

REPORT

 **TATOYAN**
FOUNDATION
Center for Law & Justice

AZERBAIJANI ONGOING HATRED POLICY TOWARDS ARMENIANS: A STATE SPONSORED MOTIVATION FOR ATROCITIES

YEREVAN, 2022

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R E P O R T

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INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared by the **Center for Law and Justice “TATOYAN” foundation** and focuses on the Azerbaijani state-sponsored continuous hatred towards Armenians. This policy is based on ethnic and religious hatred keeping Armenians and Azerbaijanis in tension and animosity throughout the world. This undermines security in the region, destroys prospects of peace and nullifies normal life of people.

This policy always results in atrocities and torture, beheadings and willful killings, destruction of civilian communities, provocation of hatred. This was proved by the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) 2020 44-day war; the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) 2016 April war; the 2022 September 13-15 military aggression against Armenia; other Azerbaijani military attacks against Armenia or Artsakh.

The Human Rights Defender (Ombudsman) of Armenia¹ and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh have regularly published (2016-2022) the following evidence-based reports confirming the existence of state-sponsored hatred and Armenophobia. Below are the main reports:

- “Interim public report on atrocities committed by Azerbaijani military forces against the civilian population of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and servicemen of the Nagorno Karabakh Defense Army on 2-5 April 2016”, Artsakh Ombudsman, 2016;
- “Interim public report on Armenophobia in Azerbaijan organized hate speech and animosity toward Armenians”, Artsakh Ombudsman, 2018;
- “On organized hate speech and animosity toward ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan as root causes of ethnically-based torture and inhuman treatment by Azerbaijani armed forces” (September-November 2020)”, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, 2020;
- “A Park of killed Armenian soldiers and chained prisoners of war in Baku: A museum of human sufferings and promotion of racism”, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, 2021;
- “Treatment of Armenian prisoners of war and civilian captives in Azerbaijan (with focus on their questionings)”, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, 2021;
- “Facts on Azerbaijani fictitious peacebuilding and absence of honest dialogue as long-standing threats to human rights: the Baku-Tbilisi platforms (the situation in 2016 and 2017)”, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, 2021;

¹ Mr. Arman Tatoyan served as the Human Rights Defender of Armenia from 2016 to 2022.

- “Responsibility of Azerbaijan for torture and inhuman treatment of Armenian captives: evidence-based analysis (the Nagorno-Karabakh war)”, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, 2021;
- “Urgent necessity for a demilitarized security zone in the areas of contact with the Azerbaijani military forces as a fundamental safeguard to protect the rights of the population in Armenia: Evidence-based analysis in the context of the ongoing situation in Gegharkunik and Syunik provinces”, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, 2021;
- “The Azerbaijani policy of hatred and animosity toward Armenians as root causes of ethnically motivated violations of human rights: evidence-based analysis of the post-war developments”, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, 2022.

This report also shows consequences of the 2022 September 13-15 military aggression against Armenia, as an example proving continuous existential threats of the Azerbaijani hatred policy. This aggression targeted Syunik, Vayots Dzor and Gegharkunik provinces of Armenia (Jermuk, Vardenis, Goris, Martuni, Sotk, Tegh, Verishen, Akner and other town and villages, etc.). Attacks against Armenia’s civilian communities must be considered in the context of the Armenophobic policy of Azerbaijan and the impunity for the war crimes during previous atrocities.

I. AZERBAIJANI STATE HATRED POLICY TOWARDS ARMENIANS DOCUMENTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

1. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (hereafter, “the Committee”) at its 2920th meeting dated 26 August 2022 adopted concluding observations, issuing findings, *inter alia*, on the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (hereafter referred to as “the Convention”) by Azerbaijan in the context of the hostilities that erupted in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 September-November war and beyond.

2. In particular, 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 recorded reports on the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage, including churches, monuments, landmarks and cemeteries. It recommended that the State party conduct thorough and impartial investigations of all human violations and strengthen its efforts to ensure accountability and end impunity.

3. The findings of the Committee contain the following main concerns:

- (a) Allegations of severe and grave human rights violations committed during 2020 hostilities and beyond by the Azerbaijani military forces against prisoners of war and other protected persons of Armenian ethnic or national origin, including extrajudicial killings, torture and other ill-treatment and arbitrary detention as well as the destruction of houses, schools, and other civilian facilities;
- (b) Reports on the destruction of and damage to Armenian cultural heritage, including churches and other places of worship, monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artefacts, and the lack of information on investigations conducted on such allegations;
- (c) Incitement to racial hatred and the propagation of racist stereotypes against persons of Armenian national or ethnic origin, including on the Internet and social media, as well as by public figures and governmental officials, and the lack of detailed information on investigations, prosecutions, convictions and sanctions of such acts;
- (d) Lack of an independent and comprehensive mechanism to investigate such reports of violations and to provide victims with redress and support.

4. Mr. Arman Tatoyan and his team, in his capacity as the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, analyzed **287 videos and photos**² in total evidencing the gross and severe violations of the Azerbaijani military forces. The videos

² Videos of atrocities and torture committed during the September 13-15 2022 Azerbaijani military aggression against Armenia are under translation and analysis.

were translated into English and Russian.³ The videos and photos specifically refer to (addition: more than one video or a photo can refer to the same person or monument):

- (a) 98 of the materials refer to the torture and humiliation of the dignity of the captives while alive;
- (b) 17, to the beheadings and extrajudicial killings;
- (c) 32, to the insult to the bodies of the victims, and amputations of body parts (for example, cutting off the hand or ear);
- (d) 54, to the managing the social network pages of captives, including the spread of hatred and the distribution of a photo of a beheaded soldier on his page;
- (e) 49, to the use of prohibited weapons of mass destruction against civilian settlements and forested areas of Artsakh, including those containing chemical elements;
- (f) 26, to the destruction and vandalism of Armenian historical, cultural and religious heritage, including monuments and churches;
- (g) 12, to websites and social network pages (Telegram, Instagram, etc.), which spread hatred, inflamed hostility, as well as videos or photos of Azerbaijani atrocities against the Armenian captives.

5. Almost in all videos, identifications are made of persons alive or dead. The study of the collected videos and photos demonstrates that the torture, cruelty and inhuman treatment by the Azerbaijani military forces of the Armenian captives were motivated by ethnic hatred. In other words, they were committed only because the victims were ethnic Armenians.

6. It should be highlighted that on 13 August 2022 the Center for Law and Justice “TATOYAN” foundation submitted a special report to the UN Committee to review the periodic report on Azerbaijan. The report provided a detailed analysis of the Azerbaijani state policy of organized hatred and animosity against Armenians, which are used as a political tool to influence Azerbaijani society. The incitement of religious hatred constituting hostility toward ethnic Armenians is also thoroughly analyzed.

7. The Armenian historical, cultural and religious heritage, including the monuments and the churches, were destroyed and vandalized based on the same principle, in gross violation of international humanitarian law and human rights requirements.

³ Available at: <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/YprA6DwjpPTNQ7P>

8. An in-depth analysis has undoubtedly proved that the root cause for gross and severe violations is the Armenophobic policy of the Azerbaijani authorities. The years of systemic propaganda of enmity further incite Armenophobia in the Azerbaijani society, resulting in atrocities, tortures and inhuman treatments against civilians and military servicemen, as well as destruction of Armenian cultural and religious heritages by the Azerbaijani military forces during and after the 2020 September-November war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

9. Yearly reports by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and recently, the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) are further proof of the true reach of the government-administrated vilification of Armenians.

10. Thus, on September 16, 2021, Armenia filed an application with the ICJ, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, instituting proceedings against Azerbaijan, alleging violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination ("ICERD"). As cases before the ICJ can take years to adjudicate, Armenia requested that the ICJ grant provisional orders.

On December 7, 2021, the ICJ indicated the following provisional measures:

- 1) "Azerbaijan must, in accordance with its obligations under CERD, 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;
- 2) take all necessary measures to prevent the incitement and promotion of racial hatred and discrimination, including by its officials and public institutions, targeted at persons of Armenian national or ethnic origin; and
- 3) 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."⁴

11. The first report of the Council of Europe Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on Azerbaijan of June 28 of 2002 had *inter alia* indicated that Armenians living on the territory of Azerbaijan under the effective control of Azerbaijani authorities tended to shield their ethnic identity or avoided exposing it publicly⁵.

12. The report indicated that hate speech and derogatory public statements against Armenians would take place routinely, and the mere attribution of Armenian ethnic origin to an ethnic Azerbaijani may have be perceived

⁴ See the official decision available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/180/180-20211207-ORD-01-00- EN.pdf> (07 December 2021)

⁵ Report on Azerbaijan, adopted on 28 June 2002, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, para. 51:

as an insult, as illustrated by trials for slander and insult opened by public figures against persons who had publicly and falsely alleged their Armenian ancestry. In its report of 15 December 2006 on Azerbaijan, ECRI stated that the situation concerning Armenians living in Azerbaijan had not seen any improvements⁶.

13. The second ECRI Report had stated that Azerbaijani authorities have not demonstrated their will to tackle the problem of racism and racial discrimination against Armenians. According to the ECRI, Armenians have experienced discrimination in their daily lives, particularly in terms of access to public services, e.g. some officials merely refused to proceed with enquiries from Armenians when they discover their ethnic origin.

14. The fact of discriminatory policy and racism by Azerbaijan towards Armenians has also been pointed out by the Advisory Committee on the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. In its opinions on Azerbaijan, the Advisory Committee pointed out the incidents of “hostility and discrimination” against Armenians, the existence of anti-Armenian sentiments in Azerbaijan and recommended Azerbaijan take steps for eliminating the discriminatory attitude toward Armenians⁷.

15. Reports and objective evidence have shown that this is a policy full of jeopardizing perils of perpetuating hostility between the peoples of the two countries and not only in the region but also worldwide. Not only do these actions violate the basic principles of international law and undermine the entire international system of human rights, but are also a threat to the democracies and human rights of those countries where Armenians and Azerbaijanis live. The policy aims at maintaining the enmity between the two people around the world.

II. EVIDENCE OF AZERBAIJANI STATE POLICY OF HATRED TOWARDS ARMENIANS AS A POLITICAL TOOL AND ITS REFLECTION IN THE AZERBAIJANI SOCIETY

16. Azerbaijani policy of organized hatred and animosity against Armenians has been the primary source of the human rights violations not only before the September-November 2020 war, during the war but also after the war, including the military aggression of September 13-14, 2022. These policies have been invigorated even further as a tool for directing the internal grievances of the population toward ‘an external evil’ in the image of Armenia and its people.

⁶ Report on Azerbaijan, adopted on 15 December 2006, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, para. 107.

⁷ Advisory Committee on the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Opinion on Azerbaijan (adopted on 22 May 2003), ACFC/INF/OP/I (2004)001.

17. This is in a closed chain in Azerbaijan being generated through state policy; encouraged by cultural, religious and other public figures that have been seeded in the Azerbaijani society at large.

18. This is not only about rhetorics or words used, but also a long-standing institutional policy that has been implemented in real life (science, education, culture, sport, etc.). Even videos of atrocities illustrate that Azerbaijani soldiers use the same words as their authorities while torturing and beheading, mutilating Armenian civilians or soldiers.

19. For the Azerbaijani authorities, anti-Armenianism is a domestic and foreign policy tool, a source of nourishment. It is a deliberate policy of keeping one's own people in Armenophobia in order to divert them from their internal problems.

20. Just after the 2020 September-November war, the President of Azerbaijan announced as follows:

“The younger generation has grown up with love for the Motherland and hatred for the enemy, and this young generation has liberated our lands from the invaders. I said that representatives of all generations performed successfully in the liberation of our lands, but the absolute majority of those across the battlefields have been the people who were children when I came to power in 2003. They matured, showed patriotism and dedication, sacrificed their lives, became martyrs, became wounded, showed heroism and restored historical justice.”⁸

The speech of the Azerbaijani President is, thereby, an allusion to the premise of the rebirth of the national spirit, culture and society that had been initiated since the beginning of his first presidential term in 2003.

21. Government institutions and high-ranking officials have followed their President's racist lead. Among many examples, in his nationwide address during the war, the President of Azerbaijan stated:

“We are driving them [Armenians] away like dogs! Azerbaijani soldiers drive them away like dogs!”⁹

22. In October 2020, Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense announced the production of military drones formally emblazoned with the words “*Iti Qovan*” or “*dog chaser*” in Azerbaijani.¹⁰

⁸ The full text of the interview is available on the official website of the President of Azerbaijan (5 March, 2021) <https://en.president.az/articles/50798>

⁹ Youtube link to the video available in Russian at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eAVs7fjUFM> 04:18 minute // <https://defence.az/en/news/146240/president-aliyev-azerbaijani-soldiers-drive-them-away-like-dogs>

¹⁰ Azerbaijan starts production of 'Iti Qovan' (22 October 2020), see full text available at: <https://defence.az/en/news/147499/azerbaijan-starts-production-of-%E2%80%9Citi-qovan%E2%80%9D-uavs-photos?cfchljschltk=pmdMg2Vf1zmQDNKqhw6edW7KcVkyXV.wFP7p.3IEeYFCi4-1629830372-0-gqNtZGzNAnujcnBszQh9>

23. From the outset, this abuse may not seem offensive or deep-hearted, but there is in fact a much deeper connotation to it. Traditionally, in Islam ‘dogs’ have been associated as something ‘impure’ (similar to pigs) and the Islamic legal tradition has developed several references as warning against contact with dogs. Additionally, according to a 1911 dictionary by M. Popov, the word “*gyaur – or literally a ‘dog’ had been used as a slur by Turkic people to refer to those who did not follow the Islamic tradition (infidels, non-believers)*”¹¹.

24. Below are further examples of statements made by the President of Azerbaijan during his official appearances and in his public addresses. Most statements are published on the official webpage of the President of Azerbaijan and in other official sources.

- (a) *“Armenia as a country is of no value”¹², “We will continue to expel these liars [meaning Armenians]. They have neither conscience nor morality. They don’t even have a brain.”¹³, “I was saying that they need to be treated. They are sick, a virus more dangerous than coronavirus has permeated them.”¹⁴*
- (b) *“I used the expression “Iron Fist” several times during my appeals to the Azerbaijani people, when I reported on the liberated cities and villages. I used this term several times and said that our “Iron Fist” would smash the enemy’s head if they do not voluntarily leave all the occupied territories. And, as it were, this term was received well in our society, and then I decided to formalize it, if I may say so, and give the operation this name. But again, this happened during the course of military operations.”¹⁵*
- (c) *“For 30 years, it [meaning Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh)] was in the hands of wild beasts, in the hands of predators, in the hands of jackals. The remains of the city of Fuzuli are a manifestation of Armenian fascism and a witness to Armenian fascism.”¹⁶*
- (d) *“We must not and will not forget about our historic lands. This must determine our future activity, and we are already working in that direction. Our historic lands are the Yerevan Khanate, Zangezur, Geycha [lake Sevan]. Both the young generation and the world should know about this.”¹⁷*
- (e) *“An Armenian is a barbarian who digs graves, digs and removes golden teeth of dead bodies.”¹⁸*

¹¹ Попов, М., Словарь иностранных слов, вошедших в употребление в русском языке, и.д. Сытина, 1911.

¹² Available at: <https://twitter.com/presidentaz/status/270827003521929216> (20 November, 2012)

¹³ Nationwide address of President of Azerbaijan (20 October 2020) <https://defence.az/en/news/147408/azerbaijani-presidentilham-aliyev-addresses-nation-on-tv-%C2%A0live>

¹⁴ Excerpts from the speech of the President of Azerbaijan, available at <https://en.president.az/articles/50798> (5 March, 2021)

¹⁵ Excerpts from the interview of the President of Azerbaijan to Russian influential “Natsionalnaya oborona” magazine (24 September, 2021) <https://en.president.az/articles/53199>

¹⁶ The President of Azerbaijan addresses the nation (17 October 2020) <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3318553.html>; the video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvDwKPPle4>

¹⁷ Available at: <https://ria.ru/20180209/1514274051.html>

¹⁸ Available at: <https://president.az/articles/51067>

(f) *“Armenians have a distorted psychology, they need a good doctor, the poison of Armenians is from the Diaspora”*.¹⁹

(g) *“Various generations of our compatriots have contributed to and invested their efforts into this Victory. However, I must mention that the biggest weight, the main responsibility is vested in the young generation. Those who were 10-15 years old in 2003 are now 27-32. It is their upbringing with the spirit of patriotism, their hatred toward the enemy that has brought us to Victory and have restored Azerbaijan’s historic justice.”*²⁰

25. What is important here to highlight is that, even today, the President of Azerbaijan continues to insult, spew ethnic hatred and Armenophobia, as well as carry out public propaganda of enmity against Armenians in his public speeches and messages.

26. The President of Azerbaijan follows his previous rhetoric: *If Armenians do not agree with maximalist Azerbaijani requirements and continue to raise the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan will launch another war and destroy both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.*²¹

27. He further implies that *the Armenian army is in poor shape, and thus Armenians should accept the situation and all Azerbaijani demands*. At the same time, he threatens that *if Armenia tries to restore its armed forces or get access to the new modern weapons, Azerbaijan will immediately launch a military offensive and destroy it.*²²

28. The Azerbaijani President goes on with generating animosity:

“We have defeated Armenian fascism, but it is not over yet. We will continue to wipe out all manifestations of Armenian fascism, and we can do that. But other countries and the international community must also be united on this issue. The destruction committed by Armenian fascism in the 21st century should be an example for everyone that fascism is fascism. Armenia’s patrons, the circles behind Armenia, must know, understand and appreciate our historical mission; they must understand whom we have destroyed. We have not only liberated our lands, but we have also cleansed the region, the South Caucasus, of these savage forces. I repeat that they are humiliated now, but no one can guarantee that they will not rise again. We will never allow Armenian fascism to rise in our region. We can never allow Armenia to become a

¹⁹ Available at: <https://en.president.az/articles/51216>

²⁰ Official Webpage of the President of Azerbaijan lays foundation of Fuzuli-Shusha road and airport in Fizuli region, visits Shusha (January 15, 2021), available at https://president.az/articles/50184?fbclid=IwAR0-NIZ5FIRtbMZEaHGEkhibz11G-Zf2MOWsEkaaXFqk_8BQJ5gy_b3Edw (the visit of January 27, 2021).

²¹ Available at: https://evnreport.com/politics/azerbaijans-war-of-narratives-against-armenians-part-i/?fbclid=IwAR2eHFS8R57RP_vnkmq-XY12yc7ICopvoRNVjgf-SRPxuVRIA3vrbTtFCzo

²² Available at: https://evnreport.com/politics/azerbaijans-war-of-narratives-against-armenians-part-i/?fbclid=IwAR2eHFS8R57RP_vnkmq-XY12yc7ICopvoRNVjgf-SRPxuVRIA3vrbTtFCzo

potential threat to Azerbaijan again. If we see that, we will destroy it on the spot. Everyone should know this."²³

29. And he continues:

*"Finally, we have crushed the head of the enemy with an "iron fist" and restored historical justice and national dignity. Therefore, these historical moments must always be on the agenda of diaspora organizations."*²⁴ *"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. Therefore, I think we need to get a clear answer from Armenia."*²⁵

30. The Azerbaijani state officials at the highest level have frequently been involved in fueling anti-Armenian xenophobia and hatred, glorifying murderers of Armenians.

31. An important example is the case of Ramil Safarov, a member of the Azerbaijani army, had brutally murdered an Armenian officer – Gurgen Margaryan – while he was asleep by decapitating him with sixteen blows of an axe on the night of February 19, 2004, in Budapest, Hungary²⁶. He was sentenced in Hungary, however, was given to Azerbaijan. Upon his arrival in 2012, Safarov was granted a hero's welcome and pardoned by the Azerbaijani president. He was promoted in rank and his salary was compensated for the years he had spent in the Hungarian prison. Other high-ranked state officials of Azerbaijan had also reinvigorated Rafarov's status as a national hero. The Ombudsman of Azerbaijan had expressed gratitude to the President of Azerbaijan for the efforts in extradition and pardoning of a criminal. Notably, Ms. Suleymanova had subsequently stated in 2004: "Safarov must become an example of patriotism for the Azerbaijani youth."²⁷

32. The opening of the Trophy Park in Baku is another clear evidence of Armenophobia, evidence of policy of racism and propaganda of animosity amounting to fascism. In the "Park", along with the Armenian military equipment, wax figures of the Armenian military servicemen have been displayed, all of which are presented in a degrading manner, a manner violating human dignity. This is made to ensure the widest possible publicity.

²³ Excerpts from the interview of the president of Azerbaijan to "AZERTAC" (31 January, 2022)
<https://president.az/en/articles/view/55326>

²⁴ Excerpts from the speech of the president at the 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shushi (22 April, 2022)
<https://president.az/en/articles/view/55326>

²⁵ Excerpts from the speech of the president at the military unit of Defense Ministry's Special Forces (16 June, 2022)
<https://president.az/en/articles/view/56458>

²⁶ Artsakh ombudsman: "Interim public report on atrocities committed by Azerbaijani military forces against the civilian population of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and servicemen of the Nagorno Karabakh Defence Army on 2-5 April 2016,
<https://artsakhombuds.am/ru/document/560>

²⁷ See the documented words available at: <https://artsakhombuds.am/hy/document/570>. These words are also documented in the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Makuchyan and Minasyan v. Azerbaijan and Hungary (Application no. 17247/13) delivered on 26 May, 2020. This case the court discusses as an ethnically based crime.

33. It is obvious from the published videos and photos of the “Park” that the exhibition was designed to increase and encourage hatred and animosity toward the population of Armenia and Artsakh, the citizens of Armenia. Exhibitions are created to publicly humiliate the memory of the victims of the war and the rights of missing persons and captives and violate the rights and dignity of their families. The “Park” again reveals that Azerbaijan’s State-sponsored indoctrination of hatred of Armenians in the next generation of Azerbaijanis is having its intended effect.

34. Immediately after the war the Ministry of Transport, Communication and High Technologies of Azerbaijan issued “Azerbaijan 2020” postage stamps, which constitute open propaganda of the extermination of the Armenians of Artsakh. In the stamp, a man in a medical uniform chemically disinfects Artsakh from Armenians with a special tool, openly presenting them as “dirt”.

35. The state-sponsored nature of hatred and animosity propaganda against Armenians has recently taken extremist forms being directed at ‘othering’ Armenians as ‘lesser’ human beings. Thus, by openly inciting animosity between the peoples of the 2 countries, and openly encouraging and glorifying any crimes against Armenians over the recent 30 years, Azerbaijani authorities have intentionally disrupted and continue to disrupt perspectives for peace and security in the region.

36. This deeply rooted phenomenon which goes against the foundations of democracy and human rights requires fundamental safeguards to properly ensure human rights protection of the population in Armenia. This also had its influence on other areas of the country’s life (sport, culture, etc.), which is obvious from speeches and interviews of public and influential figures.

37. During the 2020 September-November war, the PR and media manager of the Azerbaijani football club “Qarabag”, Nurlan Ibrahimov, stated that **“We must kill Armenians. No matter whether a woman, a child, or an old man. We must kill everyone we can and whoever happens. We should not feel sorry; we should not feel pity. If we do not kill (them), our children will be killed.”** This person confirmed and justified the fact of the Armenian genocide committed by Turkey.²⁸

38. It covers not only written communication but also any other form of expression such as surveys, and polls that encourage killings and cruel treatment of Armenian children.

39. These polls are organized with exceptional cynicism and intention of incitement to hatred. This is clearly confirmed by the attachments to this report.

²⁸ FFA demands to exclude FK Qarabag from European club competitions <https://www.ffa.am/en/1604159474/page/3>

40. Hate speech and calls for violence are a gross violation of a child's rights and absolute ignorance of fundamental requirements of international law. It can have irreversible and even tragic consequences for a child's life and health, completely undermining his healthy development. Using children for such illegal purposes is absolutely unacceptable.

41. As a matter of great concern, such practices continued after the war. In 2021, Azerbaijani armed servicemen in masks illegally stopped a civilian bus that was transporting children with the purpose of intimidating them.

42. The children who had been travelling on the road of Vorotan²⁹ are from Artsakh (football players aged 15-16 years). The Azerbaijani servicemen examined the cellphones of children, under the pretext of finding certain video recordings of unknown nature. While having the bus restrained, the border guards demonstratively scrapped an image of the flag of the Republic of Artsakh off the back of it.³⁰

43. A video capturing the detainment of the bus and its passengers was disseminated on Azerbaijani social media pages. Commentators and discussions denoted vile insults toward the children, calls for the killings of Armenians – an embodiment of the general sentiments perpetuated by the state.

During the recent escalation of the border situation on November 16th, a popular Azerbaijani-based telegram channel called its subscribers for a telephone terror campaign against Armenian citizens. The post had included instructions on how to make calls to random Armenian citizens and intimidate them with the message of 'approaching Azerbaijani forces' in order to blackmail residents of border communities to leave their homes³¹.

44. Studies have revealed that Armenophobia in Azerbaijan is deeply enshrined in the educational process through which Azerbaijani children are instilled with hatred of the Armenian people since early childhood.

45. Textbook of History of Azerbaijan, 9th Grade (2016): "(...) The main aim of the party was the defense of our people from the *Armenian terrorism*. The party mercilessly avenged *the Armenian terrorists and their patrons*"³².

46. Textbook of History of Azerbaijan, 9th Grade (2016): "(...) *How could the Armenians, who did not have a state in the South Caucasus, create it? What other lands did the Armenians lay claim to? The creation of the Republic of Armenia on the Azerbaijani lands. From the first day of its creation, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic faced the groundless territorial claims of the Republic of Armenia. 'The Armenian problem' had a special place among the countless problems the young republic was to solve. The Armenians' territorial appetite grew bigger*

²⁹ This road is currently unlawfully blocked by the Azerbaijani armed servicemen.

³⁰ Available at: https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/VideoGalleryView/595

³¹ Original post available at: https://t.me/bez_mas/10318

³² Textbook of History of Azerbaijan (page 140) is available at: http://azerichild.education/pdf/history_9-2016.pdf

each day and was accompanied by destruction of Azerbaijani villages and the extermination of the Muslim Turkic population. The government of Azerbaijan took up all the possible measures to stop this."³³

47. Textbook of Cognition of the World, 7th Grade (2014): "(...) As the Armenian armed formations were seizing our lands, they were destroying the historical and cultural monuments there. Hundreds of historical monuments and museums were ruined as a result of the occupation. This process is still going on today."³⁴

48. In another example, referring to "infidels in black clothes," a fifth-grade textbook speaks of Armenians as the source of most of the calamities that have befallen Azerbaijanis throughout history.

49. A widely disseminated video shows a group of kindergarteners who are asked "who is our enemy?" and together they shout: "Armenians."³⁵

³³ Textbook of History of Azerbaijan (page 19-192) is available at: http://azerichild.education/pdf/history_9-2016.pdf

³⁴ Textbook of Cognition of the World (page 76) is available at: <http://azerichild.education/pdf/poznanie-mira-7.pdf>

³⁵ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g56wAbY-fg>

III. INCITEMENT OF RELIGIOUS HATRED TOWARDS ARMENIANS

50. A relatively new trend of hate speech amongst Azerbaijani state actors has been attempting to create animosity between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan in the religious realm. These efforts have been aggravated as a consequence of the 2020 September-November war. While violating the religious rights of Armenians, Azerbaijani public figures have been victim-blaming while unwarrantedly accusing the Republic of Armenia and its citizens of Islamophobia.

51. For example, Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh stated: ***“When the Armenians became stronger, they did not manipulate the Christian-Armenian factor. Tens of thousands of our sanctuaries and mosques have been destroyed in the occupied territories. They have tried to change the nature of the Christian Orthodox Church.”***³⁶ Back in 2008, being a highly regarded religious authority not only in Azerbaijan but also in the Caucasian region and the Islamic community in general, Pashazadeh had made another statement: ***“Falsehood and betrayal are in the Armenian blood”***³⁷.

52. *“For nearly thirty years we had been living with our heads drooped... I had announced to our President that I was prepared to go to the frontlines with weapons in my hands to fight for our land. I knew that thousands of people stood behind my words, thousands were capable of bearing arms, were prepared to destroy the Armeno-fascist abomination, wipe it from the face of the earth.”* stated Azerbaijani national writer, Natig Rusalzade speaking of his address to the President of Azerbaijan during the 2020 Artsakh War.³⁸

53. In the meantime, during and after the 2020 September-November war Azerbaijani Armed servicemen had vandalized and desecrated Armenian cultural and religious heritage sites, including churches, tombs and khachkars amongst others – a fact that is supported by the recent ICJ decision on the case against the Republic of Azerbaijan³⁹.

54. For example, as a consequence of the war of 2020, the Zoravor Surb Astvatsatsin Armenian Church in the Mekhakavan community was completely destroyed after it came under Azerbaijani control. The destruction of the church is confirmed by a publication from BBC World News (Nagorno Karabakh: The mystery of the missing church)⁴⁰.

³⁶ Available at: <https://apa.az/az/xeber/dini-xeberler/Allahsukur-Pasazad-Gec-yarisi-usaqlari-mulki-insanlari-oldurmk-ermnilrin-xisltidir-610651> (16 October 2020)

³⁷ Available at: <http://www.today.az/news/society/46565.html>

³⁸ Available at: <https://www.trend.az/life/socium/3490101.html>

³⁹ Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/180/180-20211207-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf>

⁴⁰ Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-56517835>

55. On 8 October 2020, the Azerbaijani armed forces launched two intentional attacks at the Holy Savior Ghazanchetsots Cathedral of Artsakh(Shushi). The Cathedral is one of Artsakh's most recognizable cultural and religious symbols. Azerbaijani forces had struck the cathedral two times within a few hours with the use of striking and manageable drones. This act of Azerbaijani forces is in line with its continuous practice of destroying Armenian cultural heritage sites in Artsakh. It also demonstrates radical disrespect toward the Christian element of Armenian identity⁴¹.

56. Furthermore, on May 3, a photo was published in social media showing the removed dome of the Holy Savior Ghazanchetsots Cathedral of Artsakh. Other parts of the 19th-century cathedral have been covered in scaffolding.⁴²

57. Shortly after Shushi was taken under control by Azerbaijan, images and a video of the partially destroyed 19th-century church of Saint John the Baptist in Shushi (AKA, Kanach Zham) circulated on social media showing severe destruction to the dome and the bell tower.

58. Other damaged monuments in the post-war period include monuments devoted to the victims of the Great Patriotic War in the villages of Avetaranots, Askeran district and Talish, Mardakert district, the Armenian cross-stone in the village of Arakel, Hadrut district of Artsakh.⁴³

59. In another case, the Azerbaijani military is documented to be cynically dishonouring and vandalizing the Armenian church of St. Yeghishe in the Mataghis region of Artsakh (built in the 19th century).

60. They openly and deliberately insult the church, while knowing all too well that the church is Armenian. In the video, after entering the church they say the following: ***“This belongs to the Armenians, everything here belongs to the Armenians, we have torn it.”***⁴⁴

61. The policy of Armenophobia of the Azerbaijani authorities has received another manifestation based on religious affiliation. For example, in one case during the 2020 September-November war, Azerbaijani servicemen demanded that an Armenian serviceman renounce Christianity and convert to Islam, that is, to change his faith. After the Armenian soldier refused to obey, his legs were burned, and he was severely beaten and humiliated. We have not recorded a case like this before.

⁴¹ Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2759201674324006>

⁴² Available at: <https://en.armradio.am/2021/05/03/azerbaijan-distorting-ghazanchetsots-cathedral-under-the-guise-of-restoration-artsakh-ombudsman/>

⁴³ See Transparency International Anticorruption Center's Report on Xenophobia in Azerbaijan (28 February 2021), available at: <https://transparency.am/files/publications/1614692840-0-341815.pdf?v=4>

⁴⁴ https://www.ombuds.am/en_us/site/VideoGalleryView/520

62. In another case, Azerbaijani servicemen burned a part of the body of a captured Armenian serviceman with a lighter, on which they noticed a tattoo in the form of a cross and severely beat him. Crosses which were with the Armenian servicemen were either taken or destroyed. When the Armenian captives demanded the crosses back, they were severely beaten and humiliated, and the religion was mocked. These cases are a direct consequence of the policy of Armenophobia and enmity of the Azerbaijani authorities towards the Armenians, causing religious hatred.

63. After the September-November 2020 war, cultural heritage appeared under the control of Azerbaijan. Many of them face the imminent danger of destruction and distortion. “Monument watch” reports that on March 29, 2021, a video was posted where it can be seen that the church is used for military purposes. Azerbaijani soldiers live right inside the church. The footage shows soldiers eating, and a bed and other similar items can be seen in the video.⁴⁵ Together with this, “Caucasus Heritage Watch” documented the destruction of an 18-19th c. Armenian church (St. Sargis) in Mokhrenes village, Hadrut region of Nagorno Karabakh. Satellite imagery shows that St. Sargis was destroyed between March and July 2022.⁴⁶

64. There is enough evidence gathered by the monitoring activities of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, to demonstrate that in the videos depicting Azerbaijani atrocities toward Armenians, there are numerous occasions where the Azerbaijani servicemen are acting out of anti-Armenian religious fanaticism. For example, the crosses carried by several groups of Armenian captives were removed and destroyed by their captors in front of their eyes. All the evidence proves that the religious rights of captives were also violated.⁴⁷

65. One of the Armenian POWs who had been returned in 2021 had attested how he was being tortured and humiliated on religious grounds. In an attempt to subject him to a forced religious conversion, the captives had burnt his leg and continuously tortured the returnee. The current context of hate and animosity spread by the officials in Azerbaijan eliminates all real prospects for demilitarization and a peaceful resolution.⁴⁸

66. In addition to the state-fueled acts of violence and religious intolerance by the Azerbaijani state, the government is attempting to deflect their rhetoric by constantly blaming the Armenian side for instigating racial and

⁴⁵ Available at: <https://monumentwatch.org/hy/alerts/%d5%af%d5%a1%d5%bf%d5%a1%d6%80%d5%b8-%d5%be%d5%a1%d5%b6%d6%84%d5%ab-%d5%a5%d5%af%d5%a5%d5%b2%d5%a5%d6%81%d5%b8%d6%82-%d6%85%d5%a3%d5%bf%d5%a1%d5%a3%d5%b8%d6%80%d5%ae%d5%b8%d6%82%d5%b4%d5%a8-%d5%bc/>

⁴⁶ Available at: <https://twitter.com/CaucasusHW/status/1569384694596222976>

⁴⁷ Available at : https://ombuds.am/images/files/3101f60c869b0f378dbc737b002e5054.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3BPWvKOIreGmQ7r_eVZbgKR3-F1MiP0JbxIXni-JJcA_KGKVjA9H71M3g#page50

⁴⁸ Available at : https://ombuds.am/images/files/3101f60c869b0f378dbc737b002e5054.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3BPWvKOIreGmQ7r_eVZbgKR3-F1MiP0JbxIXni-JJcA_KGKVjA9H71M3g#page50

religious hatred toward Azerbaijanis – actions similar to the one that the Azerbaijani government had undertaken during the 2020 Artsakh war.

67. Thus, the above-presented examples demonstrate that while pursuing the internal politics of hatred toward Armenians, such policies have been replicated on the international stage.

68. The actions of Azerbaijani officials, conveying messages of hatred and discrimination against Armenians, have spilt over into affecting the internal well-being of nations across the world.

69. These mentioned policies of Azerbaijani are full of dangers of perpetuating hostility not only for the people of the two countries but also for the countries where Armenians and Azerbaijanis live which is in stark contrast to the foundations of peace, human rights and democracy pursued by the international civilized community.

IV. AZERBAIJANI HATRED POLICY TOWARDS ARMENIANS AS AN CONTINUOUS ROOT CAUSE OF WAR CRIMES BY AZERBAIJANI MILITARY FORCES

70. On September 13, 2022, at around 12:05 am, the Azerbaijani Armed forces launched large-scale military aggression against Armenia. Civilian communities and the peaceful population were also targeted. Azerbaijan used artillery and large-scale firearms, military drones (unmanned aerial vehicles - UAVs) to attack military positions and communities of Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik provinces. These included Kapan, Goris, Qarashen, Verishen, Khnatsakh, Kornidzor, Khoznavar, Ishkhanasar, Tchakaten, Nerqin Hand, Tsav, Davit Bek, Artanish, Srashen towns and villages in Syunik province; Vardenis, Sotk, Norabak, Kut, Geghamasar communities in Gegharkunik province; Jermuk, Noravan communities in Vayots Dzor province, etc.

71. Azerbaijan's military attacks against Armenia's peaceful communities were from places where the sovereign territory of Armenia was invaded. In other words, the places and roads of Syunik and Gegharkunik, they invaded and illegally deployed since May 2021. For example, the Gegharkunik villages Sotk, Norabak, Kut were under targeted attacks: from schools to civilian houses.

72. Peaceful communities of Syunik, Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor were attacked also from Azerbaijani positions unlawfully (criminal by nature) located on the Syunik Kapan-Tshakaten road, in the vicinity of villages of the Sev (Black) Lake area of Syunik, as well as areas near Sotk-Verin Shorzha villages of Gegharkunik.

73. Azerbaijani armed locations in the vicinity of Armenian villages or on the roads are themselves threats to lives and security of people, a threat to our communities, and the entire country. It should be specifically highlighted that:

74. At the beginning, shelling was especially heavy against the Gegharkunik province villages (Sotk, Kut, Norabak, etc.). On the next day (September 14 2022), Azerbaijani military expended geography of its shelling targeting new villages (Airk, Kutakan, etc.). Villages of the Syunik province also were under attack – Nerkin Hand was especially targeted. Shelling was focused on the civilian communities during both nights and days. Some community administrative buildings also became under heavy shelling (e.g. Sotk).

75. Targeted shelling resulted in destruction of plenty of civilian infrastructures, civilian buildings and houses, civilian hospitals, gas pipelines, etc. For example, only in village Sotk more than 200 houses were destroyed. Syunik Verishen village was also heavily bombed. School building were also targeted (Sotk, village). Gas supply pipelines were damaged in Sotk (Gegharkunik), Vaghatur and Tegh (Syunik) communities.

76. For example, monitoring and fact-finding missions revealed that the house of a peaceful resident of Armenia's Syunik province Verishen village was destroyed by the Azerbaijani targeted armed attack this night. Azerbaijan hit the village with rockets at 01:20 at night (September 13). As the owner of the house claimed, 1 rocket hit the house directly, and 2 rockets fell directly next to the house. At the time of the attack, the residents were at home and survived only by a miracle.⁴⁹

77. Facts confirm that there is no military unit or establishment is within kilometers of the house. This is an obvious war crime committed to kill people and destroy the civilian community.

78. Sotk village is one of the Armenian villages mostly subjected to Azerbaijani aggressive attacks since this night. The village was subjected to aggressive attacks throughout the day on 13 September 2022. According to residents, the maximum break (cease-fire) was up to 2-3 hours.

79. People had to live their cattle, most of them were either killed or stolen by the Azerbaijani military. For example, according to media publications based on civilians' statements, Azerbaijani soldiers stole 6,000 sheep from Jermuk community. Many people are deprived of possibilities to earn income for their families and to harvest results agriculture works.

80. Since the attacks started after midnight civilians were at their houses and apartments, in most cases sleeping. Children and persons with disabilities were especially vulnerable and subjected to real danger for their lives.

81. Civilians had to leave their houses during the night, with no possibilities to take anything with them for their urgent needs.

82. The Azerbaijani military also targeted roads by this not allowing civilians to use them. Thus, by these actions Azerbaijani military created real danger for lives of the civilian population immediately after the start of the aggression: on one hand, bombing civilian communities and on the other hand, roads not allowing movement of civilians (e.g. the road Kapan-Tshakaten in Syunik or the road Sotk-Yerevan in Gegharkunik). They targeted several times ambulance vehicles on the Kapan-Tshakaten Road including from sniper shots. Shootings were carried out from the locations where Azerbaijani military appeared after the end of the 44-day war through threats to destroy civilian communities. These locations have caused humanitarian and human rights serious problems to the civilian communities that are connected with the city of Kapan through this road.

83. Thousands of people (including, more than thousand children) had to leave their communities; they were deprived of their houses and became displaced. This war also resulted in casualties in the civilian population; many soldiers were killed and wounded.

⁴⁹ Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/100017676420633/videos/5566328340092700>

84. These 3-day military aggression launched by Azerbaijan again resulted in torture and severe ill-treatment of Armenian military servicemen by the Azerbaijani soldiers, including special services. 4 female soldiers were tortured and killed. Azerbaijani soldiers, as usually, filmed all torture cases and published them via social media.
85. For example, in one video, an Armenian female soldier was stripped and tortured, mutilated to death.
86. Then Azerbaijani soldiers marked the name of the Azerbaijani special forces – "YAŞMA" or "YASHMA" – on the tortured body of the same Armenian woman and the crimes committed by them.
87. In the same video, they mention in Azerbaijani that they killed 2 more Armenian female soldiers and show the tortured body of one of them in nude. The details of both this and other cases are not presented in this publication, they will be presented to the relevant international institutions.
88. In another video, Azerbaijani soldiers brutally killed another Armenian female soldier (a medical nurse), then filmed her tortured naked body and published the video through Telegram and other social media channels.
89. We have also documented that the photos of torture of Armenians were prepared as emojis and spread through Telegram channels (119 photos). The monitoring shows that these emojis were downloaded by about 20,000 Azerbaijani users within only 5 days.
90. These brutalities were filmed and purposely published through Azerbaijani social media channels so that these videos would spread in the Armenian domain in order to terrorize people.
91. More than 10 soldiers (numbers are to be confirmed) were taken as prisoners of war. Azerbaijani soldiers published videos where they torture Armenian PoWs.

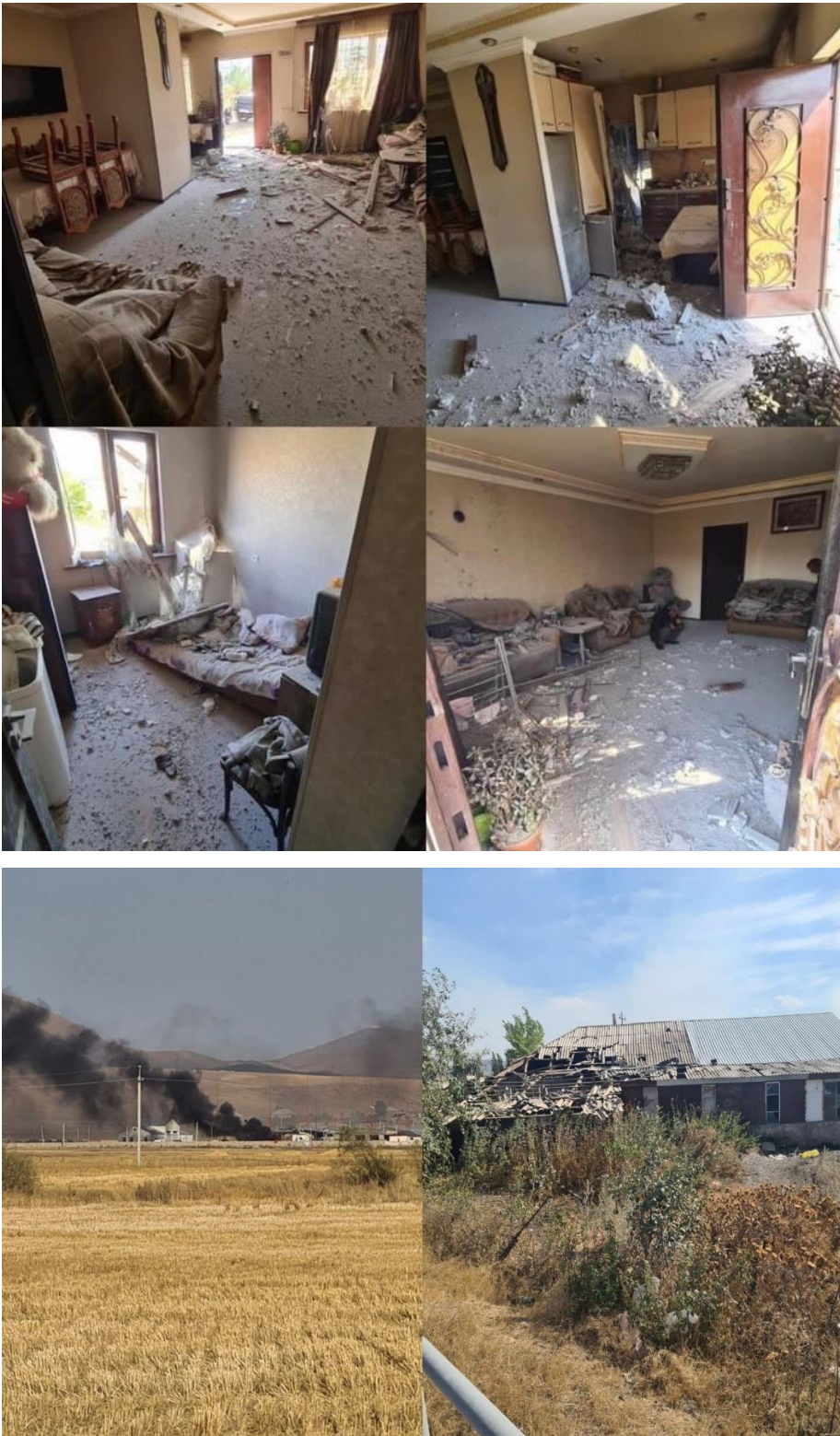


Photo examples of destroyed houses in an Armenian village.

92. These heinous acts are the result of impunity for Azerbaijani war crimes, a consequence of their genocidal policy. It is clear that Azerbaijan was creating artificial grounds to attack under the guise of false peace. Not only did they never stop sponsoring enmity and hatred toward Armenians, but also they deepened it.

At the end of the report, it should be highlighted:

The policy of ethnic hatred toward Armenians and the spread of Armenophobia is the source of ongoing human rights violations in the communities neighboring Azerbaijan and in the territories occupied and controlled by the Azerbaijani military. Their unlawful presence and criminal behavior provoke ongoing escalations that result in the lack of hope, fear, and humiliation of the peaceful population in Armenia and Artsakh. Moreover, this situation makes the life of civilians impossible in terms of enjoying their rights without risks. The families simply lack the opportunity of the right to life and security, possessing their property; their children do not get education, and the life of soldiers and civilians are being targeted by periodic armed attacks.

The Azerbaijani government intends to deceive the international community into believing that they have peaceful minds and fair purposes. But the official Baku's public statements regarding stability and integrity between Armenians and Azerbaijanis are simply empty words. The true intent of the Azerbaijani government is concealed under the shadow of fake peace-building.

This situation of supporting the Azerbaijani government in forwarding their evil intentions towards the peaceful population of Armenia and Artsakh, and the Armenians, in general.

Therefore, the Armenophobia policy in Azerbaijan is a political tool in the hands of the government, and such behavior will never vanish on its own. It has a clear genocidal nature based on ethnic and religious grounds. This policy is the same for all Armenians of the world, first and foremost targeting Armenia and Artsakh.

Apart from this, it has to be also mentioned that the atrocities committed against Armenians by the Azerbaijani military are not separate crimes from each other, but the consequences of the unified state policy of hatred of the Azerbaijani authorities. Those are the links of a single chain. The torturers even use the same expressions as the Azerbaijani officials. Not only didn't this policy stop, but it has deepened, reaching outright fascism. And all of this is encouraged by absolute impunity for these vicious crimes.

