri) village and Surb Hovhannes (1841) in Togh village of Hadrut region of Nagorno-Karabakh. The visitors included “Biblical Society of Azerbaijan,” “Evangelical Christian Baptists,” “Evangelical Lutherans of Salvation,” “Seventh-Day Adventists,” “Prefecture of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Azerbaijan,” “Russian Orthodox Church of Azerbaijan,” “Albanian-Udi Church” and others, as well as representatives of Muslim religious organizations.⁴⁹²

325. This visit was a part of propaganda showing that these Christian and even Muslim organizations were brought together by the “religiously tolerant” Azerbaijani government to pray in these churches, “finally liberated from the Armenian occupation.” The TV and the interviewed religious representatives specifically emphasized that the church is Udi-Albanian. Yet, the interviews were taken in front of the entrance of the church, where the Armenian inscriptions were clearly visible even in the video.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹⁰ Apa.az, Easter Marked in Azerbaijan's Hadrut - Photo, 27 April 2022, <https://apa.az/en/social/easter-marked-in-azerbajians-hadrut-photo-374624> (accessed on 2 May 2023); CBC TV Azerbaijan, Посещение села Туг членами Албано-Удинской христианской общины Азербайджана, 27 April 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPeTZ-ni7QA> (accessed on 2 May 2023); CBC TV Azerbaijan, Члены Албано-Удинской христианской общины Азербайджана посетили Гадрут, 27 April 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMZIBNmBJVk> (accessed on 2 May 2023); 525-ci Kanal, Hadrut, 8 May 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpZ2SxxqOZs&t=3s> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Karabakh Records, Azerbaijan Desecrated Hadrut Church: the Cross was Removed, and the Armenian Inscription Was Erased, 29 April 2022, <https://war.karabakhrecords.info/en/2022/04/29/azerbaijan-desecrated-hadrut-church-the-cross-was-removed-and-the-armenian-inscription-was-erased/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Zartonk Media, Facebook post, Photos, 28 April 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ZartonkMedia/posts/pfbid02aiHbwetz7oXPw6nr38e5JDS6ajgU4J8k5oe4a9Le4tBnsFUB2Y2mwe7yREvDBSwU> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁹¹ Hayk Makyan, Hetq, Տող գյուղի մելիքական ժառանգությունը. հայկական պատմական արժեքները Ադրբեջանի օկուպացրած տարածքում, 21 November 2022, <https://hetq.am/hy/article/150359> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁴⁹² CBC TV Azerbaijan, В храмах Карабаха отметили приближение Пасхи, 15 April 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vliMa828CHO> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁴⁹³ Ibid.,⁴⁹³ Monument Watch, Another Manifestation of Azerbaijani Religious and National “Tolerance” in the Churches of Tsakuri and Togh, 20 April 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/another-manifestation-of-azerbaijani-religious-and-national-tolerance-in-the-churches-of-tsakuri-and-togh/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

326. While Azerbaijan's president Aliyev says that "Armenians can enjoy the same rights as their other citizens,"⁴⁹⁴ and according to earlier international reports there should be at least 20,000 Armenians remained in Azerbaijan (beyond Nagorno-Karabakh),⁴⁹⁵ there was no Armenian Apostolic Church organization included in the visit program.

Destruction of Surb Sargis Church, Mokhrenes village, Hadrut region

327. The CHW discovered that between March and July, Azerbaijan completely destroyed Surb Sargis Armenian Church (18th-19th centuries), located in Mokhrenes village of Hadrut region of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁹⁶ Many of the structures of the village were also completely destroyed. Before destroying the church, Azerbaijan had misappropriated it as an "Albanian Temple."⁴⁹⁷

328. The cemetery in the village was intact as of October, but given the widespread destruction of the village and the church, the cemetery appeared threatened to be destroyed.⁴⁹⁸

Destruction of the Park of Teachers in Mets Tagher Village, Hadrut region

329. In May, a video was published on social media showing that the Park devoted to teachers was destroyed in Mets Tagher village of Hadrut region of Nagorno-Karabakh. The park was built in memory of the teachers of Mets Tagher and Sokrat Aghabekyan.⁴⁹⁹

"Albanization" of Surb Yeghishe Church, Mataghis village, Martakert region

330. On 26 June 2022, on the day of the Azerbaijani armed forces, representatives of the Udi community of Azerbaijan performed a worship service in the Armenian Apostolic Christian Church of Surb Yeghishe Church (1892-1898) in Mataghis village of Martakert region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan presented the church as an Albanian building of the 5th century, which was rebuilt, restored and Armenianized by Armenians in 1898.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁴ CBC TV Azerbaijan, В храмах Карабаха отметили приближение Пасхи, 15 April 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vliMa828CHo> (accessed on 12 April 2023); Monument Watch, Another Manifestation of Azerbaijani Religious and National "Tolerance" in the Churches of Tsakuri and Togh, 20 April 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/another-manifestation-of-azerbaijani-religious-and-national-tolerance-in-the-churches-of-tsakuri-and-togh> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁴⁹⁵ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Report on Azerbaijan, adopted on 28 June 2002, <https://rm.coe.int/first-report-on-azerbaijan/16808b5579>; <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Azerbaijan-1.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁹⁶ Monument Watch, Surb Sargis Church of Mokhrenes, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/monument/surb-sargis-church-of-mokhrenes> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁹⁷ CHW, I. Lindsay, A. T. Smith, & L. Khatchadourian, CHW Monitoring Report #4, October 2022, Ithaca: Caucasus Heritage Watch, p. 21, <https://indd.adobe.com/embed/bc52b43e-ea70-4967-9b26-1c57fcfd7ed?startpage=1&allowFullscreen=true> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 25, <https://indd.adobe.com/embed/bc52b43e-ea70-4967-9b26-1c57fcfd7ed?startpage=1&allowFullscreen=true> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁴⁹⁹ Ararathau, Telegram post, Video and photo, 4 May 2022, https://t.me/ararathau/13236?single&fbclid=IwAR1APPE85BvL4ubl1IGQ84IsJSGLR2T8h_gAdvovad1vUb7YcOL2Gwi1zu8 (accessed on 2 May 2023); Monument Watch, Azerbaijan Destroyed the Park of Teachers and the Inscription in Mets Tagher Village, 14 May 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/azerbaijan-destroyed-the-park-of-teachers-and-the-inscription-in-mets-tagher-village> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁰⁰ Monument Watch, Udi Propaganda at the Church of Surb Yeghishe in Mataghis village, 17 July 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/udi-propaganda-at-the-church-of-surb-yeghishe-in-mataghis-village> (accessed on 12 April 2023); Telegraf.com, Alban-Udi xristian icmasının üzvləri Suqovuşana səfər etdilər, 26 June 2022, <https://telegraf.com/news/toplum/331825.html> (accessed on 13 April 2023).

331. Between October 2021 and July 2022 earth moving has been noticed immediately east and north to the church threatening the structure.⁵⁰¹ CHW released a social media alert on 25 July 2022.⁵⁰²

Destruction of khachkars (cross-stones), Mataghis village, Martakert region

332. On 8 May, a video was posted on Telegram where we see a man in military uniform and the Azerbaijani flag on his back destroying khachkars first hitting them by stones, then kicking. Monument Watch has identified these are khachkars next to the chapel in Mataghis village of Nagorno-Karabakh, built by Union of Veterans of the Karabakh War.⁵⁰³

Destruction of Sghnakh village, including its cemetery, Askeran region

333. According to photos published on 21 April on social media, the satellite images showing before and after the 44-days war demonstrate that the village of Sghnakh, including its houses, cemetery and even vegetation was destroyed after falling under the Azerbaijani control.⁵⁰⁴

Destruction of cemetery, Parukh village, Askeran region

334. After using military force in March 2022 attacking Parukh village of Askeran region of Nagorno-Karabakh, and taking control of Karaglukh height, Azerbaijan has spread information that its armed forces, as a result of excavation works, have discovered “mass graves, the human remains of which belong to the Azerbaijani servicemen who went missing during the First Karabakh War in the early 1990s” “in Khojaly (Ivanyan).”⁵⁰⁵

335. According to specialists, the bones found near the village of Parukh originate from the territory of the Medieval Armenian cemetery (9-13th centuries) of Kalen Hut.⁵⁰⁶ According to observations by culturologists and archaeologists, the human skulls presented in the video have a brachycephalic (round-headed) structure of armenoid anthropological type typical of Armenians, while the population of Azerbaijan have dolichocephalic (long-headed) structure of Caspian anthropological type skull. The smooth surface of the bones means in the archaeological sense that they are centuries, rather than 30 years old. In addition, the assertions by Azerbaijan that the bones are the remains of

⁵⁰¹ CHW, I. Lindsay, A. T. Smith, & L. Khatchadourian, CHW Monitoring Report #4, October 2022, Ithaca: Caucasus Heritage Watch, p. 33, (<https://indd.adobe.com/embed/bc52b43e-ea70-4967-9b26-1c57fcfd7ed?startpage=1&allowFullscreen=true> (accessed on 13 April 2023).

⁵⁰² CHW, Twitter post, Photos of satellite images, <https://twitter.com/CaucasusHW/status/1551629823260459012?s=20&t=5bHvkWgPx6Gw3WyGpxveA> (accessed on 13 April 2023).

⁵⁰³ Ararathau, Telegram post, Video, 8 May 2022, <https://t.me/ararathau/13271> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Monument Watch, Destruction of Khachkars Caused by Azerbaijan in the Occupied Territories of Artsakh, 10 May 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/destruction-of-khachkars-caused-by-azerbaijan-in-the-occupied-territories-of-artsakh/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁰⁴ Mané Alexanian, Twitter post, Photo, 21 April 2022, <https://twitter.com/manealx/status/1517223600822136836> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁰⁵ Caspian News, Mass Grave Found in Karabakh Region Could Belong to Missing Azerbaijani Soldiers, 2 April 2022, <https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/mass-grave-found-in-karabakh-region-could-belong-to-missing-azerbaijani-soldiers-2022-4-1-0/> (accessed on 13 April 2023); Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Germany, Nasimi Aghayev, Twitter post, 30 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/NasimiAghayev/status/1508902538753437696> (accessed on 13 April 2023).

⁵⁰⁶ Monument Watch, Another Aggression of Azerbaijan. Heritage under Threat, 15 April 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/another-aggression-of-azerbaijan%E2%80%A4-heritage-under-threat/> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

the victims of Khojaly massacres is not possible to substantiate since Khojaly is located 17 km away from Parukh.⁵⁰⁷ This means that Azerbaijan destroys the cemetery at the same time falsifying the history and demonising Armenians.

“Albanization” of Dadivank Monastery, Karvachar (Kelbajar) region

336. On 8 February 2022, several days after the Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan Anar Karimov announced that a “working group of specialists in Albanian history and architecture has been set up to remove the fictitious traces written by Armenians on Albanian religious temples,”⁵⁰⁸ the official website of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation published a report and a photo of Russian peacekeepers visiting Dadivank monastery of Karvachar region.

337. The initial article mentioned that “Dadivank was one of the largest monastic complexes of medieval Armenia of the 12th-13th centuries, that it was named after Saint Dadi, who preached Christianity in the western (should be “eastern”) regions of Armenia and was a disciple of the Apostle Thaddeus. According to legend, the complex was built on the tomb of Saint Dadi.”⁵⁰⁹ However, this fragment of the report containing the fact that the Dadivank monastery was Armenian was removed,⁵¹⁰ which is 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.

338. On 3 September 2022, a video was published clearly showed an Azerbaijani man in military uniform who takes the tag “This chapel was renovated by Mr. Ralph Yirikian in 2017” from the chapel, demonstrates on camera and breaks on the ground. The Telegram channel calls this act “Fake Armenian inscriptions gorbagor oldu (in Azerbaijani meaning “damned”).”⁵¹¹

Kusanats Surb Astvatsatsin Monastery, Karvachar (Kelbajar) region

339. On 3 September, the Azerbaijani ICTIMAI TV prepared a report on the Monastery of Kusanats Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Virgin Mother) (12th century) near Dadivank Monastery misrepresenting the monastery as Albanian and referring to the Armenian khachkars (cross-stones) in the walls as “late Grigorian khachkars.”⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁷ Ministry of Culture and Sciences of Nagorno-Karabakh, Facebook post, 2 April 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/edu.nkr.am/posts/350995373745455> (accessed on 2 May 2023); 1lurer.am, Azerbaijan Destroys Armenian Cultural Heritage of Parukh and Karaglukh: photos, 2 April 2022, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2022/04/02/Azerbaijan-destroys-Armenian-cultural-heritage-of-Parukh-and-Karaglukh-photos/694945> (accessed on 12 April 2023), Caliber.az, С места событий: оперативная ситуация у села Феррух, 5 April 2022, 10:21 minute, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ub0lnhi-Eb0> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁵⁰⁸ Report.az, Working Group Set up to Restore Armenianized Albanian Temples, 3 February 2022, <https://report.az/en/cultural-policy/working-group-set-up-to-restore-armenianized-temples-of-ancient-albania/> (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁵⁰⁹ Ministry of Defence of Russia, Российские миротворцы в Нагорном Карабахе посетили монастырский комплекс Дадиванк, 8 February 2022 (initial version), https://web.archive.org/web/20220208091119/https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/news/more.htm?id=12407657@egNews (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁵¹⁰ Ministry of Defence of Russia, Российские миротворцы в Нагорном Карабахе посетили монастырский комплекс Дадиванк, 8 February 2022 (final version), https://mil.ru/russian_peacekeeping_forces/news/more.htm?id=12407657@egNews (accessed on 12 April 2023).

⁵¹¹ Карабах Today, Telegram post, AZAM Лачинский район. Фальшивые армянские надписи горбагор олду, 3 September 2022, <https://t.me/KarabakhRu/25429> (accessed on 13 April 2023).

⁵¹² ICTIMAI TV, İTV Xəbər - 03.09.2022 (15:00), 3 September 2022, 4:30 minute, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jf1K_OBcYD4 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

340. According to Monument Watch, such khachkars with an incised image of a cross belong to the 10th-11th centuries, which were quite common in Armenia, including Nagorno-Karabakh, and that it is well known and scientifically confirmed that earlier khachkars were widely used in the construction of Armenian churches in difficult times.⁵¹³

Conversion into mosque of Surb Hambardzum Church, Berdzor (Lachin), Kashatagh (Lachin) region

341. Upon the forceful deportation of Armenians from Berdzor, Aghavno and Sus in August,⁵¹⁴ Azerbaijan announced it would convert Surb Hambardzum Church (1998) of Berdzor town into a mosque.⁵¹⁵ According to the plan presented by the Azerbaijani organization Public Association for Monument Protection, the top of the dome will be demolished, the bell tower will be dismantled, and two minarets will be built on the northern façade. Obviously, all the Armenian inscriptions on the walls will also be removed.⁵¹⁶ The project was approved by the order of Azerbaijani President Aliyev.⁵¹⁷

Threat to Church and Cemetery in Arakhish village, Kashatagh (Lachin) region

342. As of October, Arakhish Church (date of construction unknown) located in Kashatagh region of Nagorno-Karabakh, 50 km north to Berdzor (Lachin), was threatened due to the extensive earthmoving and road construction activity immediately to the north east to the church and its adjacent cemetery 12-16th century khachkars.

Threat to Zorakhach Church, Arakhish village, Kashatagh (Lachin) region

343. Another church - Zorakhach in Arakhish village of Kashatagh region was threatened as of October, since it was adjacent to the earthmoving operation along a new road project.⁵¹⁸ There is no bibliographic information about the monument. According to Monument Watch, judging by the architectural solutions of the church and the gravestones embedded in the walls, the church is a structure of the 17th-18th centuries.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹³ Monument Watch, Another Azerbaijani Nonsense: Armenians Inserted “Gregorian” Crosses into the Walls of Artsakh Churches in the 19th Century, Trying to Armenize the “Albanian” Heritage, 11 September 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/another-azerbaijani-nonsense-armenians-inserted-gregorian-crosses-into-the-walls-of-artsakh-churches-in-the-19th-century-trying-to-armenize-the-albanian-heritage> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵¹⁴ Asbarez, Residents of Artsakh’s Aghavno Village Told to Evacuate by August 25, 5 August 2022, <https://asbarez.com/residents-of-artsakhs-aghavno-village-told-to-evacuate-by-august-25> (accessed on 1 February 2023).

⁵¹⁵ Monument Watch, Surb Hambardzum Church of Berdzor, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/monument/surb-hambardzum-church-of-berdzor> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵¹⁶ Arka, Azerbaijan Announces Plan to Turn St. Ascension Church in Artsakh’s Berdzor into a Mosque, 22 August 2022, <https://arka.am/en/news/politics/azerbaijan-announces-plan-to-turn-st-ascension-church-in-artsakh-s-berdzor-into-a-mosque/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵¹⁷ News.am, Azerbaijan Intends to Turn Church in Berdzor into Mosque, 8 August 2022, <https://news.am/eng/news/715370.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ Monument Watch, Zorakhach Church, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/monument/zorakhach-church> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Threat to Vakunis Church, Kashatagh (Lachin) region

344. The church in Vakunis village (17th century) of Kashatagh region of Nagorno-Karabakh was threatened as of October due to the roadwork immediately adjacent to the eastern wall of the church where the altar and vestries are located.⁵²⁰

“Albanization” of Surb Astvatsatsin Church, Banants village, Dashkesan region

345. On 7 April, a video was published on social media showing Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Virgin) Church in Banants village (Armenian-inhabited until 1990). The signboard in Azerbaijani attached to the church façade says: “Chichirevanch Albanian prayer house, 7th to 9th centuries.” The altar, several cross-stones set in the front wall of the bema, the font, and another cross-stone of 1621, surmounting its western pediment were destroyed. According to Raffi Kortoshian, co-director of the Foundation of Research on Armenian Architecture, both the name “Chichirevanch” and construction dates of 7th-9th centuries are invented to be possible to attribute the church to “Albanian” heritage.

346. In 1986, the prominent scholar of monuments Samvel Karapetyan documented 153 tombstones of the 16th to 17th centuries that had been reused as building material for the church, which leads to conclude that the church should be traced back to the 17th-18th centuries. In 1981, during the Soviet period, the church was repaired by the local Armenians.⁵²¹

Mirroring manipulations of Azerbaijan in response to condemnations for destruction of monuments

347. Along with the traditional efforts of damage, destruction and appropriation, Azerbaijan started aggressively using “mirroring” manipulations and disinformation tactics. In particular, the president of Azerbaijan intensified two major layers in his messages to the Azerbaijani public and international community to create justifications for its wrongdoings as well as to mobilize anti-Armenian attitudes globally. The first narrative was that “Armenians had destroyed 65 out of 67 mosques that existed in the territories Azerbaijan had liberated.”⁵²² The second claimed that Armenia

⁵²⁰ CHW, I. Lindsay, A. T. Smith, & L. Khatchadourian, CHW Monitoring Report #4, October 2022, Ithaca: Caucasus Heritage Watch, p. 31, <https://indd.adobe.com/embed/bc52b43e-ea70-4967-9b26-1c57fcfd7ed?startpage=1&allowFullscreen=true> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

⁵²¹ Raffi Kortoshian, Facebook post, 7 April 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/raffi.kortoshian/posts/pfbid034SNe7JPpPdSRxmKzP6mQ5v5YD7vjfzLsfzEowaWFa6wkCm88yLwMGK9yZi7huJQI> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Interview with Raffi Kortoshian and Restoration Architect Martiros Chalumyan, *Լուրեր, Աղբյուրներ և Կենտրոնական Բանակց Գյուղի Սուրբ Աստվածածնի հայկականությունը*, 30 May 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kj5J1yIxtlo&t=249s> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵²² President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Viewed Progress of Restoration Work at Aghdam Juma Mosque, 14 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55438> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received Executive Director of UN Human Settlements Programme, 5 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55578> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Received UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Azerbaijan, 9 March 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55588> (accessed on 26 January 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Visited Yukhari Govharagha Mosque in Shusha, 27 September 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57390> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Attend the Opening Ceremony of the Urban Planning and Architecture of Azerbaijan Forum, 5 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57481> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Meeting of CIS's Councils of Heads of State in Astana, 14 October 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57566> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Samarkand hosts 9th Summit of Organization of Turkic States, 11 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57816> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended the Opening of the Conference under the Motto “Along the Middle Corridor: Geopolitics, Security and Economy,” 25 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57968> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan,

has a specific Islamophobic character and attacks the Muslim world as a whole.⁵²³ President Aliyev, explicitly accepted that he has “managed to explain to them [Muslim world] that Armenia pursues an aggressive policy not only against us but also against the entire Muslim world” by presenting Armenia “as a country destroying and desecrating mosques.” He added that even though “we have isolated Armenia from the key pillars of the Muslim world... we could not isolate them completely.” And the reason for not succeeding in totally isolating Armenia, according to Aliyev, has been “hypocrisy.”⁵²⁴ This could particularly mean Iran and Arabic states, which host large Armenian diaspora that have been successfully integrated within the society, hence denying any anti-Muslim sentiments attributed to Armenians.

348. Monument Watch, the initiative of a group of archaeologists, architects, cultural anthropologists, specialists in Armenian studies, media and internet specialists, translators replied to president Aliyev’s accusations asserting that (a) “the data on the number of mosques [65 out of 67] absolutely does not correspond to the number officially approved by the Azerbaijanis in the Soviet period.” “The Azerbaijani side speaks of mosques even in Lachin and Kelbajar regions, where none of the mosque or shrine has ever been recorded,” (b) “Before the war in 2020, Muslim monuments - mosques, tombs, various other buildings that exist on the territory of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh were preserved by the state, restored if possible. Thus, the fortress of Panah Khan was repaired with public financing, the building of the mosque in Shahbulag was straightened, archaeological excavations were carried out in the pool in front of the mosque, the building of the Saatli mosque in Shushi was repaired with private financing, and the Upper Mosque of the same city was repaired due to the charitable programs of “Initiatives for Development of Armenia” (IDeA) and “Revival of the Eastern Historical Heritage” foundations. The entrance to the mosque in the city of Aghdam was closed in order to prevent animals from entering. The Muslim mosques of Khachen, Vanotsa, the Gharghabazar’s caravanserai with its mosque and their surroundings have been renovated several times by the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. (c) The Muslim monuments in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh have been registered, photographed, verified both by the specialists from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and by a large number of Armenian specialists who worked in Nagorno-Karabakh in different years, especially by the Nagorno-Karabakh Archaeological Expedition. The condition of the monuments and the existing problems has been taken into account. It should be noted that all the work was carried out under the auspices of the state bodies and science of Nagorno-Karabakh, since these monuments have always been considered part of the cultural heritage of Nagorno-Karabakh. (d) In some Muslim monuments, the connection with Armenian culture is also obvious, which was proved by Azerbaijani specialists in the Soviet period. The best examples of this are the tombs of Khachen, Vanotsa and other monuments. In this regard, a booklet dedicated to the Muslim monuments of Nagorno-Karabakh was published in 2010. (e) Many of the Muslim monuments

Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with a Group of Intellectuals from Western Azerbaijan, 24 December 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/58470> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵²³ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Was Interviewed by Local TV channels, 12 January 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55243> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Samarkand Hosts 9th Summit of Organization of Turkic States, 11 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57816> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva Viewed Progress of Restoration Work at Aghdam Juma Mosque, 14 February 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/55438> (accessed on 26 January 2023).

⁵²⁴ President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev Attended an Event Organized on the Occasion of Victory Day in Shusha, 8 November 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57801> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh were well preserved and all damage which was mainly associated with the hostilities of 1991-1994 has been recorded. (f) The damage caused to a number of monuments as a result of the illegal activities of locals, and the use of some monuments for economic purposes, was revealed. Before the war, many attempts were made to prevent such incidents. These issues have never been hidden by the public authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh. (g) Considering Muslim monuments of Nagorno-Karabakh as equally important, the team of “Monitoring of the Cultural Heritage” launched a project to study and present the Muslim monuments of Nagorno-Karabakh, (h) It should be noted that the Azerbaijani side, often demonstrating damaged monuments, forgets to emphasize that many of them were damaged during the First Nagorno-Karabakh War, when such territories as Fizuli, Jabrayil and others were the scenes of intense hostilities. It should also be added that many Muslim monuments were in a state of disrepair during the Soviet period.”⁵²⁵

Reaction of international institutions

Statements of international organizations

349. With the exception of some condemnations of Azerbaijan’s crimes against the Armenian people, Armenia’s territorial integrity and cultural heritage at the level of parliaments of some states,⁵²⁶ individual parliamentarians⁵²⁷ and organizations, the international response remained either lacking or inadequate in 2022.

⁵²⁵ Monument Watch, On the Resolution Adopted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the Cultural Heritage of Artsakh, 4 April 2022, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/alerts/on-the-resolution-adopted-by-the-organization-of-islamic-cooperation-oic-on-the-cultural-heritage-of-artsakh> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Artsakh Monuments, Քաշաղաղում և Քարվաճառում մզկիթներ չեն եղել (There Were No Mosques in Kashatagh and Karvachar Regions), 14 July 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VQ_FDsj_Kw&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR17WpTWNAR48NrVqc1IH_QdZrYaQErLp352JchpXTjAqWsizeJlBnO7i0A (accessed on 2 May 2023); Monument Watch, Gharghabazar: Caravanserai and Mosque, <https://monumentwatch.org/en/monument/gharghabazar-caravanserai-and-mosque> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵²⁶ General Assembly of Uruguay, Chamber of Senators (see Armenpress, Ուրուգվայի Սենատորների պալատը հայտարարութամբ դատապարտել է ԳԳ միջազգայնորեն ճանաչված տարածք Ադրբեջանի ներխուժումը, 18 October 2022, https://armenpress.am/arm/news/1095170.html?fbclid=IwAR3exEGMKqrZr_6aQvXQOQ-5n80BR621tm7XnB0Z4SN7IEQiygQSBN_nxNU (accessed on 2 May 2023); National Assembly of France, (see Résolution n°37, adoptée par l'Assemblée nationale, visant à exiger la fin de l'agression de l'Azerbaïdjan à l'encontre de l'Arménie et à établir une paix durable dans le Caucase du Sud, 30 November 2022, https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/16/textes/l16t0037_texte-adoptee-seance?fbclid=IwAR37lxBxOnX5y7eagbCy4yMXpxoaHhx2C56AJ9QNqdrXzrMvWjCqfLZz5tg (accessed on 2 May 2023)); Spanish Congress (see Armradio, Spanish Congress Calls on Azerbaijan to Restore Free Movement along Lachin Corridor, 22 December 2022, <https://en.armradio.am/2022/12/22/spanish-congress-calls-on-azerbaijan-to-restore-free-movement-along-lachin-corridor> (accessed on 2 May 2023)).

⁵²⁷ European Parliament, Statement by the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina Kaljurand, on the Worrying Humanitarian Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, 16 March 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/245939/20220316_Nagorno-Karabakh_humanitarian%20situation_statement.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1io1k9UtKHQ9IbIROXS1WDZd4zd8_n-krsol_0WSmj_55VNXgQYxulB-Q (accessed on 2 May 2023); US House of Representatives, Adam Schiff, Resolution Condemning Azerbaijan’s Unprovoked Military Attack on Armenia, 14 September 2022, <https://www.congress.gov/bills/117th-congress/house-resolution/1351/text> (accessed on 2 May 2023); US Congressman, Frank Pallone, Jr., Press Release, Armenia Caucus Co-Chairs Issue Statement on Escalation of Azerbaijani Humanitarian Abuses in Artsakh, 13 December 2022, <https://pallone.house.gov/media/press-releases/armenia-caucus-co-chairs-issue-statement-escalation-azerbaijani-humanitarian> (accessed on 2 May 2023); European Parliament, Statement by the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina Kaljurand, on the Blocking of the Lachin Corridor, 15 December 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/260636/20221215_Blocking%20of%20Lachin%20corridor_statement.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

350. International governmental and non-governmental organizations and media often misrepresented the aggression of Azerbaijan as a conflict or “clashes” between two countries without pointing out that the developments were usually a part and demonstration of a larger pattern of anti-Armenian racism and destruction policies, mostly backed and fuelled by Turkey.

351. No sanction has been imposed against the criminal regime of Azerbaijan for the grave breaches of international law targeting the Armenian people, their statehood, history and cultural heritage.

352. No reaction came from international partners when Azerbaijan’s president repeatedly expressed anti-Armenian hate speech in international conferences, meetings and receptions of international delegations.

353. A number of UN representatives visited and posed in a photo in Shushi⁵²⁸ without considering the fact of that city having been fallen under the Azerbaijani control as a result of a genocidal clashes in 1920 and the war of Azerbaijan and Turkey against Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians in 2020.

354. Throughout 2022, the EU, with the leadership of European Council President, Charles Michel, was involved in promotion of “peace talks” with leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan.⁵²⁹

355. On 18 July, the EU signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Partnership in the field of energy with Azerbaijan to double the flow of gas from Azerbaijan to Europe by 2027. EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, emphasized that the EU is “opening a new chapter in our [EU’s] energy cooperation with Azerbaijan, a key partner in our efforts to move away from Russian fossil fuels.”⁵³⁰ She declared Azerbaijan to be a “reliable and trustworthy partner.” Ironically, the EU

⁵²⁸ Baku, Yerevan React to Celebration of 30th Anniversary of Azerbaijan’s UN Accession in Shusha, <https://azeritimes.com/2022/03/23/baku-yerevan-react-to-celebration-of-30th-anniversary-of-azerbajians-un-accession-in-shusha/>, (accessed on 5 May 2023)

⁵²⁹ EEAS, Armenia/Azerbaijan: EU Hosts High-level Meeting in Brussels, 30 March 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armeniaazerbaijan-eu-hosts-high-level-meeting-brussels_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Statement of European Council President Charles Michel Following the Second Trilateral Meeting with President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, 6 April 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/statement-european-council-president-charles-michel-following-second-trilateral_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Press Statement by President Michel of the European Council, 23 May 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/press-statement-president-michel-european-council_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Statement by the Spokesperson of Charles Michel, President of the European Council, Regarding Armenia and Azerbaijan - 31 May 2022, 1 June 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/statement-spokesperson-charles-michel-president-european-council-regarding_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Press Statement by President Charles Michel Following the Trilateral Meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 31 August 2022, 1 September 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/press-statement-president-charles-michel-following-trilateral-meeting-president_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Statement Following Quadrilateral Meeting between President Aliyev, Prime Minister Pashinyan, President Macron and President Michel, 6 October 2022, 7 October 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/statement-following-quadrilateral-meeting-between-president-aliyev-prime_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Armenia/Azerbaijan: High Representative Borrell Holds Bilateral Calls with Foreign Ministers Mirzoyan and Bayramov, 14 October 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armeniaazerbaijan-high-representative-borrell-holds-bilateral-calls-foreign-ministers-mirzoyan_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Armenia-Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on Border Commissions Meeting, 3 November 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armenia-azerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-border-commissions-meeting_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Nagorno-Karabakh: High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell Spoke to the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, 12 November 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/nagorno-karabakh-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-spoke-foreign-ministers_en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵³⁰ European Commission, EU and Azerbaijan Enhance Bilateral Relations, Including Energy Cooperation, 18 July 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_4550 (accessed on 2 May 2023); Eurasianet, David O’Byrne, Azerbaijan and EU Agree to Strategic Energy Partnership, The Memorandum is a Win for Baku while Committing It to Do Little, 18 July 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/azerbaijan-and-eu-agree-to-strategic-energy-partnership> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, President of European Commission Held Expanded Meeting, 18 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56688> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan, European Union Signed MoU on Strategic Partnership in Field of Energy, 18 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56689> (accessed on 2 May 2023); President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, President of European Commission Made Press Statements, 18 July 2022, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/56690> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Commission closed eyes on the war crimes against Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh⁵³¹ as well as gross human rights violations by Azerbaijan against its own citizens.⁵³² It also ignored the strategic partnership agreement between Russia and Azerbaijan signed on the eve of the attack on Ukraine.⁵³³

356. Human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, stated that the EU should not have signed a bilateral agreement with Azerbaijan “without insisting on political reforms: the release of scores of political prisoners and changes to laws that heavily restrict non-governmental organizations and the media” since “Azerbaijan uses oil and gas to silence the EU on fundamental rights issues,” “the Azerbaijan authorities have been famous for cracking down on civil society activists investigating corruption, especially when it comes to oil and gas.” They emphasized that “repressive and unaccountable regimes are rarely reliable partners” for which “Russia’s aggression against Ukraine serves as a reminder.”⁵³⁴

357. This gas deal was particularly controversial for the Armenian society, where EU on the one hand condemned Russia’s aggression against the Ukrainian democracy, on the other hand, commended another aggressor – Ilham Aliyev, who cut gas and later – other communications for the democratic Nagorno-Karabakh, putting its Armenian population on the verge of humanitarian catastrophe.

358. International statements often called on “both parties” to solve the differences through peaceful means, thus, creating false equivalences, treating the perpetrator and the victim in the same light and, as a consequence, emboldening Azerbaijan for further aggression against Armenians.

359. Finally, the international actors failed to acknowledge that Azerbaijan, supported by Turkey, has been imitating peace negotiations with Armenia at the same time furthering its genocidal and ethnic cleansing intent, using military force and threatening with new wars.

360. Annex 1 includes the summaries of reactions of international governmental and non-governmental human rights organizations, including both - statements that acknowledge racist policies and ethnic cleansing intent of Azerbaijan as well as the failures to recognize and condemn such problems.

Proceedings in international courts

International Court of Justice

361. On 12 October, in response to the request by Armenia on 16 September 2022 for the modification of the Court’s Order of 7 December 2021 indicating provisional measures in the case concerning “Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial

⁵³¹ 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: Fact-Finding Report, December 2021, https://www.osf.am/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Fact-Finding-Report_FINAL_web.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023)

⁵³² The Guardian, Human Rights Groups Criticise EU’s Azerbaijan Gas Deal, 19 July 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/19/human-rights-groups-criticise-eus-azerbaijan-gas-deal> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

⁵³³ Eurasianet, Ahead of Ukraine Invasion, Azerbaijan and Russia Cement “Alliance”, 24 February 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/ahead-of-ukraine-invasion-azerbaijan-and-russia-cement-alliance> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

⁵³⁴ The Guardian, Jennifer Rankin, Human Rights Groups Criticise EU’s Azerbaijan Gas Deal, Agreement with Autocratic Ruler to Double Supplies within Five Years Comes as EU Seeks to Reduce Reliance on Russian Energy, 19 July 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/19/human-rights-groups-criticise-eus-azerbaijan-gas-deal?CMP=tw_t_b-dnnews#Echobox=1658240575 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Discrimination” (Armenia v. Azerbaijan), ICJ took note of Azerbaijan’s “commitment to treat any detained Armenians in accordance with paragraph 98 (1) (a) of the Order of 7 December 2021.”⁵³⁵ According to the latter, the ICJ ordered Azerbaijan to “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.”⁵³⁶

362. On 28 December, Armenia requested the ICJ to indicate provisional measures in the mentioned case. In particular, Armenia stated that “On 12 December 2022, Azerbaijan orchestrated a blockade of the only road connecting the 120,000 ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh with the outside world, thereby preventing anyone and anything from entering or exiting.” It further emphasized that “blockade is ongoing as of the date of [its] Request, and there are no signs that it will be lifted any time soon.” Armenia requested the Court to indicate the following provisional measures: “Azerbaijan shall cease its orchestration and support of the alleged “protests” blocking uninterrupted free movement along the Lachin Corridor in both directions, Azerbaijan shall ensure uninterrupted free movement of all persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions.”⁵³⁷

European Court of Human Rights

363. Throughout 2022, Armenia lodged a number of legal actions with European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) against Azerbaijan, including requests for interim measures in March, in August, in September with regard to Azerbaijan’s attacks targeting of civilians, threats against the peaceful population of Nagorno-Karabakh, mistreatment of Armenians PoWs.⁵³⁸ Armenia also took a new interstate case against Azerbaijan on the “Azerbaijani aggression in the direction of Khamort and Parukh villages of Nagorno-Karabakh.”⁵³⁹

364. On 21 December, ECHR reaffirmed the continuous application of its earlier interim measures and issued a decision “to indicate interim measures in the “Lachin Corridor.”” The Court noted the obligation of Azerbaijan under Article 6 of the Trilateral Statement signed on 9 November 2020 to “guarantee the security of persons, vehicles and cargo moving along the Lachin Corridor in both directions” and reminding them of their obligations under the Convention, the Court decided to indicate to the Government of Azerbaijan, “to take all measures that are within their jurisdiction to

⁵³⁵ ICJ, Order on the Request for the Modification of the Order of 7 December 2021 Indicating Provisional Measures, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan), 12 October 2022, paras 20. <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/180/180-20221012-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023)

⁵³⁶ Ibid., para. 98 (1) (a).

⁵³⁷ ICJ, Request by The Republic of Armenia for the Indication of Provisional Measures, 27 December 2022, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan), <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/180/180-20221227-WRI-01-00-EN.pdf> (accessed on 2 May 2023); ICJ, Press Release, The Republic of Armenia Requests the Court to Indicate Provisional Measures, Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan), 29 December 2022, https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/180/180-20221229-PRE_01-00-EN.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵³⁸ Arka, Armenia Requests ECHR for Urgent Interim Measures against Azerbaijan in Connection with Recent Violations Committed against Nagorno-Karabakh, 25 March 2022, http://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenia_requests_echr_for_urgent_interim_measures_against_azerbaijan_in_connection_with_recent_violations; <https://www.facebook.com/INTLEGALARM/>; <https://www.facebook.com/INTLEGALARM/posts/469188008549851> (accessed on 3 May 2023).

⁵³⁹ Armenian Government Representation Before the ECHR, Հերթական միջպետական գանգատը ներկայացվեց Ադրբեջանի դեմ, 2 August 2022, https://echr.am/events/mijpetakan_gangat_2022.html?fbclid=IwAR1hzTqrm56koSl9FYOTr61BTyDy3ylnRcvLv-KMt2UnPv6aK1pEWID1j40 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

ensure safe passage through the “Lachin Corridor” of seriously ill persons in need of medical treatment in Armenia and others who were stranded on the road without shelter or means of subsistence.”⁵⁴⁰

Call for action to prevent ethnic cleansing

Azerbaijan’s win in 44-day war, the grown asymmetry of military power between Armenia and Azerbaijan, inadequate international response to the aggression and impunity for its war crimes emboldened Azerbaijan to escalate its policy of ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh, remove the Armenian cultural heritage from the region and already claim the territory of whole Armenia. Azerbaijan’s aggressive stance and actions have been fully supported by Turkey.

In the period of current geopolitical cataclysm, the major powers and relevant international organizations shall play a critical role and take the responsibility for the protection of small and weaker states and vulnerable ethnic groups.

Urgent international measures are necessary in order to put an end to this continuous genocidal policy by Azerbaijan against the Armenian people in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Key international actors shall

- **Refrain from controversial statements on the conflict**, using false equivalences and emboldening Azerbaijani leadership to push forward its aggressive agenda;
- **Put pressure on Azerbaijan’s leadership to stop its hate propaganda, falsification of history, racism and expansionism policies**, to revise its schools’ curricula to remove Anti-Armenian content and incorporate general education to promote cultural tolerance and respect for other nations and safeguard compliance with international norms and respect for human rights;
- **To put pressure the Azerbaijani government to ensure immediate and unconditional repatriation** of all Armenian POWs and civilians detained in Azerbaijan;
- **Ensure opening of Lachin Corridor** and restoration of unimpeded and safe movement of all persons, vehicles and cargo through the Lachin Corridor, as well as secure supply of gas, electricity and internet from Armenia;
- **Elaborate mechanisms for ensuring an international presence in Nagorno-Karabakh, including urgent fact-finding and peacekeeping missions**, to guarantee impartial monitoring of the situation on the ground, regular and public reporting to the international community, and serve as an essential guarantor for the security of the local people;

⁵⁴⁰ ECHR, Press Release, European Court Decides to Indicate Interim Measures in the “Lachin Corridor,” ECHR 401 (2022), 21 December 2022, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng-press#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22003-7528728-10337270%22%5D%7D> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

- **Elaborate formats and mechanisms for ensuring long-term safety, durable peace and self-governance** of Nagorno-Karabakh people in their homeland to ensure full enjoyment of their *erga omnes* right to self-determination;
- **Support the establishment of an international mechanism and guarantees** for communication between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh to ensure the protection of the rights of local people;
- **Support delimitation and demarcation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan in line with human rights principles and international best practices**, assuring immediate withdrawal of Azerbaijan's armed forces from the territory of Armenia;
- **Ensure effective response to war crimes and other grave violations of international law**, accountability of perpetrators of aggression through imposing sanctions and restoration of the infringed rights of the suffered people, including the return to their homes;
- **Ensure the safety and protection of the Armenian cultural heritage** appeared under Azerbaijani control, in compliance with ICJ's Provisional Measures order of December 7, 2021.

ANNEX. REACTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International governmental organizations

United Nations

365. UN Secretary General, Antonio Gutierrez, on 25 March (following cutting of gas supply, occupation and ethnic cleansing of more villages in Nagorno-Karabakh), made a statement that he was “concerned by the reports on new fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh and around it.” He called on “the sides to refrain from any actions and statements that can bring to escalation of the situation, resolve all issues, including those of the humanitarian character, through direct dialogue within the existing formats.”⁵⁴¹

366. On 29 March, UN Secretary General stated at a press briefing that “we remain concerned about the reports of continued tensions in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.” He welcomed “efforts for de-escalation in the trilateral format and the engagement of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs,” continued “to urge the sides to refrain from any actions and statements that could escalate the situation and to address all outstanding issues, including humanitarian concerns of the people on the ground, through direct dialogue and within existing formats.”⁵⁴²

367. In response to the 13 September Azerbaijani attacks and invasion, the UN Secretary General expressed “deep concerns” over the reports of “resumption of hostilities along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.” He called to “immediately take steps to de-escalate the tensions exercise maximum restraint and resolve all remaining outstanding issues through dialogue and within existing [negotiation] formats.”⁵⁴³

368. UN Security Council discussed the 13 September aggression of Azerbaijan upon Armenia’s official referral.⁵⁴⁴ However, no resolution or statement was adopted.

369. On 20 December, the UN Security Council discussed the blockade of Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan, however this did not result in a resolution or statement either.⁵⁴⁵ Meanwhile, since the blockade of 12 December, nation-wide protests took place in Yerevan, in front of the UN permanent member states’ embassies, the UN office and the EU delegation demanding to take concrete action in

⁵⁴¹ Tass, ООН призвала Баку и Ереван к сдержанности на фоне обострения ситуации в Нагорном Карабахе, 25 March 2022, https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/14189419?utm_source=hetq.am&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=hetq.am&utm_referrer=hetq.am (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁴² UN, Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, 29 March 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/db220329.doc.htm> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁴³ UN, Генсек ООН призвал Армению и Азербайджан к диалогу, 13 September 2022, <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2022/09/1431381> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁴⁴ Security Council of Armenia, PM Pashinyan Chairs Security Council Session, 13 September 2022, https://seco.am/security_council/sessions/96?lang=en (accessed on 2 May 2023); UN SC, Letter dated 13 September 2022 from Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/688), 15 September 2022, <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1v/k1v6j33ej1> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁴⁵ Spokesperson of MFA of Armenia, Facebook post, 20 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/ArmSpoxMFA/posts/pfbid0LvHzUdwrDi7jLfnTrtJKbMB6GFNuHC6obxeqbjiv5VG4eoJwEwRfo4ZER8AMEaGol> (accessed on 2 May 2023); MFA of Armenia, The UN Security Council Emergency Meeting Convened on the Blockade of the Lachin Corridor, 21 December 2022, https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2022/12/21/unsc_lachin/11793 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

de-blocking the corridor,⁵⁴⁶ as well as in the capital city of Nagorno-Karabakh, Stepanakert, with the demand to open the corridor.⁵⁴⁷

370. UNESCO, as earlier, did not carry out any mission to monitor the situation of Armenian cultural heritage under the Azerbaijani occupation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

371. The UNESCO Press Office responded to the query of Armenpress in February 2022, that “we continue working to send a UNESCO Independent Technical Mission within the framework of the 1954 Convention. We hope that it will be possible soon, but for the moment the necessary conditions are not in place. So discussions are still ongoing.”⁵⁴⁸ According to the Deputy Minister of Culture of Armenia, the reason that UNESCO mission was not possible to send to the territories under the Azerbaijani control was that Azerbaijan denied the involvement in that mission of Armenian delegation.⁵⁴⁹

372. UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), on 30 August, published its findings on Azerbaijan “in light of the hostilities that erupted in and around Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 and beyond. The Committee was deeply concerned about allegations of grave human rights violations committed by the Azerbaijani military forces against prisoners of war and other protected persons of Armenian ethnic or national origin. It was also disturbed by reports on the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage, including churches, monuments, landmarks and cemeteries.” The Committee recommended that Azerbaijan “conduct thorough and impartial investigations of all human violations and strengthen its efforts to ensure accountability and end impunity.”⁵⁵⁰

373. UN officials in Azerbaijan, on 18 March, attended an event organized by Azerbaijani government devoted to the country’s UN membership, which took place in Shushi of Nagorno-Karabakh,⁵⁵¹ occupied by Azerbaijan and cleansed from 5,000 Armenians as a result of the 44-day war.⁵⁵²

374. This comes with the fact that no UN official had visited Nagorno-Karabakh during or after the 44-day war to prevent or even document international crimes committed by Azerbaijan, further ethnic cleansing of new occupied villages, constant use of force on the line of contact, deprivation of gas

⁵⁴⁶ Gegham Stepanyan, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Facebook post, photos, 15 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid02sfjsChozMF6zN1hrNwWifj3yKnF8NAhRuGKLy9UJB5rActoR56Efaz6X6YG4Fn7Al> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Gegham Stepanyan, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Facebook post, video, 18 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1108655319828282> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Gegham, Stepanyan, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Facebook post, photos, 21 December 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid0wPDGwnoVTS9FhhviAZxMHRjDfQymgv71jcDNUTQsxLo9PzLdCnHn9Jub2mYubWCnl> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁴⁷ Artsakhpress, Nationwide Rally Takes Place in Stepanakert's Revival Square (Live), 25 December 2022, <https://artsakhpress.am/eng/news/174837/hamazhoxovrdakan-hanrahavaq-stepanakertum-uxix.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁴⁸ Armenpress, As Armenian Monuments in Artsakh Face Azeri Encroachments, UNESCO Rejects “Political Instrumentalization” of History, 15 February 2022, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1075608/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁴⁹ Shant News, Ինչո՞ւ չի կայանում ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՕ-ի առաքելության այցը Արցախ. զրոյց ԿԳՄՍ փոխնախարարի հետ, 26 December 2022, 7:50 minute, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LASK51wGfoA> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁵⁰ CERD, UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Publishes Findings on Azerbaijan, Benin, Nicaragua, Slovakia, Suriname, United States of America and Zimbabwe, 30 August 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/08/un-committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-publishes-findings-azerbaijan> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁵¹ Hikmet Hajiyev, Twitter post 1, 18 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/HikmetHajiyev/status/1504692873396211712> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Hikmet Hajiyev, Twitter post 2, 18 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/hikmethajiyev/status/1504884828424089601> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁵² Gegham Petrosyan, Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, Facebook post, 18 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/gegham.stepanian/posts/pfbid0tGrndkseKeJ11yBbVXvUYfy8Q7G4QcUTCiit892h58dw5oM4krm3njA5WrrqN8wrFl> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

supply, blockade, intimidation techniques used against the civilians, etc. Instead, UN officials' visit to Shushi was actually an approval for the criminal policies of Azerbaijan expressed by the relevant member states.

European Union

375. EU Parliament, on 10 March, adopted a resolution “on the destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh,” where it acknowledged that “Azerbaijan’s continued policy of erasing and denying the Armenian cultural heritage in and around Nagorno-Karabakh” as “part of a wider pattern of a systematic, state-level policy of Armenophobia, historical revisionism and hatred towards Armenians promoted by the Azerbaijani authorities,” including dehumanization, the glorification of violence and territorial claims against the Republic of Armenia which threaten peace and security in the South Caucasus.” The resolution acknowledged that “the elimination of the traces of Armenian cultural heritage in the Nagorno-Karabakh” is also achieved “through the falsification of history and attempts to present it as so-called Caucasian Albanian.” It recalled “that historical revisionism and the defacement and destruction of cultural or religious heritage run counter to the ICJ’s Order of 7 December 2021,” stressed that “Azerbaijan must grant unhindered access to all cultural heritage sites [...] in the territories under its control” to UNESCO, urged “Azerbaijan to ensure that no interventions on Armenian heritage sites occur prior to a UNESCO assessment mission, and that Armenian and international cultural heritage experts are consulted prior to, and closely involved during interventions on Armenian cultural heritage sites.” It also called on the EU “to actively participate in efforts to protect cultural heritage at risk in Nagorno-Karabakh, notably by deploying mechanisms to facilitate UNESCO’s fact-finding mission” and suggested “the use of the EU Satellite Centre (SatCen) to provide satellite images in order to help determine the external condition of the endangered heritage in the region.” The resolution also called “on Azerbaijan to discard its maximalist aims, militaristic approach and territorial claims on Armenia and engage in good faith in negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group on the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh.”⁵⁵³

376. On 10 March 2022, Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus Marina Kaljurand issued a statement, where she emphasized that “the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be solved by military force” and “the falsification of history, as well as the war against cultural heritage, cannot be justified,” condemned “the continued policy of Azerbaijan to erase and deny Armenian cultural heritage in and around Nagorno-Karabakh,” recalled the ICJ Provisional Measures Order of 2021 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 artefacts,” and urged “Azerbaijan to remove all obstacles and facilitate the UNESCO independent mission of experts in order to assess the situation regarding cultural properties in and around Nagorno- Karabakh.”⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵³ EU Parliament, Resolution of 10 March 2022 on the Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh (2022/2582(RSP)), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0080_EN.html (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁵⁴ EU Parliament, Speech of the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina Kaljurand, at the Plenary Debate on “Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh,” 10 March 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/245682/20220310_Kaljurand_Plenary_Nagorno-Karabakh_cultural%20heritage.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

377. On 16 March 2022, Marina Kaljurand issued a statement on “the worrying humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh” emphasising that “on 8 March, the natural gas pipeline supplying Nagorno-Karabakh was damaged in an area under the control of Azerbaijan,” that “it is urgent that unhindered access is provided to the damage site without delay in order to restore supplies as soon as possible,” that “reports of ceasefire violations have multiplied since early March [...] including reports of Azerbaijan’s high-calibre mortar shelling of several Nagorno-Karabakh villages,” that “Azerbaijani army loudspeakers directed at these villages have been calling on the local Armenian population to leave the area, intensifying the psychological pressure and threatening the use of force.” She “strongly condemn[ed] any hostile actions aimed at civilians.”⁵⁵⁵

378. On 1 April, Marina Kaljurand noted her statement to the Co-Chair of the EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee Javanshir Feyziyev on her “concern about Azerbaijan’s unprovoked military intrusion into Nagorno-Karabakh” a week before, “urged the immediate withdrawal of forces back behind the line of contact,” “recalled the European Parliament resolution of 10 March 2022 on the destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh and stressed the need for Azerbaijan to urgently allow the planned UNESCO independent technical mission to access the region and perform its work unhindered,” and “urged Azerbaijan to refrain from any unilateral actions that might undermine [sustainable peace] efforts.”⁵⁵⁶

379. In a resolution of 8 June 2022, the EU Parliament stated that “the 44-day conflict [was] triggered by Azerbaijan,” that “the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh has not been settled” and called the situation on the ground “skirmishes between Azerbaijan and Armenia.” The resolution referred to the deprivation by Azerbaijan of the gas in Artsakh in March as a “result of ongoing military engagements between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in Nagorno-Karabakh” stating that “the main pipeline to supply gas to Nagorno-Karabakh has been damaged and left the disputed territory without access to energy supplies.” The EU Parliament expressed “deep concern about the continued tensions on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan,” highlighted “the importance of the full exchange and release of detainees, addressing the fate of missing persons, facilitating humanitarian demining, ensuring the safe and free movement of civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh...,” underlined “that the preservation of cultural heritage and intercultural dialogue would be beneficial to the process of conflict resolution.”⁵⁵⁷

380. On 13 September 2022, Marina Kaljurand issued a statement “on the military aggression of Azerbaijan against the Republic of Armenia” strongly condemning the “large-scale military attack by Azerbaijan against multiple targets in the territory of the Republic of Armenia,” noting that “this new aggression follows Baku’s serious breaches of the ceasefire on the Nagorno-Karabakh line of contact in March and August,” and called on the “international community, and in particular the European

⁵⁵⁵ EU Parliament, Statement by the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina Kaljurand, on the Worrying Humanitarian Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, 16 March 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/245939/20220316_Nagorno-Karabakh_humanitarian%20situation_statement.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁵⁶ Statement by the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina Kaljurand, Following the Meeting with the Co-Chair of the EU-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee Mr. Javanshir Feyziyev, 1 April 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/246704/20220331_Meeting%20of%20PCC%20co-chairs_statement.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁵⁷ EU Parliament, Resolution of 8 June 2022 on Security in the Eastern Partnership Area and the Role of the Common Security and Defence Policy (2021/2199(INI)), 8 June 2022, para. BY, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0236_EN.html (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Union, to meet this unacceptable use of force with an unequivocal response,” and emphasized that “this is not a time for toothless statements calling for restraint from ‘both sides’.”⁵⁵⁸

381. On 14 December 2022, the EU Parliament asked the Commission “to strongly condemn the destruction of historical, artistic and cultural heritage in recent conflicts, as well as the systematic and politically or ideologically targeted destruction of historical, artistic and cultural heritage, as well as the eradication of the identities and cultures of sovereign states, peoples or minorities, including Azerbaijan’s continued policy of erasing and denying the Armenian cultural heritage in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.” It also called “for targeted sanctions against the individuals and entities responsible for destroying, vandalising or trafficking in cultural heritage as an important step in establishing deterrence and ensuring accountability for such acts.”⁵⁵⁹

382. On 15 December, Marina Kaljurand issued a statement “on the blocking of the Lachin Corridor, noting her grave concern “by the actions of the Azerbaijani state authorities and purported environmental protesters in the Lachin Corridor on 3 December and again since 12 December, resulting in the blocking of the road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, which is a vital supply line for the Armenian population of the region.” The statement mentioned that “the disruption of gas supply to Nagorno-Karabakh via the pipeline passing through Azerbaijani-controlled territory is of utmost concern, adding to the risk of serious humanitarian consequences. The statement recalled that “safe movement through the Lachin Corridor is guaranteed under the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020” urging “the government of Azerbaijan to fulfil its obligations under this statement and call for utmost restraint in terms of both actions and rhetoric,” and underlined “the need for a comprehensive peace agreement which needs to provide firm guarantees for the rights and security of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh.”⁵⁶⁰

383. The EU Commission issued statements on the occasions of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, World Humanitarian Day, International Day of Democracy, Human Rights Day, where emphasized Russia’s “unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine and its population,” its “illegal war of aggression against Ukraine,” that “Russia shows no mercy to the civilian population of Ukraine,” that “Putin unleashed an unjustified aggression against a free and sovereign democratic European country [Ukraine], and a violent attack on the international rules-based order.”⁵⁶¹ The EU, however, remained silent or indifferent when it came to the Azerbaijani aggression and international crimes against both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

⁵⁵⁸ EU Parliament, Statement by the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina Kaljurand, on the Military Aggression of Azerbaijan against the Republic of Armenia, 13 September 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/253919/20220913_Azerbaijani%20military%20aggression_statement.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁵⁹ EU Parliament, Resolution of 14 December 2022 on the Implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations (2022/2047(INI)), 14 December 2022, para. 78, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0444_EN.html (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶⁰ EU Parliament, Statement by the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina Kaljurand, on the Blocking of the Lachin Corridor, 15 December 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/260636/20221215_Blocking%20of%20Lachin%20corridor_statement.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶¹ Council of the EU, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 21 March 2022: Declaration by the High Representative on Behalf of the EU, 21 March 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/international-day-for-the-elimination-of-racial-discrimination-21-march-2022-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu/> (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, International Day in Support of Victims of Torture: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, 25 June 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/international-day-support-victims-torture-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-o_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); European Commission, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), World Humanitarian Day: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell and Commissioner

384. On 7 February and 9 September, EU representatives welcomed the release of the Armenian detainees as an “important humanitarian gesture” by Azerbaijan,⁵⁶² despite the fact that Azerbaijan is bound by the 9 November Declaration 2020 to have returned all the captives.

385. On 13 March, amid the armed attacks on villages, calls to leave and deprivation of gas by Azerbaijan, the EU special representative for the South Caucasus, Toivo Klaar, stated that “the latest developments on the ground are indeed very worrying,” “are of concern to the EU,” and that “it would be essential that the gas pipeline is repaired as soon as possible and that the shootings stop,” without pointing out the responsible party of the offensive.⁵⁶³

386. On 23 March, EU Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, issued a statement⁵⁶⁴ stating it is “concerned about reports of a renewed disruption of the gas supply to Stepanakert/Khankendi.” The statement failed to note that not only the capital city was deprived of gas but also Nagorno-Karabakh as a whole. It refrained from even mentioning the term “Armenian people” expressing the “urgent need to ensure the immediate resumption of the gas supply to the affected local population.” It did not mention Azerbaijan as responsible for the deprivation of gas, yet encouraged “Azerbaijan’s active engagement on the matter, which led to repair works and the resumption of the gas supply.”

387. On 19 June, the EU special representative for the South Caucasus stated he was “pleased” to read Azerbaijan’s president Ilham Aliyev’s statement at Global Baku Forum on 16 June about peace: “Now it’s time to establish peace, to establish cooperation’ and to /move to practical implementation’ following positive dynamics with Armenia.” He emphasized that the “EU strongly supports this.”⁵⁶⁵ Meanwhile, in that very speech president Aliyev threatened and blackmailed Armenia to give a corridor to avoid a new confrontation, which was obviously overlooked.

388. In response to the military attacks by Azerbaijan on 1-3 August, the EU again failed to point out the aggressor, merely referred to “clashes” and called “for an immediate cessation of the hostilities which have broken out between Azerbaijani and Armenian.”⁵⁶⁶ Toivo Klaar expressed a concern about the “report of increased tensions in Armenia-Azerbaijan context.”⁵⁶⁷

Janez Lenarčič, 18 August 2022, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/news/world-humanitarian-day-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-and-commissioner-2022-08-18_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); European Commission, International Day of Democracy: Joint Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell and Vice-President Dubravka Šuica, 15 September 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_5545 (accessed on 2 May 2023); European Council, Council of the EU, Human Rights Day 10 December 2022: Statement by the High Representative on Behalf of the European Union, 9 December 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/09/human-rights-day-10-december-2022-statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union/> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶² Toivo Klaar, Twitter post, 7 February 2022, <https://twitter.com/ToivoKlaar/status/1490627355769020420?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Toivo Klaar, Twitter post, 8 September 2022, <https://twitter.com/ToivoKlaar/status/1567989145158533122?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Charles Michel, Twitter post, 9 September 2022, <https://twitter.com/CharlesMichel/status/1568111133449506817?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶³ Azatutyun, EU “Concerned” over Disrupted Gas Supply, Shootings In Nagorno-Karabakh, 14 March 2022, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31752102.html> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶⁴ EEAS, Armenia/Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Gas Supplies, 23 March 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armeniaazerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-gas-supplies_en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶⁵ Toivo Klaar, Twitter post, 19 June 2022, <https://twitter.com/ToivoKlaar/status/1538561152837361665?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶⁶ EEAS, Armenia/Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Latest Hostilities, 3 August 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armeniaazerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-latest-hostilities_en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶⁷ Toivo Klaar, Twitter post, 2 August 2022, <https://twitter.com/ToivoKlaar/status/1554492906278354944?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

389. In response to the military aggression by Azerbaijan against Armenia on 13 September 2022, the EU issued statements on that “serious fighting has taken place along the Armenian and Azerbaijani border,” and emphasized that “it is imperative that the hostilities stop and that there is a return to the negotiating table.” It called on “all forces [...] return to positions held prior to this escalation.”⁵⁶⁸

390. On 15 September, on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy which coincided with the days of Azerbaijani aggression, the EU issued a statement emphasizing that “the EU has reacted firmly against Russia’s aggression, demonstrating our unambiguous commitment to defend democracy, in the European Union and beyond.”⁵⁶⁹ However, there was no appropriate reaction to the proceeding aggression of dictatorial corrupt regime of Azerbaijan against democratic Armenia.

391. On 17 September, Toivo Klaar merely twitted about “disturbing reports of crimes and violence targeting civilians during the latest fighting,”⁵⁷⁰ without mentioning that the crimes and violence against civilians were committed by Azerbaijan on the territory of Armenia. Similarly, he referred to the “horrible video” of Armenian PoWs being executed,⁵⁷¹ without mentioning by whom. Instead, he posted about “several videos” he was sent “apparently showing war crimes committed against Azerbaijanis.”⁵⁷²

392. On 11 October, the EU High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrel found it was a clear political position that “the fighting must stop. Both sides need to re-engage in meaningful negotiations.” He also talked about “extremely worrying reports of a surge in attacks on populated areas, which is taking a deadly toll on civilians,”⁵⁷³ without indicating that those civilians were Armenians and the attackers were the Azerbaijani armed forces.

393. On 11 November, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the 44-day war, the EU issued a statement remembering “all Armenian and Azerbaijani victims of the conflict,” called on “both sides to turn the page of enmity and continue reconciliation efforts,” reiterated its call on “the sides to moderate their rhetoric and avoid any unnecessary escalation of tensions, including by refraining from threats or allegations against each other and military provocations and actions,”⁵⁷⁴ without any hinting on who was responsible for the military aggression and who uses threats and aggressive rhetoric.

⁵⁶⁸ EEAS, Armenia/Azerbaijan: Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borell on the Military Escalation, 13 September 2022., https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/armeniaazerbaijan-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borell_en (accessed on 2 May 2023); EEAS, Armenia/Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Latest Developments, 15 September 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armeniaazerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-latest-developments_en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁶⁹ European Commission, International Day of Democracy: Joint Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell and Vice-President Dubravka Šuica, 15 September 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_5545 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷⁰ Toivo Klaar, Twitter post, 17 September 2022, <https://twitter.com/ToivoKlaar/status/1571101801528852480?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷¹ Toivo Klaar, Twitter post, 2 October 2022, <https://twitter.com/ToivoKlaar/status/1576451440280686592?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷² Toivo Klaar, Twitter post, 3 October 2022, <https://twitter.com/ToivoKlaar/status/1576694063272955904?s=20> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷³ EEAS, Nagorno Karabakh: Remarks by the High Representative / Vice-President Josep Borrell at the EP Plenary Debate on the Resumption of Hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, 7 October 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/nagorno-karabakh-remarks-high-representative-vice-president-josep-borrell-ep-plenary-debate_en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷⁴ EEAS, Armenia-Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Efforts, 11 November 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armenia-azerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-conflict-resolution-and-reconciliation-efforts_en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

394. On October 17, EU deployed Monitoring Capacity to Armenia along the Armenian side of the international border with Azerbaijan to monitor the situation for two months.⁵⁷⁵

395. On 13 December, “following with serious concern the various developments around the Lachin Corridor since the beginning of December,” EU pointed to the responsible party, calling on “the Azerbaijani authorities to ensure freedom and security of movement along the corridor.”⁵⁷⁶

Council of Europe

396. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE): On 13 September 2022, upon the Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia, the Committee of Ministers Chair and PACE President stated that “the use of military force is totally unacceptable in settling disputes between Council of Europe member states,” called on “Azerbaijan and Armenia to pull back from any further steps which might worsen the situation, to respect international agreements and to engage in peace talks without further delay,” and urged “both member states of the Council of Europe to abide by their commitments taken upon accession, notably, to settle the conflict by peaceful means.”⁵⁷⁷

397. On 13 October 2022, the PACE co-rapporteurs on Armenia expressed concerns about “the numerous reports of alleged war crimes or inhuman treatment perpetrated by the armed forces of Azerbaijan,” noted “that the Military Prosecutor's Office of Azerbaijan has decided to investigate the facts and hope that these investigations will be public and transparent,” added that “Azerbaijani armed forces are occupying Armenian territory in violation of Armenia's territorial sovereignty and Azerbaijan’s obligation under the Statute of the Council of Europe to settle conflicts by peaceful means,” and called “upon the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately withdraw from all parts of the territory of Armenia and to release the prisoners of war under their control.”⁵⁷⁸

398. On 16 December 2022, PACE co-rapporteurs for the monitoring of Azerbaijan and Armenia expressed deep concerns on “the interruption of freedom of movement in the Lachin corridor, causing considerable hardship to the population,” stated that “freedom and security of movement of persons and goods must be urgently restored along the corridor,” called “on all parties to the Trilateral Statement of 9-10 November 2020 to immediately take the necessary measures,” and reiterated their “readiness to provide all political support needed, including by undertaking a fact-finding mission to the region.”⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁵ EEAS Press Team, Q&A EU Monitoring Capacity to Armenia, 25 October 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/qa-eu-monitoring-capacity-armenia_en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷⁶ Armenia/Azerbaijan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Developments around the Lachin Corridor, 13 December 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/armeniaazerbaijan-statement-spokesperson-developments-around-lachin-corridor_en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷⁷ CoE, PACE, Hostilities at Armenia and Azerbaijan Border: CM Chair and PACE President Call for De-escalation and Respect for a Cease-fire, 13 September 2022, <https://pace.coe.int/en/news/8804/hostilities-at-armenia-and-azerbaijan-border-cm-chair-and-pace-president-call-for-de-escalation-and-respect-for-a-cess-fire> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷⁸ CoE, PACE, PACE Co-rapporteurs on Armenia Concerned by Reports of Alleged War Crimes or Inhuman Treatment Perpetrated by Azerbaijan’s Armed Forces, 13 October 2022, <https://shorturl.at/coxBJ> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁷⁹ CoE, PACE, PACE Monitors Urge the Restoration of Freedom of Movement along the Lachin Corridor, 16 December 2022, <https://pace.coe.int/en/news/8930/pace-monitors-urge-the-restoration-of-freedom-of-movement-along-the-lachin-corridor> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

399. Secretary General of the Council of Europe (CoE): Throughout 2022, the CoE Secretary General, Marija Pejčinović Burić, did not have any mentioning of the attack of Azerbaijan on Armenia or on human rights violations and destruction of the cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh. In contrast she had a number of statements on the Ukraine war expressing solidarity with the Ukrainian people⁵⁸⁰ and government,⁵⁸¹ pointing out the “brutal”, “illegal”, “shocking” and “appalling” nature⁵⁸² of the Russian “aggression against Ukraine – one Council of Europe member state on another” as a “flagrant violation of the Council of Europe’s Statute,”⁵⁸³ noting that “the Russian “aggression in Ukraine has put many of its cultural treasures in peril”⁵⁸⁴.

400. On 5 April, Marija Pejčinović Burić gave a speech on the “Launch of the Action Plan for Azerbaijan, 2022-2025” pointing out to the positive developments of the human rights situation in Azerbaijan and the challenges that persist, without the reference to the grave human rights violations by Azerbaijan against the Armenian people and the cultural property.⁵⁸⁵

401. On 13 September 2022, the CoE SG, upon the Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia, stated that “Reports of escalating armed hostilities around the Armenian-Azerbaijani border are very alarming,” that “disagreements between Council of Europe member States must be resolved peacefully through negotiations,” and that “when entering the Council of Europe, Armenia and Azerbaijan committed to resolve the conflict peacefully” which “must be respected.”⁵⁸⁶

402. On 10 October 2022, the SG sent a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan requesting information on concerning the measures taken by Azerbaijani authorities concerning “alarming and shocking reports,” the “recent video footage allegedly depicting extreme violence against Armenian prisoners of war, including extrajudicial killings.”⁵⁸⁷

403. Commissioner for Human Rights: Throughout most of 2022, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, did not provide any report or statement on the human rights consequences of the aggression of Azerbaijan for Armenia and Artsakh people.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁰ Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Empowered Women Changing Communities: Conference on the Occasion of International Women’s Day, 9 March 2022, <https://shorturl.at/kwKN8> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸¹ Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Extraordinary Session Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 14 March 2022, <https://shorturl.at/bfn16> (accessed on 2 May 2023); Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Statement by Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić on Her Visit to Ukraine, 9 May 2022, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/secretary-general-in-ukraine> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸² Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, 50th Anniversary of the Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, 17 September 2022, <https://shorturl.at/hRVW3> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸³ Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Extraordinary Session Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 14 March 2022, <https://shorturl.at/bfn16>; Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, 42nd Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 22 March 2022, <https://shorturl.at/ozHI6>; Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Permanent Council of the OSCE, 9 June 2022, <https://shorturl.at/cginC>; Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, World Forum for Democracy Closing Ceremony Speech, 9 November 2022, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/secretary-general/-/world-forum-for-democracy-closing-ceremony-speech> (all accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸⁴ Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, 11th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture “Creating Our Future: Creativity and Cultural Heritage as Strategic Resources for a Diverse and Democratic Europe”, 1 April 2022, <https://shorturl.at/ghJT9> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸⁵ Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Launch of the Action Plan for Azerbaijan, 2022-2025, 5 April 2022, <https://shorturl.at/ehoE5> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸⁶ Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Hostilities around Armenian-Azerbaijan Border: Statement by Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić, 13 September 2022, <https://www.coe.int/ka/web/portal/-/hostilities-around-armenian-azerbaijan-border-statement-by-secretary-general-marija-pejcinovic-buric> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸⁷ Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, Letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, 10 October 2022, <https://rm.coe.int/letter-from-ms-marija-pejcinovic-buric-secretary-general-of-the-council/1680a8693f> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁸⁸ CoE, Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, Memorandum on the Human Rights Consequences of the War in Ukraine, CommDH(2022)18, 8 July 2022, <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680a72bd4> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

404. Only on 22 December, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement “Movement along the Lachin Corridor should be restored as a matter of urgency to prevent a deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.” She referred to “the prolonged disruption in the movement of people, preventing some from reaching their homes, and in access to essential goods and services, including food supplies and urgent medical care, threatens the enjoyment of human rights by the population of Nagorno-Karabakh.” The statement lacked any reference to either the victim or the perpetrator. It was not clear who were the victims and who were perpetrators, who were “those residing in Nagorno-Karabakh” and who were “those responsible for maintaining public order and security of the Corridor,” who were supposed to take “all the necessary steps to restore movement along that road as a matter of urgency and prevent a deterioration of the humanitarian situation.”⁵⁸⁹

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

405. On 29 March 2023, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) adopted its 5th report on Azerbaijan covering the period till 8 December 2022 after its previous report from 2016. ECRI noted that “many interlocutors had confirmed that Armenians” were among the groups “most targeted by hate speech,”⁵⁹⁰ that “several interlocutors have expressed concerns to ECRI about the presence of discriminatory language in school textbooks, particularly against Armenians,” expressed its deep concern that “the use of hate speech linked to the long-lasting conflict and confrontations with neighbouring country Armenia, has been observed among young people in and outside schools and could eventually provide a breeding ground for further hostilities,”⁵⁹¹ and recommended to “remove any references reinforcing prejudice, stereotyping or other discriminatory content from school textbooks.”⁵⁹²

406. The ECRI also noted that “persistent adversarial narrative against Armenia is rooted in the context of the long-lasting conflict and confrontations related to Nagorno-Karabakh”⁵⁹³ and emphasized the blurred discourse that is “impossible to discern” in the Azerbaijani society of the resentment against the Armenian decision-makers and the “hate speech towards Armenians as an ethnic or national community,” a narrative which “escalated during the hostilities that erupted in and around Nagorno-Karabakh on 27 September 2020 and that ended on 9 November 2020.”

407. By linking Azerbaijan’s racist policy against the Armenians with the “long-lasting conflict and confrontations” with Armenia, including around Nagorno-Karabakh, ECRI actually justified such policy by Azerbaijan. This was already manifested in the official comments of Azerbaijan to the ECRI report, where Azerbaijan continued referring to the Azerbaijani refugees and internally displaced persons in 1990s war as the ground for the “consequences on the minds of population,” which “made

⁵⁸⁹ CoE, Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, Movement along the Lachin Corridor Should be Restored as a Matter of Urgency to Prevent a Deterioration of the Humanitarian Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, 22 December 2022, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/movement-along-the-lachin-corridor-should-be-restored-as-a-matter-of-urgency-to-prevent-a-deterioration-of-the-humanitarian-situation-in-nagorno-karabakh> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁹⁰ CoE, ECRI fifth Report on Azerbaijan, Sixth Monitoring Cycle, CRI(2023)18, adopted on 29 March 2023, published on 21 June 2023, para. 38, <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-report-on-azerbaijan/1680ab9e35> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., para. 13.

⁵⁹² Ibid., para. 14.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., para. 39.

inevitable the strong indignation against the policy of Armenia in the Azerbaijani society.”⁵⁹⁴ Besides, ECRI failed in its report to refer to Azerbaijan as the planner and executor of the 44-days war despite the mounting evidence thereof and the acceptance by the Azerbaijani leadership themselves of the fact. Instead, the ECRI referred to “hostilities that erupted in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.”

408. The ECRI emphasized in its report that “during and after these hostilities, the public discourse has been marked by the use of inflammatory rhetoric in public statements by politicians, including at the highest political level, and other public figures, as well as by the wide dissemination of hateful and dehumanising content, in traditional and social media.”⁵⁹⁵ The ECRI also referred to the “opening of the Baku Trophy Park in April 2021, where Armenian military equipment and personnel were portrayed very negatively,” and mentioned that it “raised a lot of criticism.” Instead of directly expressing its own criticism, ECRI noted that it “shares the grave concerns expressed by other international bodies [...] about the language of “aggression” and regular resort to adversarial narratives that propagates racist stereotypes and perpetuates animosities.”⁵⁹⁶

409. In the chapter on “Manifestations of hate-motivated violence” ECRI mentioned “numerous reports with graphic accounts of violence against Armenians, including willful killings or the extensive destruction of their property during and after the 2020 armed conflict and confrontations in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.”⁵⁹⁷ However, the ECRI underlined “that the general issue of war crimes and treatment of both servicemen and civilians in times of armed conflict goes beyond ECRI’s mandate,”⁵⁹⁸ thus failing to recognize that the international human rights norms continue applying during armed conflicts. ECRI also failed to acknowledge that the crimes during the 44-days war against Armenians were not limited to isolated war crimes but were part of the wider policy of hatred against the ethnic Armenian people.

410. Finally, ECRI made no mention to the Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia of 13 September 2022. Nor any reference was made to the racist policy and ethnic cleansing attempts against Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. In contrast, it has condemned “in the strongest terms the aggression of the Russian federation against Ukraine, which was preceded and is accompanied by ultra-nationalist political discourse and propaganda and has resulted in the immense suffering of the Ukrainian people.”⁵⁹⁹

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

411. OSCE Minsk Group: OSCE Minsk Group was ineffective throughout 2022 given the war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February and the damage of relations between the Co-Chair countries.

⁵⁹⁴ Comments of the Government of Azerbaijan on the Sixth Monitoring Report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Azerbaijan, CoE, ECRI Fifth Report on Azerbaijan, Sixth monitoring cycle, CRI(2023)18, adopted on 29 March 2023, Published on 21 June 2023, para. 13, <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-report-on-azerbaijan/1680ab9e35> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁹⁴ CoE, ECRI Fifth Report on Azerbaijan, Sixth monitoring cycle, CRI(2023)18, adopted on 29 March 2023, published on 21 June 2023, p. 45, <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-report-on-azerbaijan/1680ab9e35> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid. para. 40.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid. para. 57.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ CoE, ECRI, Statement of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on the Consequences of the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, adopted by ECRI at its 88th plenary meeting, 29 March-1 April 2022, <https://rm.coe.int/sta-ukraine-2022-367-eng-2754-0600-6278-1/1680a618fa> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

412. OSCE Chairmanship, Poland: In April, upon the visit to the South Caucasus, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Poland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Zbigniew Rau, stated in Azerbaijan that he "hoped to make headway, particularly in urgent humanitarian issues, such as the release of detainees, exchange of information about missing persons, demining, and protection of historical and cultural sites." In Armenia he stated that "Poland's Chairmanship of the Organization strongly supports all initiatives aimed to facilitate dialogue, which is indispensable to deescalate the persisting tensions on the ground," and called on "both Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage in negotiations in good faith in order to come up with a comprehensive solution to all unresolved issues."⁶⁰⁰

413. On 13 September 2022, on the occasion of the Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and OSCE Secretary General, Helga Maria Schmid, issued a statement calling "for an immediate ceasefire following reports of armed clashes along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan." They emphasised that "the escalation of hostilities at the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan must cease immediately."⁶⁰¹ There was no marking of the victim and the perpetrator.

414. Throughout 2022, there were no comments made regarding the destruction of the Armenian cultural property by Azerbaijan, the mutilation of the Armenian servicewomen, hate-motivated attacks and intimidation against the Armenian people in the vicinity of the Azerbaijani armed forces. In contrast, throughout 2022, OSCE Chairmanship issued targeted statements in the context of the Ukraine war clearly referring to "the destruction of religious sites and places of worship" and calling on "Russia to stop the destruction of religious sites and places of worship, which, together with the indiscriminate killing of tens of thousands of civilians, constitute crimes against humanity,"⁶⁰² emphasising "hate-motivated attacks on vulnerable ethnic and religious groups and minorities,"⁶⁰³ "rape and other sexual violence committed by the Russian forces in Ukraine."⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁰ OSCE, Chairmanship, OSCE Chairman-in-Office Rau Concludes visit to Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, 2 April 2022, <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/515075> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁰¹ OSCE, Chairmanship, OSCE Chairman-in-Office and OSCE Secretary General Call for Immediate Cessation of Hostilities along Armenia-Azerbaijan Border, 13 September 2022, <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/525732> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁰² OSCE, Chairmanship, Russia Must Stop Aggression and Destruction of Religious Sites and Places of Worship –Joint Statement by Special Representatives of OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Council of Europe, 13 April 2022, <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/515943> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁰³ OSCE, Chairmanship, Personal Representatives of OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Tolerance and Non-discrimination Statement for International Day of Tolerance, 16 November 2022, <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/531131> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁰⁴ OSCE, Chairmanship, OSCE joins the 16 Days of Activism Campaign and Urges States to Step up Efforts to End Violence against Women in Conflict, 25 November 2022, <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/532070> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

415. OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR): The OSCE ODIHR issued no statement against the attack on Armenia, execution of the Armenian prisoners of war and other human rights violations by Azerbaijan. In contrast, ODIHR reacted on the human impact of military action in Ukraine already on 25 February,⁶⁰⁵ on the next day of the start of war and the death sentences of members of Ukrainian armed forces in June 2022.⁶⁰⁶

Collective Security Treaty Organisation

416. On 4 August, on the occasion of Azerbaijan's aggression in August, Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) Secretariat issued a statement that it is "concerned by the information about the armed clashes that took place in Nagorno-Karabakh and resulted in human casualties," an "urge[d] the parties to the conflict to refrain from the use of force and to use only diplomatic methods to overcome their differences."⁶⁰⁷

417. On 13 September, when Azerbaijan attacked Armenia proper, Armenia initiated an emergency meeting of the CSTO Permanent Council, the members of which "expressed extreme concern about the evolving situation and considered proposals for the possible use of the CSTO mechanisms to resolve the situation."⁶⁰⁸ "All the participants in the Collective Security Council (CSC) meeting expressed their concern at the exacerbation of the situation in the region and called for its settlement exclusively by political and diplomatic means."⁶⁰⁹

418. On 15 September, CSTO mission was sent to Armenia to formulate proposals for the "de-escalation of the tension," "monitor the current situation in certain regions," "prepare a detailed report to the heads of states at the next session."⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁵ OSCE, ODIHR, Human Impact of Military Action in Ukraine of Increasing Concern, OSCE Human Rights Head Says, 25 February 2022, <https://www.osce.org/odihr/513031> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁰⁶ OSCE, ODIHR, OSCE Human Rights Office Condemns Death Sentences against Captured Soldiers, 15 June 2022, <https://www.osce.org/odihr/520262> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁰⁷ CSTO, Statement by the CSTO Secretary General on the Deteriorating Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, 4 August 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/zayavlenie-generalnogo-sekretarya-odkb-v-svyazi-s-obostreniem-situatsii-v-nagornom-karabakhe/#loaded (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁰⁸ CSTO, Extraordinary Session of CSTO Permanent Council Held in Connection with Sharp Aggravation of Situation on the Border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, 14 September 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/sostoyalos-ekstrennoe-zasedanie-postoyannogo-soveta-odkb-v-svyazi-s-rezkim-obostreniem-situatsii-na-#loaded (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁰⁹ CSTO, Extraordinary Session of the CSTO Collective Security Council has Discussed the Situation in Connection with the Sharp Deterioration in Certain Areas on the Border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, 14 September 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/na-vneochednoy-sessii-soveta-kollektivnoy-bezopasnosti-odkb-obsudili-situatsiyu-v-svyazi-s-rezkim-#loaded (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹⁰ CSTO, Extraordinary Session of the CSTO Collective Security Council has Discussed the Situation in Connection with the Sharp Deterioration in Certain Areas on the Border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, 14 September 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/na-vneochednoy-sessii-soveta-kollektivnoy-bezopasnosti-odkb-obsudili-situatsiyu-v-svyazi-s-rezkim-#loaded; CSTO, The CSTO Mission Advance Team led by Colonel General Anatoly Sidorov Arrived in the Republic of Armenia, 16 September 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/peredovaya-gruppa-missii-odkb-pod-rukovodstvom-general-polkovnika-anatoliya-sidorova-pribyla-v-armen/#loaded; CSTO, The CSTO Mission Advance Team Continues to Work in the Republic of Armenia, 16 September 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/peredovaya-gruppa-missii-odkb-pod-rukovodstvom-nachalnika-obedinennogo-shtaba-organizatsii-anatoliya/#loaded; CSTO, The CSTO Mission Advance Team Visited Several Border Areas between Armenia and Azerbaijan, 17 September 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/peredovaya-gruppa-missii-odkb-posetila-neskolko-uchastkov-na-granitse-armenii-i-azerbaydzhana/#loaded; CSTO, The CSTO Mission Headed by the Secretary General of the Organization Stanislav Zas Arrived in the Republic of Armenia to Study the Situation, Including on the Border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Prepare Proposals for Additional Joint Measures, 20 September 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/missiya-odkb-vo-glave-s-generalnym-sekretarem-organizatsii-stanislavom-zasem-pribyla-v-armeniyu-dlya/#loaded; CSTO, The CSTO Mission in the Republic of Armenia led by the Secretary General of the Organization Stanislav Zas Visited Border Area with the Republic of Azerbaijan, 22 September 2022, https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/missiya-odkb-v-armenii-vo-glave-s-generalnym-sekretarem-organizatsii-stanislavom-zasem-posetila-prig/#loaded; CSTO, "Sputnik-Armenia": I Expect That the

419. CSTO failed to issue a direct statement or measures condemning Azerbaijani aggression, despite the fact of having collective defence obligations towards its party state Armenia as opposed to a non-party state Azerbaijan.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

420. On 13 September, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) stated that it was “very concerned about attacks along the Armenian and Azerbaijan border, including reported strikes against settlements and civilian infrastructure inside Armenia,” and called “for an immediate cessation of hostilities and urgent de-escalation.”⁶¹¹

421. On 22 September, the NATO Secretary General stated that “he is extremely concerned about the events that took place on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border” and emphasized “the need for the settlement of regional problems through negotiations.”⁶¹²

422. NATO did not deter its ally, Turkey, in the context of its full support to Azerbaijan, including on the latter’s aggression against Armenia in 2022, as well as Turkey’s threats to Armenia in the course of the negotiations process. Instead, the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, commented Turkey for its efforts in the Black Sea region “to mediate between Moscow and Kyiv,” “its deliveries of assistance to Ukraine,”⁶¹³ as well as Turkey’s “role in limiting access to Russian warships”⁶¹⁴ and “for its strong support for Ukraine’s right of self-defence.”⁶¹⁵

International non-governmental organizations

Freedom House

423. On 24 March, Freedom House published on Twitter that “Azerbaijan must prevent a humanitarian crisis by restoring unhindered gas supplies to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, who have endured weeks of freezing temps without heat or hot water.”⁶¹⁶ While this statement was a progress in international response, however, it did not refer to the armed attacks against Armenian villages that Azerbaijan was carrying out in Nagorno-Karabakh in parallel with the deprivation of gas.

Assistance Package for the Republic of Armenia Will be Adopted after it is Finalized - S. Zas, 21 September 2022, <https://en.odkb-csto.org/news/smi/rasschityvayu-chto-posle-dorabotki-paket-po-okazaniyu-pomoshchi-armenii-budet-prinyat-zas/#loaded> (all accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹¹ NATO, Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia 2021, Javier Colomina, Twitter post, 13 September 2022, https://twitter.com/JavierColominaP/status/1569628316511993857?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1569628316511993857%7Ctwgr%5E2623df885931f63b145afe3e4d94de4b973d2ddd%7Ctwtcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fhetq.am%2Fen%2Farticle%2F148195 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹² Prime Minister of Armenia, PM Pashinyan Meets with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, 22 September 2022, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2022/09/22/Nikol-Pashinyan-Jens-Stoltenberg> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹³ NATO, Secretary General, The Secretary General Underlines the Importance of Turkey’s Contributions to NATO, 11 March 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_193089.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹⁴ NATO, Secretary General, NATO Deputy Secretary General Underlines Strategic importance of Black Sea region, 1 July 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_197707.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹⁵ NATO, Secretary General, NATO Secretary General Visits Türkiye, 3 November 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_208707.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹⁶ Freedom House, Twitter post, 24 March 2022, <https://mobile.twitter.com/freedomhouse/status/1507041060090003461> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

424. On 13 September, Freedom House stated that it was “alarmed by reports of Azerbaijani Armed Forces intensively shelling the southern Armenian settlements of Goris, Jermuk, Vardenis and Sotk this evening. We call for an immediate ceasefire and urge both parties to find a peaceful resolution.”⁶¹⁷

425. On 14 September, Freedom House said that “The Azerbaijani armed forces must immediately cease their deadly attacks on Armenian territory and commit to the ongoing peace process facilitated by the EU, the US, and Russia.” It also welcomed “the commitment by French president Emmanuel Macron to hold discussions at the UN Security Council,” and urged “democratic governments to consider additional steps to protect Armenia’s territorial integrity.”⁶¹⁸

Human Rights Watch

426. Human Rights Watch (HRW) had published a number of articles since the 44-day war of 2020, including on the torture and other ill-treatment of Armenians under the control of Azerbaijan.⁶¹⁹

427. In 2022, HRW published two articles, one on the execution of Armenian PoWs by Azerbaijani armed forces in the course of the 13 September 2022 aggression,⁶²⁰ the other on the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh in December.⁶²¹

428. HRW concluded that the execution of the Armenian PoWs “apparently by Azerbaijani forces” is a war crime, which “in addition to leading to accountability, needs to be a key element in ensuring that such outrages never happen again.”⁶²² However, HRW failed to acknowledge the pattern of such crimes based on anti-Armenian hatred policy by Azerbaijan, and even refrained from using any wording that would indicate that this crime was committed as a continuation of such policy and the aggression by Azerbaijan against Armenia. Instead, HRW referred to the “fighting between the countries” or “fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces that broke out” in September, “when Azerbaijan made incursions into Armenia and along the border.”

429. On 14 October, HRW published an article on the execution of the Armenian PoWs referring to the video that has been identified still on 2 October. HRW stated that it has relied on the Azerbaijani state to “ensure” the effectiveness of the investigation that the Prosecutor of Azerbaijan, opened on 2 October.

⁶¹⁷ Freedom House, Twitter post, 13 September 2022, <https://twitter.com/freedomhouse/status/1569461778396123136> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹⁸ Freedom House, Freedom House Condemns Azerbaijani Attacks on Armenia, Calls for Diplomacy, 14 September 2022, <https://freedomhouse.org/article/freedom-house-condemns-azerbaijani-attacks-armenia-calls-diplomacy?fbclid=IwAR2FQHBRSraoCkWAAO4b9eOpYbCmZwyEOXRPLowUyr9j7KjpZc5mUz1Xyo> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶¹⁹ HRW, Survivors of Unlawful Detention in Nagorno-Karabakh Speak out about War Crimes, 12 March 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/12/survivors-unlawful-detention-nagorno-karabakh-speak-out-about-war-crimes> (accessed on 2 May 2023); HRW, Azerbaijan: Armenian POWs Abused in Custody, 19 March 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/19/azerbaijan-armenian-pows-abused-custody> (accessed on 2 May 2023); HRW, Azerbaijan: Armenian Prisoners of War Badly Mistreated, 2 December 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/02/azerbaijan-armenian-prisoners-war-badly-mistreated> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶²⁰ HRW, Video Shows Azerbaijan Forces Executing Armenian POWs. Hold Those Responsible to Account, 14 October 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/14/video-shows-azerbaijan-forces-executing-armenian-pows> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶²¹ HRW, Azerbaijan: Nagorno-Karabakh Lifeline Road Blocked. Ensure Access to Essential Goods and Services, 21 December 2022, https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/21/azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh-lifeline-road-blocked?fbclid=IwAR3uMoa_kmv0p85cMfA5fwUGnAYA_FT0Du79rNjr8n16ZbLn7WQ0xk7PJm4 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶²² HRW, Video Shows Azerbaijan Forces Executing Armenian POWs. Hold Those Responsible to Account, 14 October 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/14/video-shows-azerbaijan-forces-executing-armenian-pows> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

430. On 21 December, HRW published a report on the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh since 12 December. HRW stated that “Regardless of who is blocking the road, Azerbaijan’s authorities and the Russian peacekeeping force deployed there should ensure that access remains open, to enable freedom of movement and ensure people have access to essential goods and services.” It advised that “Azerbaijan should facilitate the right to peaceful protest by interacting with the protesters,” to ensure “the road remains open and the protest does not deny Nagorno-Karabakh residents their rights of access to essential services and goods, and to freedom of movement.”⁶²³

431. HRW did not take into consideration the nature of the “protestors,” although as of 21 December, there was plenty of information in the public domain proving the affiliation of the protesting “eco-activists” with the Azerbaijani state institutions, indicating the state sponsorship of the blockade. HRW did not mention that the blocked road is not only the “sole connection with Armenia,” but also with the rest of the world. It did not reveal the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh people live under constant terror by Azerbaijan with their livelihoods distracted, meanwhile it emphasized that “the Azerbaijani state gas company has stated that Azerbaijan bears no responsibility for the disruption.”⁶²⁴

Amnesty International

432. On 17 May, Amnesty International released two reports⁶²⁵ about the elderly people in Armenia and Azerbaijan, titled “Armenia: Last to Flee: Older People’s Experience of War Crimes and Displacement in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict” and “Azerbaijan: “Life in a Box”: Older People’s Experiences of Displacement and Prospects for Return in Azerbaijan.”

433. Amnesty International used the term “conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory” and “active fighting [that] broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2020,” without any hint about the state responsible for launching the “active fighting,” the asymmetry of powers between the countries, the ethnic cleansing intent of one side and the need for protection of basic human rights.

International Federation for Human Rights

434. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) did not refer to any of the events and policies against the Armenian people by Azerbaijan and Turkey throughout 2022 although the FIDH issued a number of publications on the Russian invasion of Ukraine war.⁶²⁶

⁶²³ HRW, Azerbaijan: Nagorno-Karabakh Lifeline Road Blocked. Ensure Access to Essential Goods and Services, 21 December 2022, https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/21/azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh-lifeline-road-blocked?fbclid=IwAR3uMoa_kmv0p85cMfA5fwUGnAYA_FT0Du79rNjr8n16ZbLn7WQ0xk7PJm4 (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶²⁴ Ibid

⁶²⁵ Amnesty International, Armenia/Azerbaijan: Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Caused Decades of Misery for Older People – new reports, 17 May 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/05/armenia-azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-caused-decades-of-misery-for-older-people-new-reports> (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶²⁶ FIDH, Europe and Central Asia, Ukraine, 2022, https://www.fidh.org/en/region/europe-central-asia/?debut_articles=24&pays=1331&thematique=#pagination_articles (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Genocide Watch

435. Since 2021, Armenia/Azerbaijan conflict is included into Situations of Increased Risk within its Countries of Special Concern report.⁶²⁷

436. On 23 September, Genocide Watch issued a genocide warning for Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, given “Azerbaijan’s unprovoked military attacks on Armenia and on the unrecognized Armenian Republic of Artsakh.” The organization considers Azerbaijan’s assaults at “Stage 4: Dehumanization, Stage 7: Preparation, Stage 8: Persecution, and Stage 10: Denial.” Genocide Watch made the connection of the border and contact line offensives with Azerbaijan’s larger racial discrimination policies and intent to destroy Armenians. It also acknowledges Turkey’s role in inspiring Azerbaijan’s aggressive actions. It recommended that the “EU, NATO, and US should pressure Turkey and Azerbaijan to stop Azerbaijani attacks on Armenia and Artsakh, and the US, Canada, and Israel must halt military sales to Azerbaijan.” It also proposes that “sanctions should be placed on Azerbaijani oil and gas exports if Azerbaijani attacks on Armenia and Artsakh continue.”⁶²⁸

International Association of Genocide Scholars

437. On 24 October, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) issued a statement on Azerbaijani September 2022 aggression against Armenia and the indigenous Armenians of the South Caucasus. The IAGS “strongly condemn[ed] Azerbaijan’s invasion of the Republic of Armenia and the ongoing aggression against the Armenian people in the Republic and in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and express[ed] concern about the risk of genocide against the Armenian population of that entity.”⁶²⁹

438. The IAGS indicated that “significant genocide risk factors exist in the Nagorno-Karabakh situation concerning the Armenian population, [n]oting in particular that this violence occurs in the context of a prior genocide against ethnic Armenians in 1915 - 1923 by the Ottoman Empire (which became Turkey), and the continued relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan.”⁶³⁰ The IAGS emphasized that the “current violence is part of a lengthy, related process of violence by the Azerbaijani regime against the indigenous Armenian population of the South Caucasus,” which included “hate speech against Armenians,” “anti-Armenian discourse and propaganda,” as well as “cultural destruction.” The IAGS called on the “international community and academic and cultural organizations to condemn violence and hate speech by Azerbaijan against Armenia,” “take all necessary measures to compel Azerbaijan to cease hostilities and hate speech,” “to hold the authoritarian regime of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev accountable” for the international crimes, called on “Azerbaijan to comply with the International Court of Justice Provisional Measures order of 7 December 2021,” “to remove its soldiers from the territory of the Armenian Republic,” “to respect

⁶²⁷ Genocide Watch, Countries of Special Concern, January-June 2021, https://www.genocidewatch.com/files/ugd/31f489_e40b213c46b84739a97ad799ef9545a2.pdf

⁶²⁸ <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/genocide-warning-azerbaijan-and-nagorno-karabakh-september-2022> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

⁶²⁹ IAGS, Statement on Azerbaijani Aggression Against the Republic of Armenia and the Indigenous Armenians of the South Caucasus, 24 October 2022, https://genocidescholars.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/IAGS-EB-Statement-Armenia-Azerbaijan-Oct-2022.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2JQLXsReCvE6mvy4bdOj-dhJTNfYRNk0_Hu2ZVQSQ-Vg7OkdrQxL-yaao (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*

the right of self-determination of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh as guaranteed under the United Nations Charter.”⁶³¹

Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention

439. Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, following its alerts from 2021,⁶³² issued another five “Red Flag” genocide alerts and four statements throughout 2022 on the policy of Azerbaijan and Turkey towards the Armenian people.

440. On 15 August, the Lemkin Institute published genocide alert in the light of the handover of Berdzor (Lachin) town, Aghavno and Sus villages to Azerbaijan and after a video released on Azerbaijani social media showing “an Azerbaijani soldier tying what is allegedly an Armenian skull dug up from a nearby Armenian cemetery to the back of a military truck while fellow soldiers cheer.” The Lemkin Institute called this “desecration of graveyards and other burial sites” a “new apparent atrocity” seeking “to target, humiliate, destroy the identity, and deny the dignity of the target group, even after death.” The Institute warned that “the risk of genocidal atrocity is especially significant now, given the recent news of the transfer of the Armenian-populated towns of Aghavno and Berdzor to Azerbaijan as well as the continued documented violations of the ceasefire agreement by Azerbaijan.” The common nature of the international crimes during the 44-day war by Azerbaijan and the “many statements made by Azerbaijani president [...] that Yerevan (the capital of Armenia) is Azeri “historic land,” provide the larger genocidal context for current Azerbaijani atrocities.” Lemkin Institute emphasized that the “international community, especially NATO and its member countries, continues to ignore Azerbaijan’s genocidal statements, genocidal domestic ideological culture, and genocidal actions, all of which are supported and furthered by Turkey,” and called on “all international and state bodies to monitor Turkey and Azerbaijan for genocidal ideology and practices, to place pressure on Turkey and Azerbaijan to cease their genocidal threats against the Armenian people, and to reinforce the security of Armenians and the Armenian identity in the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, and in Diaspora communities worldwide.”⁶³³

441. On 13 September, the Lemkin Institute “strongly condemned Azerbaijan’s ongoing war of aggression against Armenia and its people,” and pointed out “Azerbaijan’s overall genocidal rhetoric” and “enduring determination [...] to eliminate the Armenian national identity and its territory.” The Institute expressed concerns that the aggressions would “reach the capital of Yerevan if immediate measures [were] not taken to resolve the conflict and oppose Azerbaijani impunity” and emphasized that the “presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey have threatened to erase Armenia from the world’s map on multiple occasions.” It once again urged the international community to explicitly condemn” the attack on Armenia and “take measures against the autocratic government of Azerbaijan and its ally

⁶³¹ IAGS, Statement on Azerbaijani Aggression Against the Republic of Armenia and the Indigenous Armenians of the South Caucasus, 24 October 2022, https://genocidescholars.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/IAGS-EB-Statement-Armenia-Azerbaijan-Oct-2022.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2JQLXsReCvE6mvy4bdOj-dhJTNfYRNk0_Hu2ZVQsq-Vg7OkdrQxL-yaao (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶³² Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Red Flag Alert for Genocide – Azerbaijan, 3 December 2021, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/9bc553_946a5dc027ae472985979af288e8c579.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023); Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Statement on the Continued Inhumane and Illegal Detention of the Armenian PoWs 17 July 2021, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/654c78_1b0e77657a814cd2891770990cc8b182.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶³³ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Red Flag Alert for Genocide, Azerbaijan, Update, 15 August 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_a2bd798c7cc5440c84242509e9869934.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023)

Turkey,” and warned that if such actions continued to be ignored by the international community and stay unpunished “the world will soon witness [...] another genocide against the Armenians.”⁶³⁴

442. On 29 September, Lemkin Institute issued the second alert, following the Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia and the release of social media videos on the atrocities especially against Armenian female service personnel. The Institute condemned these atrocities “in the strongest possible terms” and called on “the governments of the world to condemn Azerbaijan and to call on the international media to report accurately about this terror campaign.” Lemkin Institute emphasized that both the Azerbaijan soldiers surrounding the decapitated stripped naked body of the Armenian servicewoman but also the Azerbaijani social media users were celebrating and mocking her with the goal “to wound, humiliate, demoralize, and terrorize Armenians as a whole.” The Institute emphasized the “permanent denial” by Azerbaijan of its crimes, the “lack of international condemnation and called on “the international community to order an urgent investigation of all current and past atrocities.” The Institute remarked that “these videos are reminiscent of tactics used by the Islamic State [ISIS] against ethnic and religious minorities in Syria and Iraq as well as tactics employed by the Turkish military against Kurdish fighters in eastern Turkey,” bearing “all the hallmarks of institutionalized genocidal ideology and state terrorism.” The Institute also pointed out that the occurrences are not isolated events, but are part of the “terroristic pattern that ties these atrocities to anti-Armenianism practiced in Azerbaijan, in Turkey, and by the Grey Wolves terrorist organization that is supported by both of these states.” The Institute called this a “slow genocide — genocide by a thousand cuts — against Armenians with the full support of NATO member Turkey.” The Lemkin Institute emphasized that “Western calls for Armenia to negotiate with Azerbaijan and Turkey over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, over a corridor through Syunik, and over Azeri-occupied territory in the Republic of Armenia are short-sighted and dangerous” and are in fact a support to the presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey and those who empower them are complicit. It further called on the West to “take immediate action to isolate these genocidal regimes.”⁶³⁵

443. On 4 October, the Lemkin Institute’s statement condemned “the harmful and often ill-informed media rhetoric used in the coverage” of the Azerbaijani recent offensive against Armenia, pointing out that the “Western media outlets regularly utilize the same rhetorical devices that were mobilized in the reporting of Serb attacks on Bosniaks and the Hutu Power attacks on Tutsis in the 1990s – rhetoric which reframed genocidal assaults and plans as ancient hatreds and tribalism.” The statement also emphasized that the “reporting on the violence against Armenia stands in stark contrast with the reporting on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.” In the case of the latter, “the Western media was clear about which country was the aggressor” offering “in-depth analyses of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s speeches and other evidence of his attitude towards Ukraine and Ukrainians” but ignored “Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s hateful rhetoric, reproducing Azerbaijani propaganda, sowing confusion about causation, and failing to adequately report on the facts on the

⁶³⁴ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Statement on Azerbaijan’s Breach of the Established Ceasefire Agreement and Its Unprovoked Attack on Armenia, 18 September 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_097900502a814271aeacd24af3474a2c.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶³⁵ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Red Flag Alert for Genocide: Azerbaijan, Update, 19 September 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_b71c5427c8f740dba3629d3c08ed20a2.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

ground.”⁶³⁶ The Institute identified a number of such cases of harmful language used in media such as the term “clash(es)” which “suggests that the conflict is playing itself out around incomprehensible issues that resist factual confirmation.” Another type of such language suggests that “each side blames on the other” for ceasefire violations. “While it is true that each side blames the other, only one side invaded a sovereign state without provocation.” Another example was identified when the media claims that the sides “resume attack” which “suggests that the decision to engage militarily was mutual, ignoring the spontaneity of Azerbaijan’s attack.” The Institute also emphasized some “short-cut descriptors” such as “tensions,” “flare up” or even “hostilities and “armed conflict” that “suggest equal responsibility for the violence and downplay the severity of an unprovoked attack by a strong adversary with an even stronger regional ally.” Lemkin Institute also criticised the media for quoting Azerbaijani and Turkish leaders without vetting for propaganda and presenting the Azerbaijani aggression against Armenia as linked to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which is, in fact, in accordance with the Azerbaijani government.⁶³⁷ The Institute further criticised the Western media for using “childish words” referring to the “war characterized by genocidal atrocities,” for not providing “background information,” for ignoring “the high level of Armenophobic hate speech” by Azerbaijani officials, the documented atrocities committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces, hate crimes against Armenians in the diaspora, the history of the 1915-1923 genocide against Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians committed by the Ottoman Empire, the well-funded and longtime denial of that genocide by Turkey and Azerbaijan, the internal human rights abuses committed by the government of Azerbaijan (which often uses hate speech against Armenians and war with Armenia as a distraction), and the series of broken ceasefire attacks such as this one that have been consistently committed by Azerbaijan with the military and diplomatic support of Turkey.” Finally, the Lemkin Institute called upon “Western media outlets to clarify their language and avoid the false neutrality of “balanced reporting” that simply reproduces the propaganda of the aggressor and fuels genocidal actions and rhetoric.”⁶³⁸

444. On 7 October, upon the release of the video of execution of Armenian PoWs by Azerbaijani forces Lemkin Institute issued the third alert. The Institute “strongly oppose[d] all international pressure put on Armenia to cede territory, give up Nagorno-Karabakh, allow access routes through the Syunik province, and/or demilitarize its borders” and emphasized that “all global and regional powers that have been pressuring the Armenian state to “pursue peace” with neighbors that are threatening genocide must stop immediately.”⁶³⁹ The Institute called on the “the international community [to] provide support for Armenia to strengthen its military and its borders – including in Nagorno-Karabakh – in order to protect Armenian life, and [to] strongly condemn Azerbaijan’s actions and genocidal rhetoric.” The Institute also called for “strict economic sanctions against the Azerbaijani state and its leadership, including a ban on all military aid and the supply of weapons,” as well as sanctions against Azerbaijan’s main arms trade partners Israel, Ukraine, Russia, and Turkey, “if they continue to supply Azerbaijan with weapons.” The Institute further called out the “grotesque support”

⁶³⁶ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Statement on the Western Media Narrative Regarding Azerbaijan’s September 13 Attack on Armenia, 4 October 2022, p. 2, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_773d85aed8ec46ec9e4064376bf12be5.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶³⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶³⁹ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Red Flag Alert for Genocide: Azerbaijan, Update #3, 7 October 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_868b3771b026486fba9471cac5df7983.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

by NATO, NATO members, and the European Union “for the genocidal state of Azerbaijan under its genocidal president” and reminded these powers that “complicity - aiding and abetting - can trigger responsibility under international criminal law.” It further warned about “Turkish and Azerbaijani propaganda, which is well-funded by both states” as a result of which “genocidal Armenophobia” has worked its way into “scholarship, journalism, and politics” and has included also “the Azerbaijani state’s tactic of “mirroring,” which involves accusing Armenia and Armenians of committing the crimes that it itself has committed or is planning to commit.”⁶⁴⁰

445. On 12 October, Lemkin Institute’s statement criticised the computer game “Maroon Berets” as a “violent propaganda piece and training tool for Turkish and Azeri youth to become desensitized to the gruesome act of war” which “glorifies the brutal war crimes of Azerbaijani soldiers,” “legitimizes past and future Azeri and Turkish attacks on Armenian territory – not only Nagorno-Karabakh.”⁶⁴¹

446. On 24 November statement, the Lemkin Institute emphasized that it is a common “misperception among many members of the international community that Nagorno-Karabakh should simply be “given up” [...] in the name of “peace” and “prosperity”” the origin of which is “a desire to please Turkey and to gain access to Caucasus oil [and] to strategic positions in Central Asia.” The Institute affirmed that this “view negates Nagorno-Karabakh’s legitimate right to self-determination and risks collusion with a genocidal state” leading to “forced displacement and persecution of Armenians, widespread atrocity crimes, destruction of cultural heritage, and one of the largest humanitarian crises in the Caucasus region in the past decades, involving a huge influx of refugees to Armenia proper” [...] “In fact, the depopulation of Nagorno-Karabakh should be seen as the beginning of a much larger push to erase the Armenian presence from the region once and for all.” The Institute reminded that “the right to self-determination is one of the most important fundamentals of the international legal system [...] and should not become another legal fiction, instead, it should be understood as an essential element of lasting international peace and security.” It warned the “world has the rare chance to prevent genocide before mass killing has begun” and called for “the creation of an independent international commission to study the issues involved in Nagorno-Karabakh, with the aim of establishing a just outcome and a stable peace. Azerbaijan must not be allowed to use force to claim Armenian territory and the international community must make clear that it will vigorously defend Armenian life against a renewal of the genocide of 1915.”⁶⁴²

447. On 3 December, the fourth genocide alert was released, when a group of Azerbaijanis in civilian clothes blocked the Stepanakert-Goris, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the world as a whole. Although the road was opened the same day, the Lemkin Institute reminded the international community that the blockade was “not an isolated event but one in a series of criminal actions carried out by the autocratic regime of Ilham Aliyev in Azerbaijan, which continue without serious opposition from the international community” and predicted the “guarantee[d] repetition and escalation of this type of violence” since genocidal regimes “stage rehearsals for genocide in incremental steps, gauging the international response as they go.” The

⁶⁴⁰ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Red Flag Alert for Genocide: Azerbaijan, Update #3, 7 October 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_868b3771b026486fba9471cac5df7983.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁴¹ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Statement on the Anti-Armenian Steam RPG Game Maroon Berets: 2030, 12 October 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_7208bc1eb6bb422094a153a42074722b.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁴² Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Statement on Self-Determination of Armenians in Artsakh (South Caucasus): There is No “Peace” or “Prosperity” through Genocide, 24 November 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_8aeaec9797084bf485de48a0fca1715c.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

Lemkin Institute reminded that “Aliyev has faced no public repercussions for the aggressive wars and the atrocities” internationally and emphasized that “the genocidal intent of Baku has never been clearer and the actions carried out up to the moment highly predict this outcome.” The Institute further criticised the international community that “continues to choose to ignore the claims of Armenians for survival and self-determination in Nagorno-Karabakh, the media that “in general fails to portray a proper image of the conflict (if they cover the conflict at all)” as a result of which “Aliyev is convinced of his invincibility,” the EU for “engagement in gas-related business with the autocratic regime of Azerbaijan.” It called on the “Western world [to] make it clear that it does not support genocide” and “not believe themselves to be beyond the reach of international criminal law.”⁶⁴³

448. On 15 December, Lemkin Institute issued its fifth genocide alert in response to a longer blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh by a group of Azerbaijani military and civilian servants, claiming to be “environmental activists.” The institute announced that “it is clear that the blockade between Armenia and the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh has no environmental purpose” and that in addition, “cutting the supply of necessary utilities,” including gas, to the Nagorno-Karabakh “is a criminal act which intends to create terror and unbearable conditions of life for” its population. The Institution again warned that these “are not isolated events [and are] instead, being committed within a larger genocidal pattern against Armenia and Armenians by the Azerbaijani regime” methods of which a “separating Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia, and isolating and terrorizing ethnic Armenians residing in Nagorno-Karabakh.” This also creates “fear in Armenia [and] Armenians all over the world, since they demonstrate the criminal capacity of the Azerbaijani regime and the inoperability of the international community that, for the most part, decides to ignore what happens.” The Lemkin Institute, once again, called on the international community “to protect the Armenian identity in the region,” “to condemn Azerbaijan’s actions and policies against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, “implement sanctions against Azerbaijan,” “stop all military funding with no further delay.”⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴³ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Red Flag Alert for Genocide: Azerbaijan, 3 December 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/9bc553_379ff0739c994c39ba1cf6d714bab6f9.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).

⁶⁴⁴ Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Red Flag Alert for Genocide: Azerbaijan, Update 5, 15 December 2022, https://www.lemkininstitute.com/files/ugd/391abe_22be692d531c4134817cb6417ccdc931.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023).