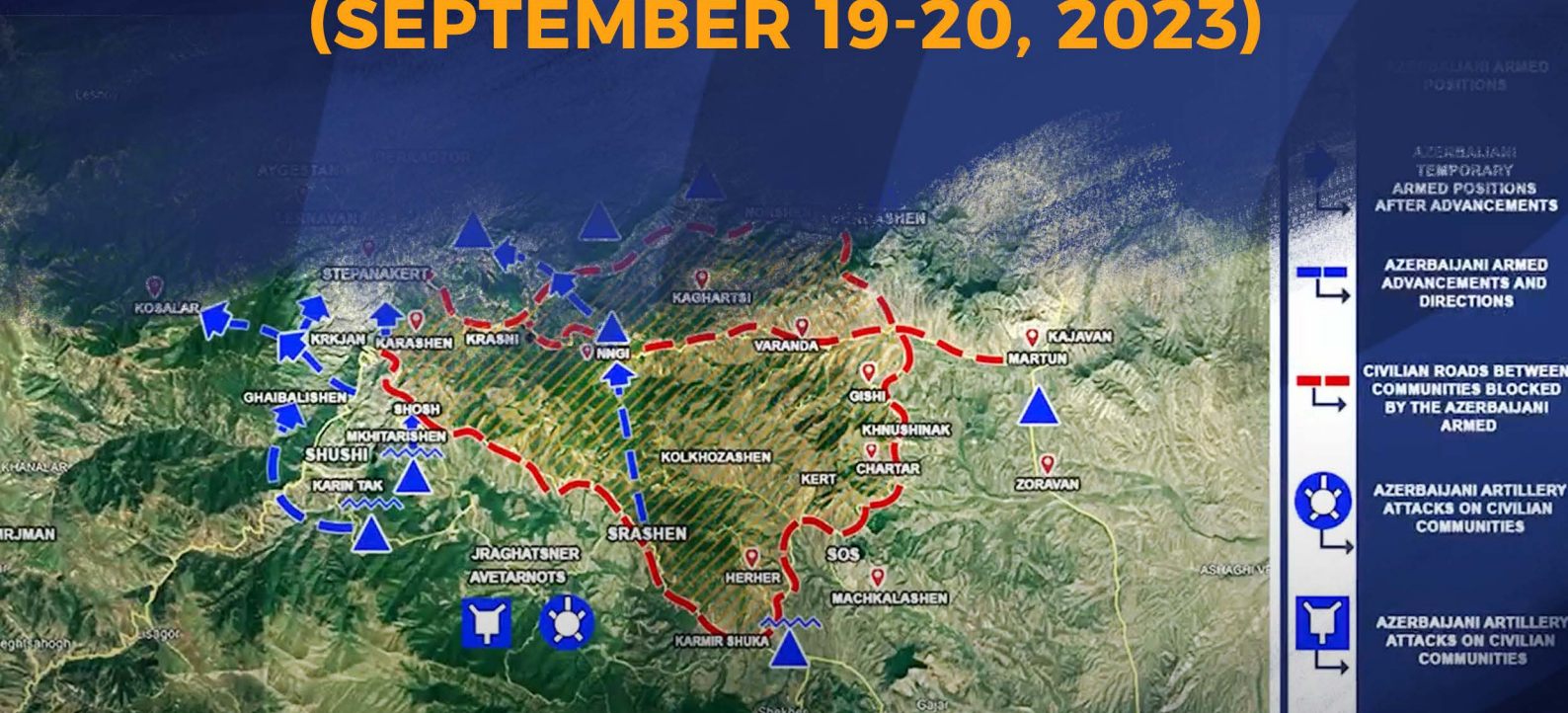




# REPORT

## TACTICS OF THE AZERBAIJANI ARMED ATTACKS ON ARTSAKH (NAGORNO KARABAKH) AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT OF ARMENIANS FROM ARTSAKH (SEPTEMBER 19-20, 2023)



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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1. This report presents findings from fact-finding missions and research conducted by the “Center for Law and Justice Tatoyan” Foundation<sup>1</sup> in locations where individuals displaced from Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) were resettled in the Republic of Armenia from September 2023 onward, following Azerbaijani armed attacks started on 19 September and a significant influx of displacement. These efforts included extensive engagement with displaced individuals, former authorities of Artsakh through meetings, interviews, and data collection. Joint fact-finding activities were carried out in cooperation with Mr. Gegham Stepanyan, the Human Rights Defender of Artsakh. Furthermore, a meticulous analysis of digitally sourced evidence was conducted. The data gathered from these various sources underwent rigorous examination and verification as part of the Foundation's fact-finding process.
2. This report presents facts regarding special tactics and directions of Azerbaijani armed attacks on civilian populations, infrastructures, and human rights violations, including war crimes committed against the Armenians of Artsakh, both in villages and cities. These tactics and directions were aimed at isolation of exhausted people and spreading fears in communities, forcing them to leave their houses.
3. **The fact-finding missions and the analyses mentioned above, as well as this report were prepared in the framework of institutional, financial and expert cooperation with the Center for Law and Justice “Tatoyan” Foundation USA Office. Professional analyses were conducted with the support of international lawyer Mr. Karnig Kerkonian and international criminal defense attorney Mr. Garo Ghazarian.**
4. **The Foundation expresses its deep gratitude to Mr. Jack (Hagop) Youredjian, a philanthropist and the founder, long-time CEO, and current Chairman of**

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<sup>1</sup> Hereinafter: Foundation.

**Western Drug/Lifeair, for his support in enabling the Foundation to conduct fact-finding activities and prepare the current report.**

5. The Foundation and its partners systematically sought informed and specific consent of all interviewees to use and/or share the information given, ensuring confidentiality as needed. The consent of every person interviewed and any conditions attached to it were recorded in the database, as were any potential protection risks.
6. The Foundation used all of the information to conduct an evidence-based analysis, while meticulously assessing the credibility and reliability of the sources. Of these sources, it gave particular weight to first-hand testimonies. Factual determinations under this standard were based on at least one credible primary source of information, substantiated independently by one or more additional credible sources.
7. The Foundation also considered the information's relevance to the fact-finding activities, its internal consistency and coherence, and its consistency with and corroboration by other information, among other factors.

## **2. BACKGROUND: AZERBAIJANI MILITARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST ARTSAKH (NAGORNO KARABAKH) IN SEPTEMBER 2023**

On December 12, 2022, at around 10:30 am (GMT+4), a group of Azerbaijanis in civilian clothes, presenting themselves as alleged “environmental activists” blocked the only road, Goris – Stepanakert Highway, which passes through the Lachin (Berdzor) corridor connecting Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) with Armenia and the outside world. The so-called “eco-protest” with documented participation of the Azerbaijani state sponsored special-services agents is clearly orchestrated by the Azerbaijani government<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the ongoing blockade has physically obstructed Artsakh's only lifeline, leaving its entire population in a state of total isolation, facing massive violations of fundamental human rights, as well as multifaceted existential and security threats. Thus, for almost 10 months, 120,000 people, including 30,000 children, have found themselves in a complete blockade with no access to basic necessities, essential goods, services, medication, foodstuffs, fuel, and, most importantly, no right to move in and out of Artsakh freely.

Along with the ongoing blockade of the Lachin corridor, Azerbaijan has also deliberately disrupted the operation of the most critical infrastructure of Artsakh with the aim to further aggravate the already dire humanitarian crisis and cause excessive suffering to the Artsakh population. As a result, 120 000 Armenians, including 30 000 children among them were subject to genocide through starvation<sup>3</sup>. People especially children, pregnant women, and the elderly were facing severe healthcare problems due to malnutrition. Artsakh was lacking the most essential foodstuffs and vitally important products. Against this backdrop, Azerbaijani authorities deliberately proposed replacing

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<sup>2</sup> See, “The Azerbaijani government’s “eco-activist” agents who blockaded the only road of life connecting Artsakh to Armenia and the outside world” report, Center for Law and Justice “Tatoyan” Foundation and Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh. Available at: [https://tatoyanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ECO\\_ACTIVISTS.pdf](https://tatoyanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ECO_ACTIVISTS.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See, “Children of Artsakh in Azerbaijani blockade: inflicting sufferings by ethnic cleansing (evidence-based analysis)” joint report of the Center for Law and Justice “Tatoyan” Foundation and Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh. Available at: [https://tatoyanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Childrens-rights\\_-report.pdf](https://tatoyanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Childrens-rights_-report.pdf)

the Berdzor (Lachin) road with an Akna (Aghdam) road, without any intention to open the Lachin Corridor.

On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan launched a military offensive against Artsakh. Following a series of airstrikes, drone assaults, and extensive shelling of civilian communities, including schools and kindergartens, the terrified Armenians of Artsakh were kept hostage within the enclave, unable to escape from the control of the Azerbaijani military. There were reports of torture, casualties among women and children, etc. With no food, mobile connection, fuel, electricity, and gas, villages completely lost connection with the capital city Stepanakert.

The attacks against Artsakh were part of Azerbaijan's deliberate criminal policy and were aimed at the forced displacement and annihilation of Artsakh Armenians. The Azerbaijani armed forces targeted the civilian population and the civilian infrastructures. These attacks began while children were in schools or kindergartens.

Thousands of people were reported missing in Artsakh. Due to communication breakdowns, determining their fates - whether they were alive or deceased - was particularly challenging. Many families were separated, with parents unable to find their children and vice versa, and siblings separated from each other. Residential areas were isolated from one another, leaving people whereabouts uncertain. Furthermore, the lack of essential supplies such as food, communication, electricity, gas, and medicine exacerbated the population's suffering.

Tens of thousands of civilians were forcibly displaced from their homes and communities after nearly 10 months of blockade. The exhausted population of Artsakh, stripped of all belongings and homes, without access to communication, electricity, or gas, endured days and nights under constant fire, seeking refuge in streets and basements.

After enduring this 10-month blockade, these actions can only be described as genocide against 120,000 ethnic Armenians of Artsakh committed in September 2023. This represents a deliberate policy by Azerbaijani authorities and constitutes a series of criminal acts in a coordinated campaign (See the evidence "Picture 1").

From the 2020 [44-day war] until September 2023, approximately 150,000 Armenians were forcibly displaced from Artsakh as a result of Azerbaijani massive armed attacks, numerous cases of unpunished torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, humiliations, and other war crimes and crimes against humanity. These crimes derive directly from years of anti-Armenian racist and xenophobic policies by Azerbaijani authorities.

### **3. THE ISOLATION AND DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNITIES IN ARTSAKH (NAGORNO KARABAKH) AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT OF THE ARMENIAN POPULATION AS A RESULT OF THE AZERBAIJANI ARMED ATTACKS ON ARTSAKH**

The fact-finding missions of the Center for Law and Justice “Tatoyan” Foundation revealed the main directions of the Azerbaijani military attacks on Artsakh. The newly detected and verified facts prove the objectives behind the military actions of Azerbaijan, the racial discrimination and xenophobic policies of the Azerbaijani authorities in depopulating Artsakh, and forcing people to leave their homeland. These verified facts were collected in close collaboration with relevant military personnel of the Defense Army of Artsakh<sup>4</sup>.

The evidence presented in this report through maps prove that Azerbaijani authorities intentionally executed the ethnic cleansing of the Armenians under the conditions of the ongoing Azerbaijani racist and xenophobic policies rooted in hatred of Armenian ethnic identity. This deep hatred towards the Armenian ethnic identity has been sponsored by the Azerbaijani authorities for years, resulting in impunity for Azerbaijani atrocities against Armenians.

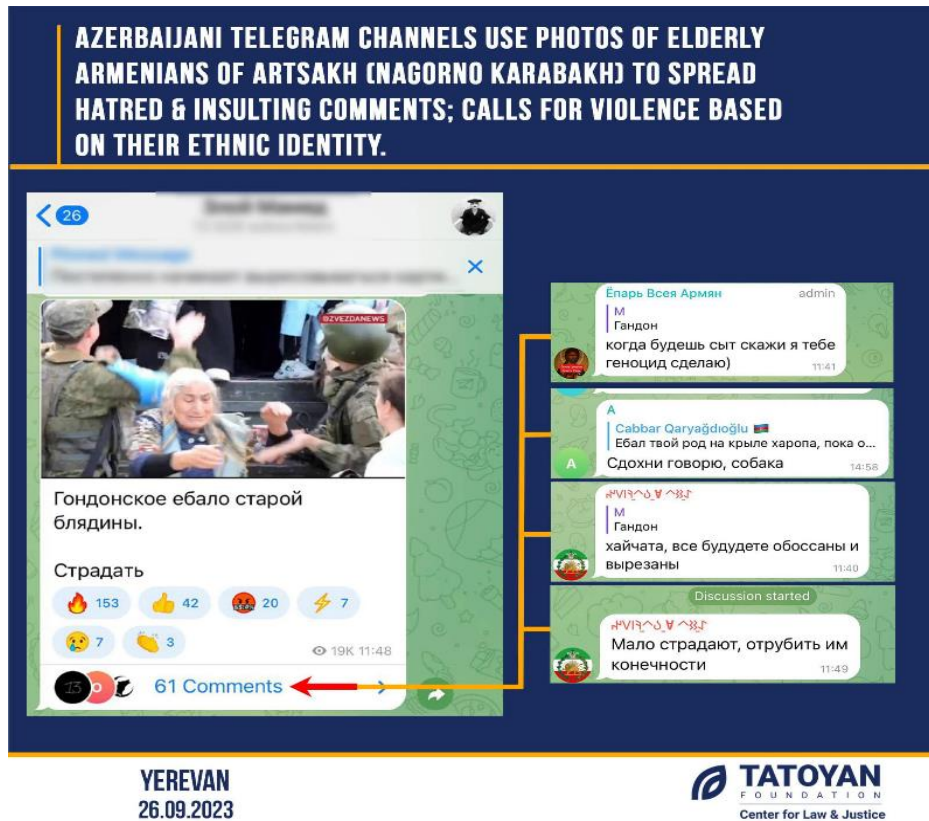
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<sup>4</sup> As mentioned in the beginning of this report, the collection and analysis of the facts presented in this chapter are independent of the project conducted with the assistance of Caritas Armenia, specifically the “Emergency Assistance to People Forcefully Displaced from Nagorno Karabakh” project funded by Caritas Spain through the “Armenian Caritas” Benevolent NGO (<https://caritas.am/>). However, the Foundation has chosen to include these facts in the report because the details of Azerbaijani armed attacks are crucial for the completeness of the analyses and findings of this report.



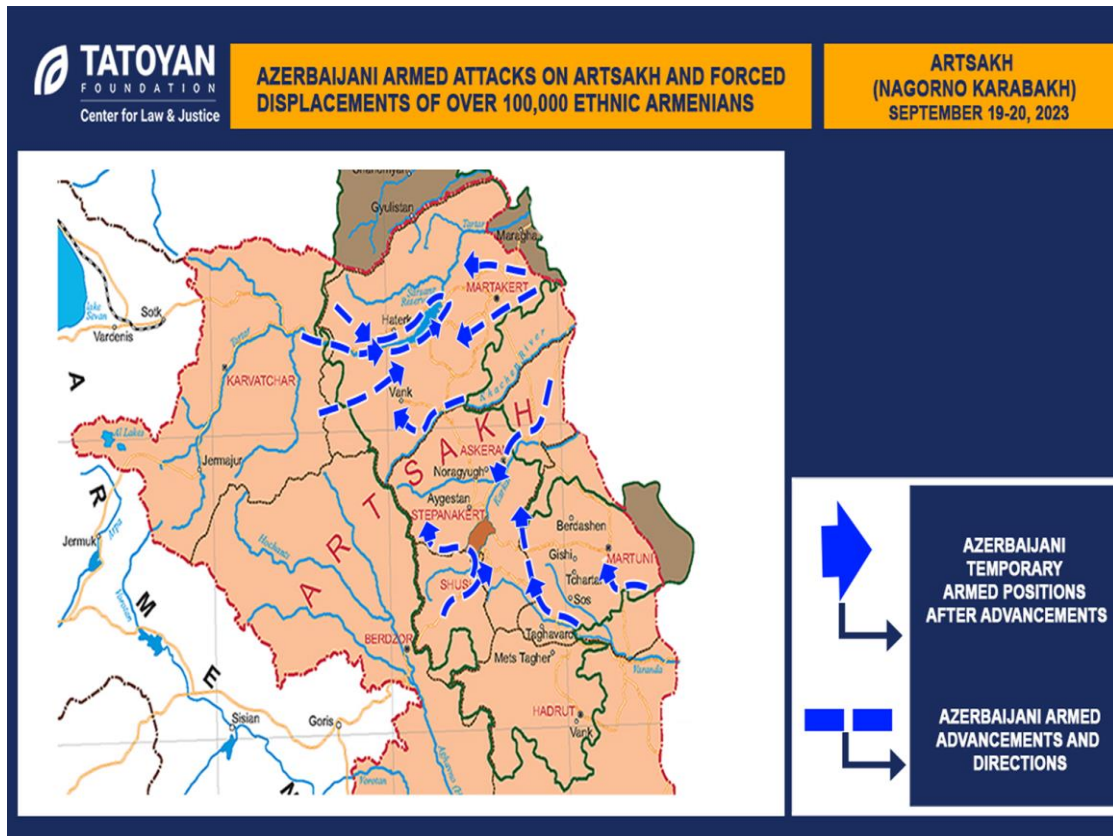


**“Picture 2”:** Azerbaijani telegram channels use photos of elderly Armenians of Artsakh to spread hatred and insulting comments; calls for violence based on their ethnic identity



The facts that the Foundation’s fact-finding mission collected clearly prove that the Azerbaijani armed forces isolated Artsakh’s major communities: Stepanakert, Martakert, Martuni, and Askeran from each other. Azerbaijani forces carried out armed attacks in four directions, as presented in "Picture 3".

**“Picture 3”:** Azerbaijani armed attacks on Artsakh and forced displacements of over 100,000 ethnic Armenians only in September 2023



With evidence, the maps distinctly depict (see “Picture 3) the directions of the Azerbaijani military operations in Artsakh on September 19-20, 2023, and the forced displacement of the Armenians of Artsakh.

On September 19, 2023, at 1:00 p.m., the Azerbaijani armed forces launched a large-scale military attack against Artsakh. They initiated the military operations at 1 p.m., when children were in schools and kindergartens, and adults were at their workplaces, which highlights a calculated intention to derail routine. Thousands of people lost contact with their families because of this strategy. In this manner, the Azerbaijani authorities intentionally inflicted panic and created a highly chaotic situation. Moreover, the facts prove how the Azerbaijani aggressors targeted civil infrastructures that hold vital importance for people. For example, they immediately

seized the water supply system of Stepanakert city, obstructing the filtration of drinking water and forcing the people to drink cloudy water.

Collected facts from September 19 and onwards present that the Azerbaijani side also targeted the communities with artillery and air strikes, which resulted in two dozen victims and hundreds of wounded civilians (Stepanakert, Sarnaghbyur, Vardadzor villages, etc.). There were cases of civilian killings, as mentioned above. For example, on the road from Stepanakert to Harav village, a grandfather was killed in a civilian car on his way to find his grandson.

This evidence substantiates that the communities of Artsakh were isolated through a pre-planned mechanism to inflict physical pain and emotional panic in Artsakh. This was also done to cover up the traces of crimes.

Hence, through military operations, the Azerbaijani armed forces cut the connection between cities and villages in Artsakh. Azerbaijan preyed on the lack of communication, fuel, and transport, exploiting the cover of night to target and bomb peaceful residential communities such as Stepanakert, Martuni, etc. The deliberate targeting of civilians, including pregnant women, children, and the elderly, exacerbated the loss of life and destruction of residential communities. The Azerbaijani government deliberately escalated the humanitarian crisis in this criminal style.

### ➤ 3.1 The direction of military operations in the Martakert region

The Azerbaijani armed forces launched attacks in the Martakert<sup>5</sup> region in the following three main directions:

1. The first direction was from ***Dadivank to Charektar, Getavan, and Drombon mine;***
2. The second direction encompassed ***Nareshtar, Vank, Arajadzor, and the Khachen bridge;***
3. The third direction extended to ***Vardadzor, Kashen mine, and the city of Martakert.***

“Picture 4”: The main directions of Azerbaijani armed attacks on Martakert region and isolation of communities



- During the military operations of September 19-20, 2023, the ‘Dadivank - Charektar - Getavan’ direction was the primary trajectory of the Azerbaijani

<sup>5</sup> The Martakert region had a population of around 14,000 to 15,000, with approximately 4,000 residents living in Martakert city.

armed forces' attacks in the Martakert region (see "**Picture 4**"). Civilians from the villages of Dadivank and Charektar (shepherds and their families) inhabited the mountain ranges in the neighboring areas to keep cattle, as it is easier to keep animals in that area since it does not gather grass. There are also old Armenian infrastructures and civilian homes in Baghrli and Aghdaba.

On September 19-20, 2023, approximately a dozen people were long displaced from the village of Dadivank to Charektar. Among them, the spiritual father who conducted holy services in Dadivank, and due to his displacement civilians were no longer permitted to visit the monastery.

As a result of the military attack, the civilian population in Dadivank and Charektar villages were evacuated to Getavan (see "Picture 5").

***"Picture 5": Azerbaijani attacks on Martakert villages, isolation of communities and forced displacement of ethnic Armenians***

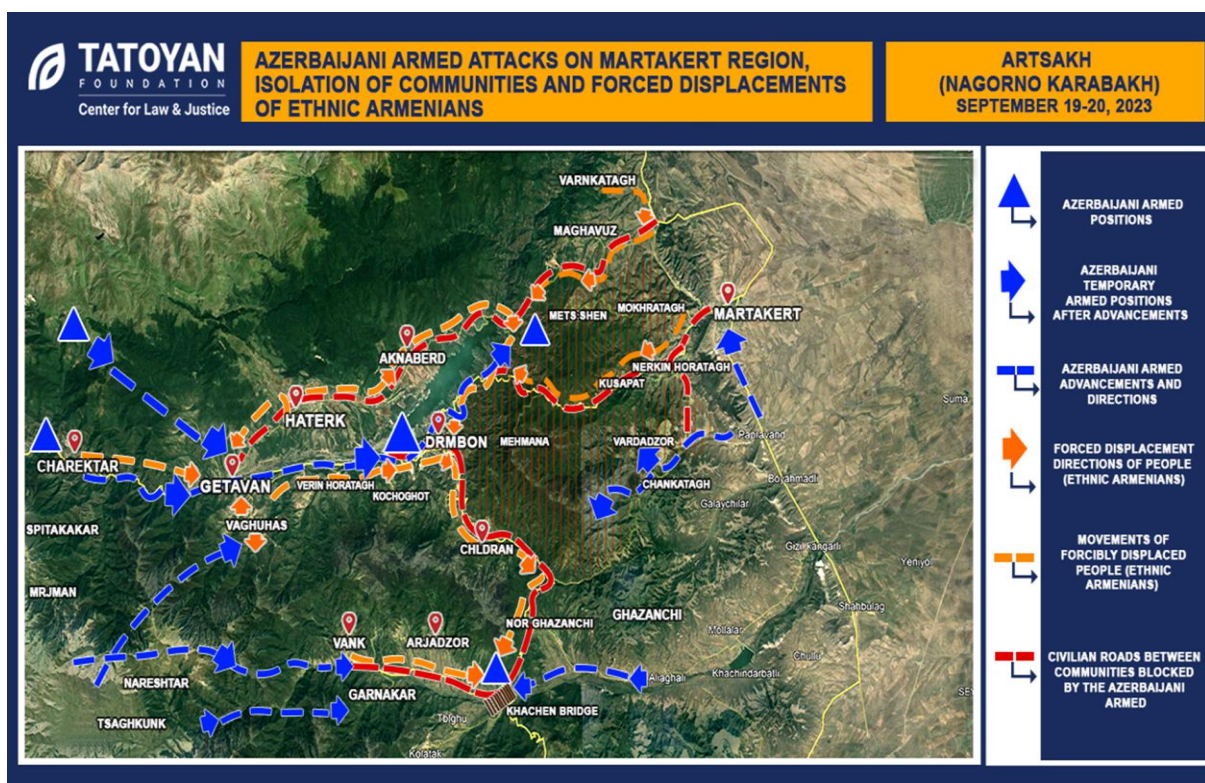


The population had only 2-3 hours to evacuate the mentioned communities, and as a result of these circumstances, they did not have time to take any belongings with them.

The Foundation’s fact-finding activities clarified that in some cases, people were not even able to bring their personal documents with them.

Azerbaijani armed forces selected several target positions, which they captured and advanced towards Getavan village. Initially, the Azerbaijani armed forces severed communication access. Consequently, the operational connection between communities (local self-government bodies and civilian population) and the guards was disrupted. The population had no opportunity to ascertain what was happening and remained unaware of the Azerbaijani armed forces’ movement and invasion of civilian communities, including villages (see **“Picture 6”**).

**“Picture 6”: Azerbaijani armed attacks on Martakert region, isolation of communities and forced displacements of ethnic Armenians**



The attack took the residents of Getavan village by surprise, and initially, some of the residents ascended to Vaghuhas village, believing it to be safer than Getavan. However,

upon realizing that the Azerbaijani armed forces initiated a military attack from there as well, they descended back to Getavan village.

- As already mentioned above, the next direction of the attack of the Azerbaijani armed forces in Martakert region was ***Nareshtar, Vank, Arajadzor and Khachen's bridge.***

On September 19-20, 2023, the Azerbaijani armed forces launched an attack from Nareshtar village in two directions: **one towards Vaghuhhas village and the other towards Vank (Gandzasar)<sup>6</sup> village.** The distance from Nareshtar village to Vaghuhhas is roughly 3-4 km. Simultaneously, the Azerbaijani armed forces also attacked the village of Vaghuhhas from the direction of Getavan.

Thus, the population hastily evacuated the village of Vank in the early morning of September 20th. They left quickly, without clothes or belongings, as the Azerbaijani armed forces were already entering the village, and they managed to evacuate within a few minutes.

During the Foundation's fact-finding activities, Artsakh-Armenians who were forcibly displaced from Artsakh stated that, during the military operations, they did not have time to evacuate the communities of the Martakert region. Numerous people left barefoot because the Azerbaijani armed forces swiftly invaded the communities, cut off communication, and prevented people from warning each other to leave. The chaotic and crisis situation was further exacerbated by the previous nine-month blockade, resulting in a lack of fuel in civilian communities. Despite the ownership of multiple cars, the absence of fuel hindered a timely and organized evacuation for the people. For this reason, they had to leave their cars in Artsakh.

Forcibly displaced Armenians from the Martakert region of Artsakh mentioned that some only had the ability to exit the village due to the miracle that one villager had fuel in his tractor.

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<sup>6</sup> Vank village was one of the largest communities in the Martakert region, which had a population of 1400-1500 and about 400 households.



As a result of the Azerbaijani armed forces and their actions, the population of the Martakert villages left their communities with a difference of a few minutes in conjunction with the invasions of the Azerbaijani armed forces. Had they stayed, the inhabitants of this region would have been captured or killed by the Azerbaijanis similarly to their other peers. Namely, 60-year-old Baghdasaryan Nersik, who was killed in the airstrikes of Azerbaijan's armed forces, a 4-year-old child and one of his parents who were injured, as well as 13-year-old Mkrtich Hovoyan, who also was killed in the Azerbaijani armed forces' attacks.

Concurrently, the direct danger of genocide is also evidenced the chronicling of a man named Sasun Arakelyan's death, discovered as a result of the fact-finding activities. Arakelyan did not manage to leave the Vank village in time, and when he went to Tsovakar village, the Azerbaijani armed forces were already there, ready to kill him.

As a result of direct military operations, these two groups of villages in the Martakert region did not have time to evacuate, leaving all at once due to the quick Azerbaijani military invasion of their communities.

In general, some parts of the population from Charektar and Haterk villages was evacuated to Getavan village, while another group moved to Aknaberd village. According to the map (**Picture 6**), residents then descended to Drombon, where the Azerbaijani armed forces already closed the road and established a checkpoint. However, due to the lack of communication and the tumultuous situation, some residents from Getavan attempted to travel down to Vaghuhas, but Azerbaijani armed forces had already attacked Vaghuhas from the Nareshtar direction. Surrounded by the Azerbaijani armed forces, the civilian population returned to Getavan and moved to Drombon, and from there, they further moved to Chldran village and Khacheni bridge, where the Azerbaijani armed forces had *also* closed and established a military checkpoint.

The Azerbaijani armed forces targeted civilian infrastructures and communities. They gained control of one large hydropower plant and three smaller plants situated along the Sarsang reservoir, built on the Tartar River. Additionally, two more hydropower plants, Trghe 1 and Trghe 2, were taken in the direction of Haterk, along

the Trghe River. With these actions, they targeted the drinking water supplies of the civilian population.

The presented facts indicate that the only road available for the population of the Martakert region to evacuate was the Khachen Bridge. However, the Azerbaijani armed forces strategically attacked and closed this road through planned military operations. In order to create panic and crisis situations among the population, the Azerbaijani armed forces divided the Martakert region into three parts, closing the roads that connect communities, thus blocking the two exit roads from the region: the Drmbon and Khachen bridges.

➤ **3.2 Specific evidence of ethnic cleansing in Artsakh exactly in the Martakert Region (video-evidence)**

*“Picture 7”: Azerbaijani armed attacks towards civilian houses*



This evidence<sup>7</sup> proves that the Azerbaijani armed servicemen attacked civilian communities in Artsakh on September 19, 2023.

Depicted above is Charektar village in Artsakh. By collecting different video segments, the Foundation successfully established that the Azerbaijani armed servicemen fired shots at civilian houses, obviously knowing that civilians remained in the houses of villages and towns.

<sup>7</sup> Available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Pje9tF4vU&list=PLxle3iWZPc3IIJ0phxxKQuMf8HjtNfvYo>

*“Picture 8”: Azerbaijani deliberate shootings towards civilian houses*



*“Picture 9”: The movements of Azerbaijani troops near the civilian houses*

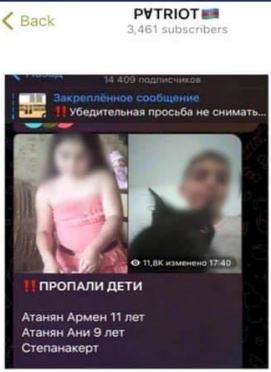


➤ **3.3 Further objective evidence of Anti-Armenian racist and xenophobic policies in Azerbaijan: insulting comments targeting a young Armenian woman from Artsakh and calls for violence**

Objective evidence of deep hatred towards Armenians has been sponsored by the Azerbaijani authorities for years, and this hatred induces atrocities against Armenians and impunity for these crimes.

*Picture 10 & 11: Azerbaijani telegram channels use photos of missing Armenian women in Artsakh; they spread massive hatred, with insulting comments and calls for violence (rape) promising monetary rewards*

**AZERBAIJANI TELEGRAM CHANNELS' MASS APPEALS FOR KILLING AND DISMEMBERING THE ARTSAKH (NAGORNO KARABAKH) ARMENIAN CHILDREN [WITH THEIR PICTURES] PROMISING \$500 REWARD FOR THESE CHILDREN'S EARS.**



Этих двух маленьких гадёнышей нужно будет расчленить и кусками отправить их родителям.  
The bodies of these two little bastards must be dismembered and sent in pieces to their parts parents.

Объявляем охоту, за уши этих гадёнышей админы готовы заплатить по 500\$.  
We are announcing hunting the ears of these two bastards; admins are ready to pay 500\$ for each of them.

Все же помнят наш «добрый» опрос. ??  
Так вот, у нас появились первые кандидаты на осуществление этой ситуации. Этих двух маленьких гадёнышей нужно будет расчленить и кусками отправить их родителям.

Объявляем охоту, за уши этих гадёнышей админы готовы заплатить по 500\$.

Атнан Армен 11 лет  
Атнан Ани 9 лет  
Степанакерт

14 409 подписчиков  
Закрепленное сообщение  
Убедительная просьба не снимать...

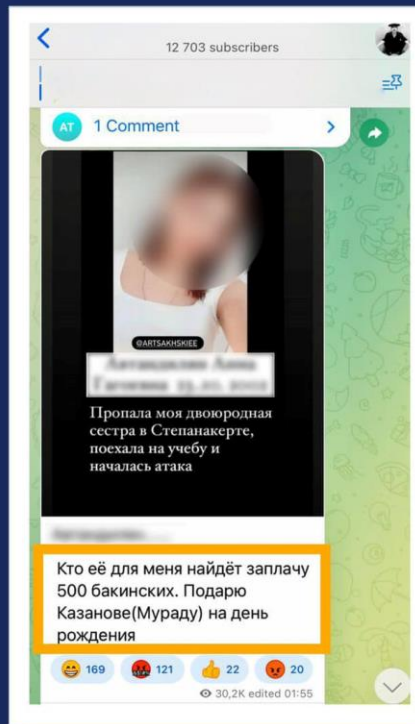
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PROPAЛИ ДЕТИ

YEREVAN  
22.09.2023

**TATOYAN**  
FOUNDATION  
Center for Law & Justice

**AZERBAIJANI TELEGRAM CHANNELS USE PHOTOS OF ARMENIAN MISSING WOMEN IN ARTSAKH (NAGORNO\_KARABAKH); SPREAD MASSIVE HATRED WITH INSULTING COMMENTS AND CALLS FOR VIOLENCE (RAPE) PROMISING MONETARY REWARDS.**



YEREVAN  
23.09.2023

**TATOYAN**  
FOUNDATION  
Center for Law & Justice

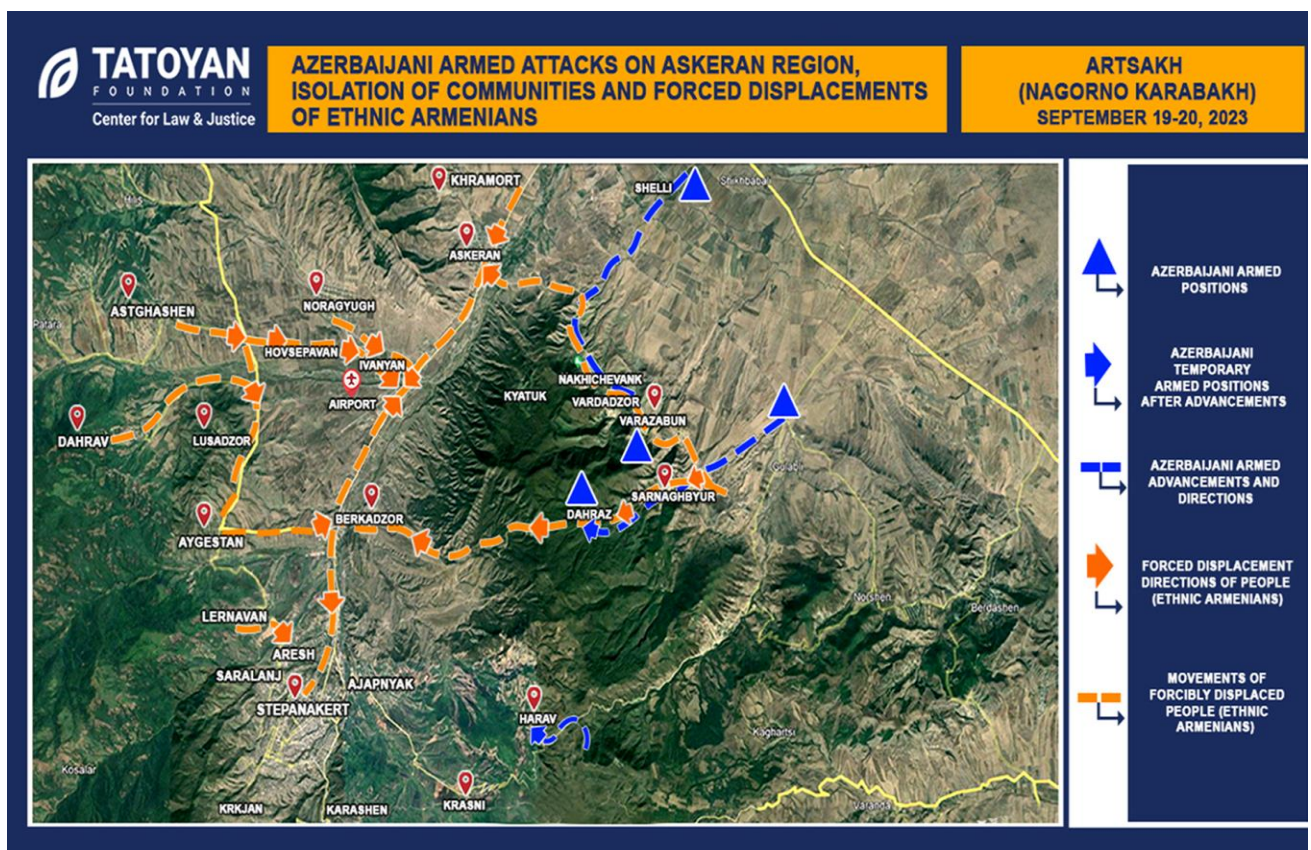
### ➤ 3.4 The directions of military operations in the Askeran region

In revealing the complete picture of Azerbaijan's criminal policy, the fact-finding missions confirmed that the military operations in all directions, including in the Askeran region, and the attacks on peaceful communities started at the same time. This circumstance is incredibly significant, as it proves the Azerbaijani motive to disrupt the entire system and panic the civilian population.

According to the direct testimonies of citizens and the facts presented by our colleagues (the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, the Defense Army representatives, NGOs and their fact-finding teams,) in Artsakh, it is proved that the Azerbaijani armed forces not only targeted military facilities, but also attacked systems and infrastructures of vital importance to the state or the civilian population (such as electricity, water supply, communication systems, local government buildings, schools, civilian houses and shelters).

In the direction of the Askeran region, the armed forces of Azerbaijan launched a multi-directional attack, starting with **the village Harav** (see “**Picture 12**”). The enemy held a position on the opposite mountain just a mere few meters away from the village, from where they invaded it.

**“Picture 12”: Azerbaijani armed attacks on Askeran region, isolation of communities and forced displacements of ethnic Armenians**



Simultaneously, military attacks were initiated in the direction of **Nakhichevanik, Vardanadzor, and Varazabun villages, and from Sarnaghbyur village to Dahraz village** (see “**Picture 12**”).

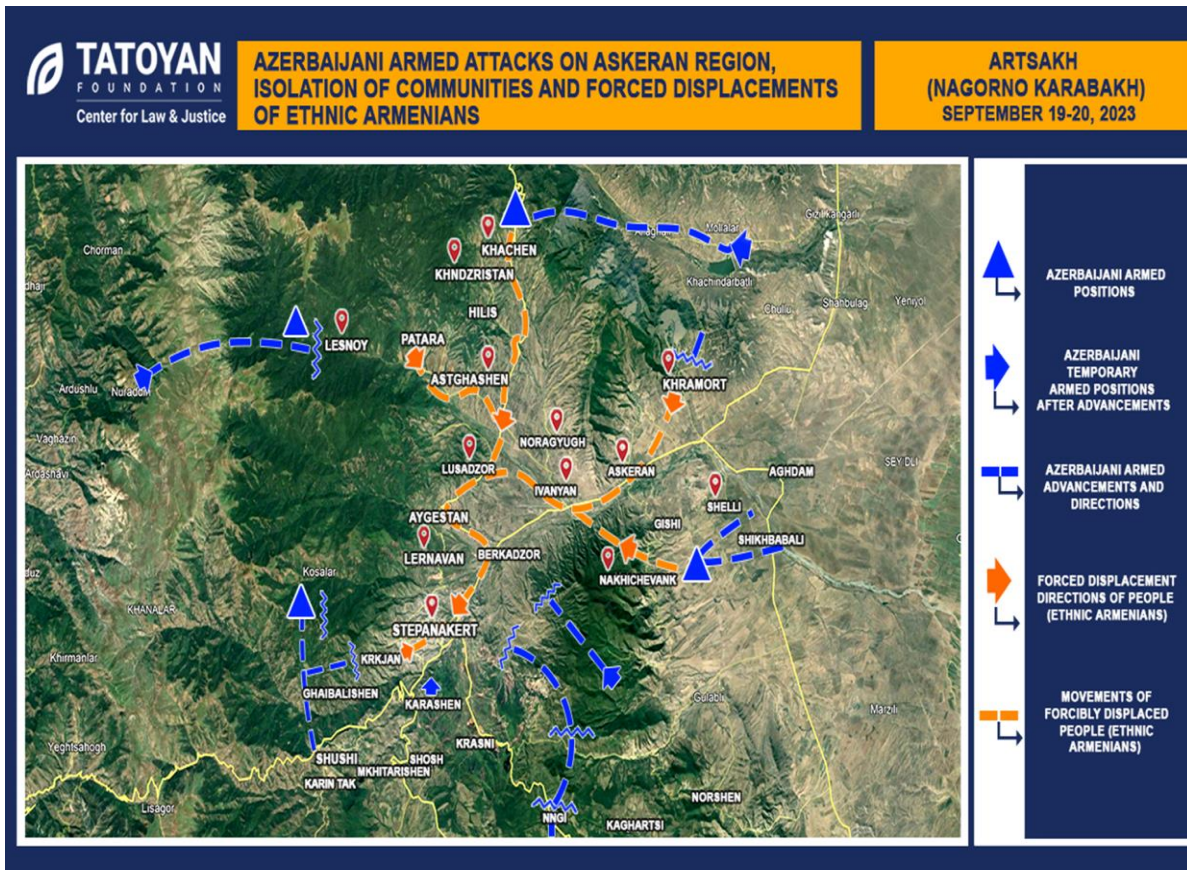
During the Foundation's fact-finding activities, numerous facts and evidence emerged in regards to the murders, atrocities, and war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces during their attacks on the villages in the Askeran region.

Through the fact-finding activities conducted in the Armenian city of Goris, and interviews with forcibly displaced Artsakh-Armenians, information emerged concerning war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces in the village of Sarnaghbyur in the Askeran region. Specifically, according to the information provided, the Azerbaijani armed forces in Sarnaghbyur village killed 89-year-old Elira Atayan, an individual with health problems and disabilities.

Amidst the trepidation of the forced displacement, the son of the murdered woman was unable to evacuate his mother with them by car due to space limitations. Then, upon his return from evacuating his family, Aram Atayan found his mother brutally murdered. According to the information from a relative, the Azerbaijani military servicemen dismembered the body.



*“Picture 13”: Azerbaijani armed attacks on Askeran region from other directions, isolation of communities and forced displacements of ethnic Armenians*



Among the above-mentioned facts and cases, the Azerbaijani armed forces also killed two brothers, eight-year-old Nver Ghazaryan and ten-year-old Mikayel Ghazaryan, in Sarnaghbyur village of Artsakh. The children were at school during the attacks by the Azerbaijani armed forces. Ten-year-old Mikayel was found killed on the very day of the Azerbaijani, on September 19, 2023, while eight-year-old Nver was considered missing for five days. The International Committee of the Red Cross only found the brutally murdered child on September 24, 2023.

Moreover, residents of the Sarushen village in the Askeran region stated during the fact-finding missions that around 400 people miraculously escaped from the Azerbaijani blockade. Alisa Arustamyan, a resident of Sarushen village, remembered September 19, a day when they had to move from place to place to save themselves. According to the collected information, the attack on the positions started at 11:00am. The Azerbaijani armed forces positions were 200-300 meters away from the village.

After a very short time, the Azerbaijani armed forces initiated shooting and military attacks on the village.

Forced to leave their homes, some residents were in casual clothes, while others had no time to take their documents. As the village roads were already closed, the people of Sarushen had no choice but to flee into the forest.

Residents described how they reached the forest under the gunfire and, after waiting for five hours, realizing that the danger was getting closer, they followed the advice of the village head and moved through the forest to Msmna village in the Martuni region.

*"At night, we set off on foot to go to Msmna. We walked five to six kilometers, arriving at three in the morning. In the morning, the head of the village brought cars, and we came to Stepanakert. I didn't go to our house again; we left empty-handed, without even taking our documents"<sup>8</sup>, said Alina Arustamyan.*

From inside the forest, the forcibly displaced Artsakh-Armenians witnessed how Azerbaijani soldiers shot the wounded as they were transported to the medical hospital from the Sarushen positions. The soldiers of the Azerbaijani armed forces cut off the road for the wounded and started to kill and and torture them with weapons. Residents stated that they recognized some of the soldiers' faces during the torture and killing, and later identified these killed soldiers, whose heads were missing, in the Stepanakert hospital. During the fact-finding mission, the residents said that if they had left the village of Sarushen a little later, they too would have been killed by the Azerbaijani armed forces.

These attacks and crimes forced the civilian population to be displaced to Berkadzor, Askeran city, and Ivanyan airport.

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<sup>8</sup> See the detailed information with the following link: <https://forrights.am/2023/11/06/%D5%A9%D5%B8%D6%82%D6%80%D6%84%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%A8-%D5%AF%D5%BF%D6%80%D5%A5%D6%81%D5%AB%D5%B6-%D5%BE%D5%AB%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%BE%D5%B8%D6%80%D5%B6%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%AB-%D5%A1%D5%BC%D5%A1%D5%BB%D5%A8/> .

### ➤ 3.5 The directions of military operations in the Martuni region

In the Martuni region, armed attacks by the Azerbaijani forces were initiated from multiple directions: from the villages of Karintak and Mkhitarashen towards Shosh, from Krkzhan to Kosalar and Stepanakert, from Sarushen village to Nngi, and another direction to the village of Charektar and the city of Martuni.

With these military operations, the Azerbaijani armed forces closed the roads between the communities, cutting them off from each other.

**“Picture 14”:** Azerbaijani armed attacks on Martuni region, isolation of communities, and forced displacements of ethnic Armenians

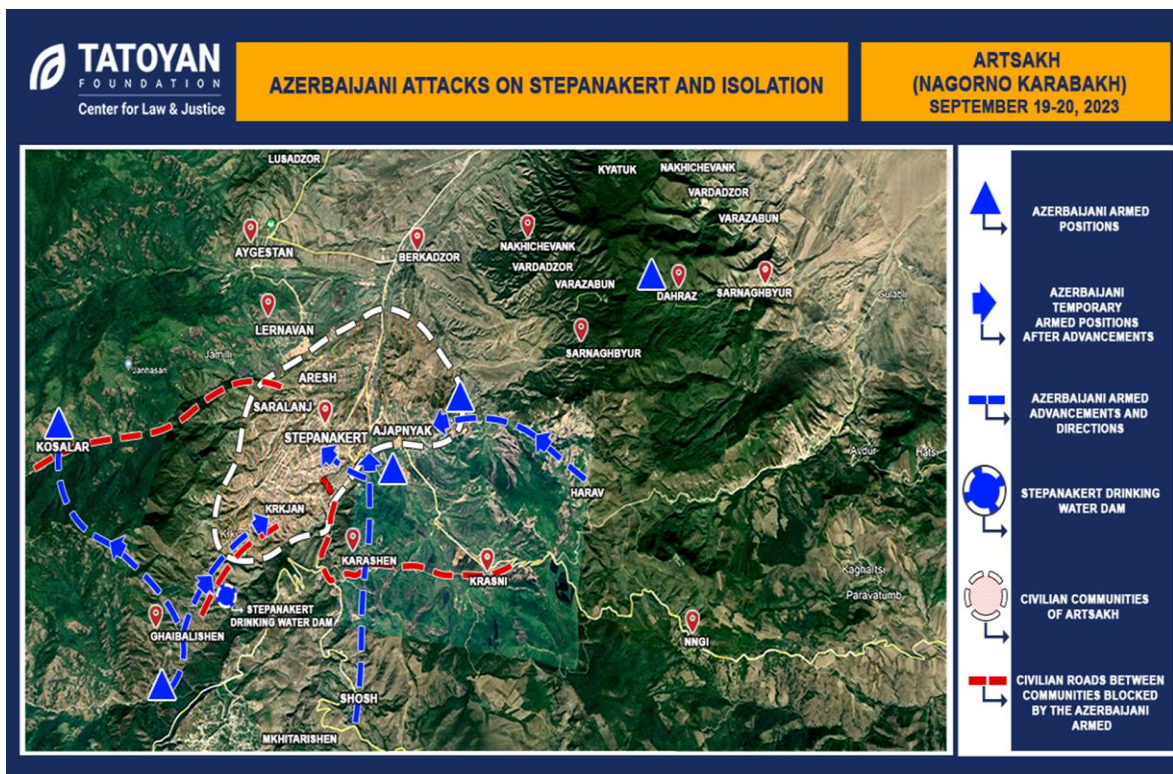


### ➤ 3.6 The directions of military operations in Stepanakert

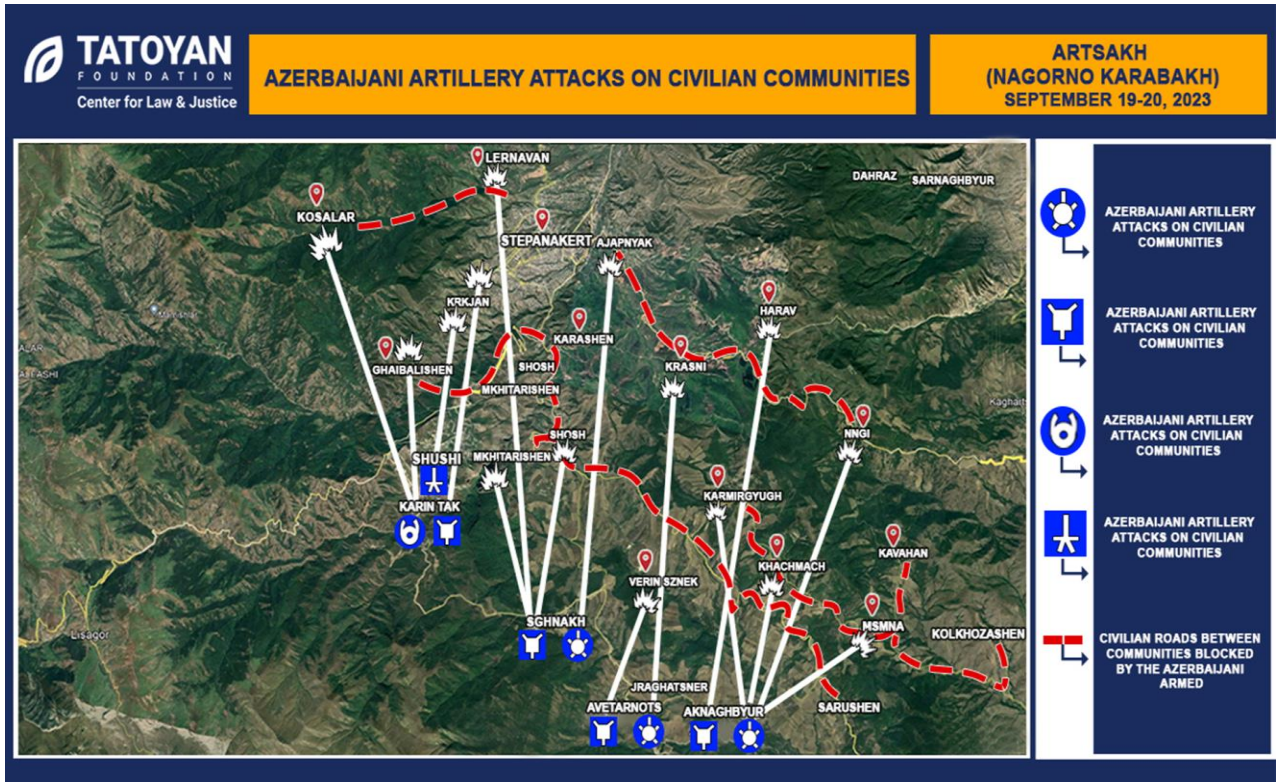
After targeting the civilian population and cutting connections between communities, the Azerbaijani armed forces also targeted the city of Stepanakert and the civilian population. First of all, they advanced from Ghalbalishen in two directions: towards Kosalar village and Stepanakert city, reaching the Krkjan district (see “**Picture 15**”). At the same time, they launched attacks from Shosh to Karashen and Stepanakert, extending to the Ajapnyak district. Another direction of the attack towards Stepanakert was from Harav village.

By attacking the civilian population and infrastructure of Stepanakert from multiple directions, the Azerbaijani armed forces first targeted hydropower plants and then the reservoir, providing water supply to the city of Stepanakert. Consequently, the entire city, including hospitals, have been deprived of a drinking water supply since September 20, 2023.

“**Picture 15**”: Azerbaijani attacks on Stepanakert and isolation of the city



“Picture 16”: Azerbaijani artillery attacks on civilian communities in Artsakh



“Picture 17”: Azerbaijani armed attacks on Artsakh and forced displacements of over 100,000 ethnic Armenians only in September 2023



The facts mentioned above prove that people were unable to take the bodies of the victims to forensic examinations and burials, since the Azerbaijani armed servicemen keep communities isolated from each other. There were cases when people held improper funerals without forensic expertise.

Substantial lack of food, electricity, gas, and medicine were added to the conditions above, which increased the people's sufferings.

In the aftermath of the conflict, almost 105,000 people endured forced displacement from 90 communities across Artsakh. The impact of the Azerbaijani armed forces destroyed communication systems and economic security, severing essential services.

In an interview conducted during the foundation's fact-finding activities, a man named Suren Abrahamyan stated that he was originally from the Krkjan district of Stepanakert. On September 20, 2023, when he attempted to go home to gather his important documents, he noticed that the Azerbaijanis were already there, and they placed the Azerbaijani flag on his house. He was forced to leave Artsakh without taking the documents. Abrahamyan also mentioned the complete lack of bread or food in Stepanakert in recent months, explaining that the people ate whatever they could find or simply starved.

Another fact of Azerbaijani criminal policy and the forced displacement of Artsakh-Armenians is found in the case of Marianna Stepanyan's family. In her attempt to leave Artsakh at night, Azerbaijani armed forces servicemen stopped the car of Marianna Stepanyan's family at the unlawful Azerbaijani checkpoint, asked where they came from, then started laughing loudly and pointed their flashlights in the eyes of the people in the car.

Furthermore, the fact-finding mission discovered cases and reports of the Azerbaijani armed forces stopping the cars of Artsakh-Armenians on the way to be forcibly displaced through the Lachin (Berdzor) corridor, asking people where they were from. Then, upon hearing the response that they were from Stepanakert, for example, the Azerbaijani border guard service soldiers corrected Artsakh Armenians,

stating that the correct name is not Stepanakert, but Khankendi or it is not Martuni, but Khojavend.

Finally, people didn't have a home; they were forcibly displaced from their homes and historical communities. Each personal testament and invasion map serves to prove the intentional policy of Azerbaijan; from racism and xenophobia against Armenians, to torturing and murdering people, to disturbing testimonies of these inhumane sufferings.

These are the main reflections of Azerbaijani policies that have resulted in gross human rights violations, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, supported by high-ranking political authorities.