



**THE HUMAN RIGHTS  
DEFENDER OF ARMENIA**



# VIEWER WARNING

The following section and its Annexes contain  
violent and gory materials

21+

**AD HOC REPORT ON TORTURE AND INHUMAN TREATMENT OF  
MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES OF ARMENIA AND CAPTURED  
ARMENIANS BY AZERBAIJANI ARMED FORCES**

**(SEPTEMBER, 2022)**

**UPDATED**

**YEREVAN  
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## **I. Background**

1. In the early hours of September 13, 2022, according to HRD's hotline call information, some local and other sources the Azerbaijani military forces launched a large-scale coordinated attack against the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, along the eastern and south eastern line of contact, deliberately targeting the peaceful borderline communities of Kapan, Goris, Kharashen, Verishen, Khnatsakh, Kornidzor, Khoznavar, Ishkhanasar, Tchakaten, Nerqin Hand, Tsav, Davit Bek, Artanish, Srashen, Jermuk, Vardenis, Sotk, Norabak, Kut, Geghamasar and other borderline communities in the provinces of Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik of Armenia. The Azerbaijani armed forces used different types of weapons including heavy artillery, mortars of different calibers, UAVs, large-caliber guns, and Grad multiple rocket launchers (MRLs).

2. The Azerbaijani military attack was accompanied by gross violations of International Humanitarian Law and human rights.

3. The military attack of the Azerbaijani armed forces has violated the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia. This is a clear violation of Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations which provides that "*All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.*". Moreover, Article 51 of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations provides that "*Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.*"

4. The fact that the border between the states is not officially delimited and demarcated does not give states the right to derogate from their international obligation from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and launch a military attack on the sovereign territory of a neighboring state, endangering the rights and lives of the residents of borderline communities.

5. It is of particular concern that during the attack the Azerbaijani side is targeting the civilian population and vital civilian infrastructure in gross violation of IHL and international human rights law.

6. Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the UN Charter (Declaration 2625) recalled the *“duty of states to refrain from the military, political, economic or any other form of coercion aimed against the political independence or territorial integrity of any state”*.

7. Besides, the Azerbaijani attack on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia is a violation of the trilateral ceasefire statement of November 9, which states that the parties to the agreement shall remain at their current positions (the positions they were occupying at the moment of the statement).

8. On September 14 starting from 20:00 a very fragile ceasefire was established, which is very often violated, for example, on September 28 starting from 18.00 Azerbaijan violated the ceasefire in the direction of Jermuk, and both large-caliber small arms and artillery and UAVs were used resulted in the death of three Armenian servicemen.

## **II. Methodology**

9. The purpose of this Report is to digest, analyze and present the gross violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law by the Azerbaijani armed forces during its military attack against Armenia starting from September 13, 2022.

10. According to Human Rights Defender’s (HRD) National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) mandate this report covers the issues relating to the facts of torture and ill-treatment done by Azerbaijani military towards Armenian PoWs. According to usual practice of the institution considering the sensitivity of the topics, and the gruesome nature of the images and videos, this report is published in closed format and refers to the inhuman and degrading treatment of Armenian PoWs, and the mistreatment and conducting of acts that violate the treatment of the bodies of dead Armenian servicemen.

11. The factual data illustrated in this report include and supplement the data of the Ad hoc Report published on September 16 of this year, including summarized facts covering the period from September 13 until the publication of this report.

12. The purpose of this Report is to present and record the gross violations of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights by the Azerbaijani armed forces during its aggression on Armenia which was initiated on September 13, 2022. The factual data illustrated in this report covers the timeline between September 13 and the moment of the release of this report.

13. The Report, among other things, is based on the fact-finding activities of the Human Rights Defender's Office (HRDO), during which representatives of the Defender's Office conducted visits to Sotk, Kut, and Norabak communities of Gegharkunik province as well as to Verishen, Akner, Karashen, Vaghatur, Khoznavar, Aghitu, Noravan communities of Syunik and to Jermuk city of Vayots Dzor province. During the visits, the representatives of the Defender's Office conducted private interviews with the heads of the communities, the residents, the evacuated and displaced persons, as well as persons who had received various injuries and were receiving or have received relevant medical care in the medical centers. HRDO visited the injured civilians in Yerevan hospitals as well.

14. During its activities, the Human Rights Defender's Office has also cooperated with the relevant state bodies and local-self-governing authorities, and with the representatives of reputable non-governmental organizations to further corroborate the collected facts and evidence. The Defender's Office has conducted monitoring of media publications, has analyzed the alarming-calls addressed to the Human Rights Defender's Office and its regional-subdivisions, including through the 24/7 hotline.

15. The Defender's Office has also monitored Azerbaijani social media platforms to examine any photo or video publications in relation to the treatment of the servicemen of the Armenian Armed Force who have fallen captive or have been killed during the Azerbaijani aggression.

16. The authenticity of the obtained videos and photos was verified by comparing them with the video and photo database of the Human Rights Defender's Office (the database was created in September 2020), as well as with the databases of the Ministry of Defense and law enforcement agencies. In addition, consultations were held with technical specialists, forensic medical experts, MoD representatives as well as former servicemen and conscripts who have served in affected areas.

17. The Human Rights Defender's Office has also conducted extensive research of International Law, International Humanitarian Law, and Human Rights Laws, standards, and requirements during the preparation of the current Report. Moreover, The Human Rights Defender has prepared and sent daily communiqués on the violations of International Humanitarian Law and human rights to international organizations mandated with the protection of human rights, international partners, and diplomatic missions accredited in the Republic of Armenia. HRD has established a dedicated communication channel related to potential questions on these events by the side of the international partners.

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**The following Report and its Annexes contain violent and gory materials.**

### III. Humiliating Treatment of Dead Persons by Azerbaijani Armed forces

18. Concerning disrespectful acts of humiliating of dead bodies by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, it is important to highlight that in the International Human Rights Law the overarching principle is that of **personal dignity**, which is considered an inherent and inalienable human right of the living, foundational to human beings to such an extent that it continues to apply posthumously.

19. The International Humanitarian Law protects the dignity of persons involved in armed conflicts both during their lifetime and after death and prohibits any kind of outrages upon personal dignity. The key principle is that the persons *hors de combat* (surrendered, wounded or otherwise disabled) and bodies of dead persons should be protected from any kind of ill-treatment. The bodies of enemy combatants should be treated with respect. These points have also been developed in the Customary International Humanitarian Law and were applied by international judicial instances (such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia).

20. The monitoring of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia reveals that members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces subject the bodies of the dead Armenian soldiers to humiliating treatment.

21. There are a couple of videos depicting the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces stepping on the bodies of dead Armenian soldiers and using excessive amount of hate speech against ethnic Armenians. These actions are captured in videos published by the Azerbaijani sources (*Annexes 1*<sup>1</sup>, *2*<sup>2</sup> and *images 1, 2*).

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SITAQov62hmBRK9OC7Tjcm3RfPpX3O64/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vz5K8Gj3O4ZEKL2AvZqeuBprjGMbwo--/view?usp=sharing>.



1



2

22. The Article 34 (1) of the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) provides that *the remains of persons who have died for reasons related to occupation or in detention resulting from occupation or hostilities and those of persons not nationals of the country in which they have died as a result of hostilities shall be respected (...)*.

23. Moreover, under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court **committing outrages upon personal dignity constitutes a war crime** in both international and non-international armed conflicts (Article 8(2)(b)(xxi)). The elements of this crime include the **humiliating, degrading or otherwise violating the dignity of one or more persons, including dead persons by perpetrator.**

### **Treatment of bodies of female Armenians and their remains**

24. Armenian women who fell into the hands of Azerbaijani Armed Forces fell victim to the utmost degrading and inhuman treatment deciphered from photo and video evidence that has been gathered by the Human Rights Defender's Office. All of the female captives were stripped down to their breasts and left on the field of combat with their chests stripped naked (*see images 3, 4, 5*).



3

4

5

25. In one of the videos (*Annex 3*<sup>3</sup>), a completely nude woman’s body is placed in a trophy-like manner above the rest of the nearby corpses. While kicking her body the camera operator repeatedly directs abuses towards the victim. Her breasts and genitals are borne naked as a spectacle for the witnesses (*see image 6*). The perpetrators have left a message in writing over her chest and stomach area with her undershirt hanging on the side of her body. The lower part of the message says “YAŞMA” [yashma]. With her hands placed above her head, the ‘messengers’ have left a cut-off finger sticking out of her mouth; one of her eyes is closed, while the other has a reverted eyeball planted over her closed eyelid. In addition, there is visible evidence that the butcher has cut her throat, leaving a cut mark on her neck and bloodstains in the surrounding area (*see image 7*).

26. “Yasma<sup>4</sup>” is a code name for the Azerbaijani specially trained forces (derives from the village where respective military base is located). The servicemen from Yasma were doing the sabotages in the peaceful villages as well as the cruelest crimes during the 2020 war, also filming such operations and circulating on Azerbaijani social media for public appraisal and pride. They also “label” their victims with mark “Yasma”. This means that

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qe07EpQoFrjU2U3Ug3fmC2v8rtM75tFK/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>4</sup> Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special\\_Forces\\_of\\_Azerbaijan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_Forces_of_Azerbaijan).

the particular group of this special forces who was serving to the area of the crime is liable and they took liability by marking their code-name on the body of the victim.



6



7

27. The perpetrators who desecrated the body of this woman had evidently intended to leave it as a message to the observers. Several Azerbaijani social media platforms<sup>5</sup> have identified the body of the woman as a volunteer for the Armed Forces of Armenia who had participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Nagorno-Karabakh Wars as a sniper – thence the perversion with only one of the eyes closed and the index finger (*see image 8*). She has been later identified as Gayane Abgaryan, a member of the regular armed forces. Although the body of the woman lying next to her has already been returned to Armenia, Gayane Abgaryan's body still remains at the hands of the Azerbaijani officials.

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<sup>5</sup> See e.g. the telegram channel "XACHERUBKA 18+" <https://web.telegram.org/k/#@KHACHERUBKA>.



8

28. In the same video, the camera operator repeatedly stomps on the chest of a different woman (Alisa Melqonyan, a contract soldier for the Armenian army) (*see image 9*). Her body was later returned in a similar condition to that seen in the recording – with her undergarments still hanging out from the side of her hand (*see image 10*).



9



10

29. Article 13 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (GC III) provides guarantees against actions that lead to a serious endangerment to the health of a prisoner of war. The convention requires that no POW “*may be subjected to physical mutilation or to medical or scientific experiment of any kind...*”. Not only did the body of persons in question get subjected to physical mutilation, the video material was also published on various online platforms, becoming an object of widespread public

curiosity over the matter in which their bodies were desecrated – a violation of a different statute under the same article of GC III.

**30. As a result, this video is a concrete evidence of a grave war crime cruelly committed by the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces. The severe violence of the perpetrators is beyond imagination. Moreover, these gruesome crimes are followed with actions demonstrating extreme cynicism based on the hatred against ethnic Armenians.**

**31. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia emphasizes that these kinds of actions are totally degrading and disrespectful towards killed soldiers. It is important to state that the outrage upon the personal dignity, even in cases of the dead, constitutes a war crime under the International Criminal Law and the perpetrators must be punished. The bodies of all fallen soldiers irrespective of their gender should be handled in a respectful and honorable manner.**

32. In addition to the above-mentioned cases, a woman from a different video, laying naked down to her underwear over another body is given special attention by the filming person. From the uniform found on the victim it is evident that she is not a member of the military units (*see image 11*). She has been later identified as Irina Gasparyan, a medical nurse.



33. Article 16 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Geneva Convention, IV) prescribes that (...) *each Party to the conflict shall facilitate the steps taken to search for the killed and wounded, (...) and to protect them against pillage and ill-treatment.*

34. Additionally, Article 27 of the same convention stipulates that *Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault.*

#### **IV. Willfull killings of Prisoners of War**

35. One of the Azerbaijani Telegram channels published a video in which the Azerbaijani soldiers are willfully killing the Armenian prisoners of war (*Annex 4<sup>6</sup>*). In the video the members of Azerbaijani armed forces brutally execute the Armenian POWs with a round of gunshots. The fact that the prisoners of war are undoubtedly members of the Armenian Armed Forces can be deducted from their uniforms and helmets.

36. It is clearly seen in the footage that those hors de combat, obviously unarmed and non-resistant, were sitting on their knees and were surrounded by many Azerbaijani soldiers. Then some of the soldiers begin shooting and killing them ignoring the urges of the other soldiers not to shoot or stop the shooting (*see images 12, 13 and 14*). It is also important to note that later this video was deleted from Azerbaijani social network sources.

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<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LY7biN0uxestEtVxAGQK8urdEnzEvqTT/view?usp=sharing>.



12



13



14

37. The photo and video database of the Human Rights Defender's Office as well as the results of the fact-finding mission near Ishkhanasar, the surrounding mountaintops and the type of layered rock fragments point out that the actions in the abovementioned video took place at the military posts of mount Ishkhanasar which are situated within the borders of the Republic of Armenia.

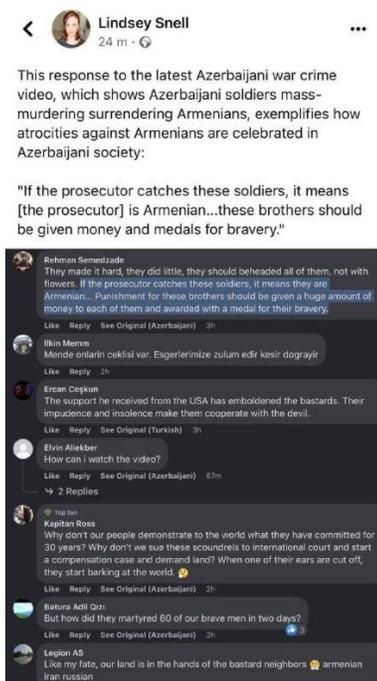
38. These extremely cruel and bloodthirsty executions of alive captured persons are an expression of unimaginable hatred and brutality of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces towards the members of Armenian Armed Forces and ethnic Armenians. Moreover, recording the obvious crime and uploading it to social platforms is an act of cynicism and disrespect towards human life and human rights.

39. The Military Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan has issued a statement regarding the incident, promising to conduct investigations and take appropriate legal measures to punish the perpetrators. However, there is a reasonable level of doubt as to whether any type of action will really take place. Due to the systemic nature of this impunity, it leaves a large gap in the eyes of the public when they clearly see that such atrocities are left unpunished and therefore encouraged by their law-enacting bodies. The barbarities will continue, as long as those committing them are left unpunished.

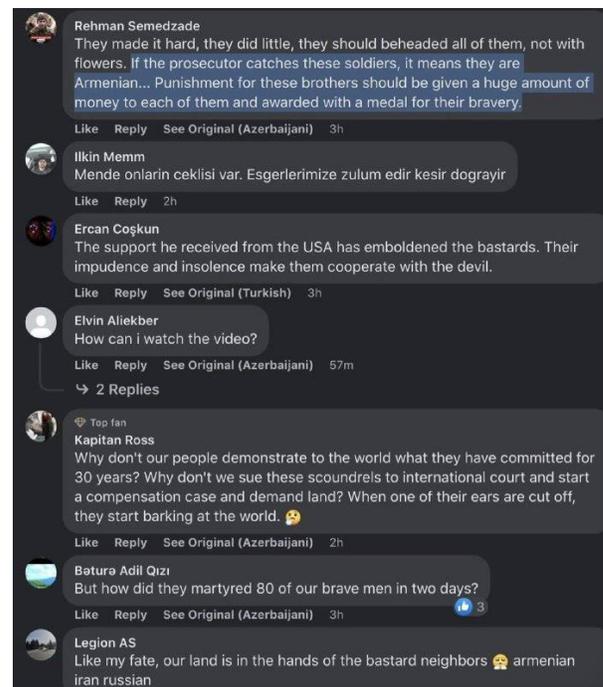
40. Despite the vast amount of widely available materials concerning Azerbaijani war crimes recorded since the start of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War (September 27-

November 9, 2020), as also proven by the recent decision<sup>7</sup> of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, most of the war criminals are still to face any sort of punishment or retribution. There are solid records<sup>8</sup> indicating that those servicemen who are engaged in the “investigation” initiated by the Azerbaijani law enforcement authorities after 2020 war and related to war crimes committed by Azerbaijani military, are being promoted and decorated with medals after couple of months.

41. It is also worth mentioning that the comment section under the post related to the abovementioned video is filled with approving and laudatory statements from various members of the Azerbaijani public. One of the commentators goes further and suggests for the war criminals to be given monetary rewards and awarded medals for bravery (*see images 15, 16*).



15



16

42. This goes in line with rhetoric that has been pursued by the state of authorities of Azerbaijan. In an infamous case, Ramil Safarov had butchered an Armenian soldier at a NATO Partnership for Peace course, held in Budapest, Hungary. In 2012, while still serving his thirty-year sentence, the government of Azerbaijan had negotiated for Safarov's repatriation to Azerbaijan. Upon his return, Safarov immediately received

<sup>7</sup> Available at [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/AZE/CERD\\_C\\_AZE\\_CO\\_10-12\\_49770\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/AZE/CERD_C_AZE_CO_10-12_49770_E.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Available at <https://fip.am/en/20460>.

pardon and was rewarded with an apartment and a sum of money to compensate for the time he had spent in prison.

**43. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia notes that the monitoring and the evidence of undeniable war crimes constantly committed by the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces indicate that this criminal and terroristic approach against ethnic Armenians is widely adopted by the Azerbaijani military and enjoys support and guidance from the state. These criminal and terroristic actions undermine the fundamental principles of International Law. Therefore, this policy must be condemned in a strict manner and all the persons responsible for committing those cruel war crimes must be brought to justice correspondingly.**

## **V. Deaths resulting from provision of inadequate medical treatment**

44. While Article 13 of GC III provides the protection of POWs against medical and scientific interventions “...*which are not justified by the medical, dental or hospital treatment of the prisoner concerned and carried out in his interest*”, the evidence collected from the Human Rights Defenders office of Armenia demonstrates that the Azerbaijani side fails to provide adequate medical treatment and other conditions for the well-being and survival of their captives.

45. The following screenshot from a video (*Annex 5<sup>9</sup>*) made by the Azerbaijani armed forces displays a scene (*see image 17*) where the detaining forces have captured a wounded Armenian captive, identified from the source by his parents as Davit Gishyan, a conscript born in 2002. They are demonstratively administering first aid, seemingly placing bandages over the shoulder of a wounded Armenian soldier. On the 17th of September 2022, the corpse of Davit was returned to Armenia along with the thirty-one other dead Armenian soldiers. The forensic-medical examination conducted in Armenia shows that the primary cause of death was identified as a hemorrhagic shock<sup>10</sup> and the severity of blood loss resulting from medical negligence and the lack of necessary surgical intervention as the deceased was left for dead.

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<sup>9</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rbarSOq9fM225Hv0eBtNg11NbT11CYPI/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>10</sup> Severe blood loss leading to inadequate supply of oxygen at cellular level.



17

46. In a second video (*Annex 6<sup>11</sup>*), two Azerbaijani servicemen start filming a “Kamaz” (*see image 18*) military truck having discovered an Armenian conscript (later identified as Shavarsh Margaryan). As they try and keep quiet not to disturb the scene, one of them says “*sag-salamat*”.<sup>12</sup> As a result of the forensic-medical examination that was conducted in the aftermath of the transfer of dead bodies on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September, the victim lost his life in a manner similar to the previous case – heavy blood-loss resulting in a hemorrhagic shock. The Azerbaijani side has yet again failed to adhere to international human rights standards, namely their duty to provide adequate medical services to Armenian POWs who have fallen into captivity.

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<sup>11</sup> Available at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1shgqxFGQDjcwE\\_0iC8MxuXEbvqVKeHO/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1shgqxFGQDjcwE_0iC8MxuXEbvqVKeHO/view?usp=sharing).

<sup>12</sup> A phrase in Azerbaijani, meaning “everything is intact” [well-and-wholly].



18

47. The evidence collected from recordings demonstrates that the Azerbaijani Armed forces fail to provide adequate medical assistance to Armenian POWs that often results in further casualties of war. From the images below, it is evident that many captives requiring medical intervention are left unattended and suffering (*see images 19, 20, 21 and 22*).



19



Aleksan Faroyan

20



21



Gor Khachatryan

22

48. Article 20 of GC III necessitates conditions whereupon the Detaining Power is obliged to provide sufficient conditions for the evacuation of POWs, putting specific emphasis on adequate medical assistance to ensure their safety. Furthermore, Article 19 states that it is necessary to conduct an assessment on whether the potential transportation (or any other related action) of captives would carry risks to their health and well-being. Both articles emphasize the obligation of the Detaining Power under international humanitarian law to provide similar conditions for captives and members of their own troops.

**49. Whether it is due to ignorance, negligence or resulting from purposeful mistreatment, the Geneva Conventions state that persons of combat who have fallen into the hands of the enemy shall be treated humanely and receive the required medical treatment when necessary. The Human Rights Defender of Armenia recognizes and highlights the emergency of the current state of affairs. Young Armenian conscript face an imminent threat of being subjected to subhuman treatment if fallen into the hands of Azerbaijani military.**

## **VI. Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Prisoners of War by Azerbaijani Armed Forces**

50. Numerous videos and photos depicting atrocious actions of Azerbaijani Armed Forces against Armenians have been published through Azerbaijani sources of social media platforms (Telegram, TikTok, Facebook, etc.) that are easily accessible to the general public in Azerbaijan, Armenia and worldwide.

51. In one of the videos (*Annex 7*<sup>13</sup>) uploaded to social media platforms a member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces is intentionally stepping on the wounded foot of an Armenian prisoner of war (*see image 23*). In the video the same person is also hitting and kicking captured Armenians Nshan Petrosyan and Artur Lopoyan, who are handcuffed and blindfolded (*see images 24, 25*).

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<sup>13</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/15pf4eFzVbleegXP-AG9Ycv56Bh9kmiui/view?usp=sharing>.



23



24



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52. Compelling Armenians to repeat their words, usually of a degrading nature, filming it, and uploading the videos to social networks, is a widespread practice of the Azerbaijani military.

53. In a publicized video (*Annex 8*<sup>14</sup>) many Armenian prisoners of war (POW) are seen to have been fallen into captivity. The video starts with the person operating the camera instructing others to stop hitting (the captives) as he has started filming. It continues by depicting ten prisoners of war handcuffed and laying down with their faces directed to the ground (*see images 26, 27, 28*). Some of the captured Armenians can be seen to have wounds and blood stains on their bodies.

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<sup>14</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16eiqg1PclJC1gbFuBz6qoqNE9ddKI8hZ/view?usp=sharing>.



26



27



28

54. In the mentioned video one of the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces starts filming on his phone and picks one of the captives up by his head, forcing him to repeat words in Azerbaijani: “*Say hello Geranboy! Say hello Geranboy! Say it!*”. After forcing the Armenian prisoner of war to comply with his order, the Azerbaijani serviceman in question continues the video-address by sending what can be deemed as greeting remarks to his addressees (*see image 29*).



29

55. A different video publication (*Annex 9*<sup>15</sup>) exhibits at least eight POWs crouched inside trenches with their hands tied behind their backs. In the meantime, the camera operator continuously uses abusive rhetoric towards young captives, while ironically singing “*ey benim jujelerim*” (my little chicks) to them, lyrics from a popular soviet Azerbaijani children’s song “*Cib, cib, jujelerim*”. At the end of the recording the operator kicks soil onto captives’ faces, finishing with another round of abuse (*see image 30*).



30

56. The video (*Annex 10*<sup>16</sup>) demonstrates a member of an armed colonnade head kicking a soldier who is attempting to give assistance to a wounded companion nearby



31

<sup>15</sup> Available at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nHaWt\\_j-q2spzs5sKadiGyzP2PTY4du/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nHaWt_j-q2spzs5sKadiGyzP2PTY4du/view?usp=sharing).

<sup>16</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aciMYNFzryyYoxfy1BfDGSU6tgcWtnZ/view?usp=sharing>.

(see image 31).

57. In another footage (*Annex 11*<sup>17</sup>) a member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces is taking a video with captured Armenian Artur Hoveyan and telling him to repeat the following phrase: “*Long live the child of Baku! Long live the child of Sovetsky*<sup>18</sup>!” (see image 32).



32

58. The following piece of evidence (*Annex 12*<sup>19</sup>) (see image 33) shows a scene where a young Armenian captive is keeping his head up while being imposed to repeat after the Azerbaijani captor. The Azerbaijani soldier continues dictating greeting directives addressed at residents of Lachin (a territory only recently seceded to Azerbaijani forces according to the point 6 of the trilateral ceasefire statement signed on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 by the President of Russia, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan<sup>20</sup>). The message continues with compelled salutations directed at another individual (a certain named Murvad).

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<sup>17</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sr1OkcpN3KVKMwYyvJk1n-lr9gGZiGmh/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>18</sup> One of the historic districts of Baku, Azerbaijan.

<sup>19</sup> Available at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M8DO1L9KlaWbyANogYeOzfj8Nnb\\_mlkz/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M8DO1L9KlaWbyANogYeOzfj8Nnb_mlkz/view?usp=sharing).

<sup>20</sup> Available at <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2020/11/10/Announcement/>.



33

59. Another video (*Annex 13*<sup>21</sup>) demonstrates an Armenian soldier stood up with hands tied behind his back (*see image 34*). He is visibly pressured to repeat after his captor, who has a message prepared for the people of Kurdamir<sup>22</sup>.



34

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<sup>21</sup> Available at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/193hT1f-Ckgwf-upgBA7bzfJBKb2\\_-sY/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/193hT1f-Ckgwf-upgBA7bzfJBKb2_-sY/view?usp=sharing)

<sup>22</sup> A city with a large airbase located in the central part of Azerbaijan.

60. The following recording (*Annex 14*<sup>23</sup>) shows a captive POW stripped topless of his uniform (*see image 35*), seated next to an Azerbaijani captor and made repeat greeting phrases towards Celilabad<sup>24</sup>.



35

61. In another video (*Annex 15*<sup>25</sup>) Azerbaijani soldiers are insulting the Armenian prisoners of war who are sitting inside the van handcuffed and blindfolded (*see image*



36

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<sup>23</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FslidEwL1chJJewlkePhcUWgcB8REK6In/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>24</sup> One of the 66 districts of Azerbaijan with a capital of the same name.

<sup>25</sup> Available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mKWmTqog7sSi6WtMk1QGgUYIlgDnnIH/view?usp=sharing>.

36). One of the soldiers is ordering the captives to say “Karabakh is Azerbaijan!”.

62. Article 13 of GC III states that POWs must at all times be protected from acts of violence and intimidation, particularly in the context of receiving insults and being subjected to public curiosity. The materials present a clear demonstration of the ways that Azerbaijani soldiers abuse the state of captivity of Armenian POWs, by constantly putting them in positions where their dignity and humaneness are being systematically violated. In addition, the Article further emphasizes that the treatment of captives should not in no manner be acted upon as measures of reprisal. While Article 17 of the mentioned convention states that “*Prisoners of war who refuse to answer may not be threatened, insulted, or exposed to any unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind.*”

### **Effects on the general public**

63. The monitoring and the evidence of undeniable war crimes continuously committed by the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces indicate that this unlawful and terroristic approach against ethnic Armenians is widely adopted by the Azerbaijani military and enjoys support and guidance from the state. **At the same time, the monitoring indicates that the photo and video depictions of these crimes are being praised by the Azerbaijanis in various social network platforms, which is a result of an extremely high level of Armenophobia. A more detailed analysis of how the Azerbaijani state-led systemic policies of Armenophobia is the root cause for the encouragement of hatred, torture and ill-treatment of can be found in the Ad-hoc public report On Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia published by the Human Rights Defender of RA<sup>26</sup>.**

64. The image below (*see image 37*) captures the culprit placing an item resembling a stone-like item between the buttocks of a stripped dead person, with his/her underwear visibly left hanging down his/her thighs. From the positioning of the body, it is unclear whether the victim had been violated at any stage or not. However, it is clear that the perpetrators have staged the scene with the purpose of denigrating the victim's dignity.

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<sup>26</sup> Available at <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf>.



37

65. Some videos were posted via a telegram channel named “khacherubka” on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, 2022. The term “khacherubka” (хачерубка) is a derivative of two Russian words “khach” (хач) and “rubka” (рубка). “Хач”<sup>27</sup> is a denigrating term usually used by nationalists towards persons of Armenian descent (particularly in the context of ex-Soviet nations), while the word “рубка” translates into English as “felling”. Therefore, the channel that had initially posted the video with the alleged female sniper is literally named “the felling of Armenians”. The comment section under the post in concern and the channel in general<sup>28</sup> are yet another demonstration of the degree of continuously state perpetuated Armenophobia that are deeply entrenched in the Azerbaijani society at large.

66. The comment sections (*see images 38, 39*) under the group posts are filled with hatred and animosity from the Azerbaijani public towards Armenian POWs and Armenians in general, further proving the effects of the deeply rooted state programmed Armenophobia.

<sup>27</sup> From the Armenian word “խաչ” – literally “cross”.

<sup>28</sup> The telegram channel “ХАЧЕРУБКА 18+” <https://web.telegram.org/k/#@KHACHERUBKA>.



38



39

67. Some users have gone beyond and created stickers<sup>29</sup> (see images 40, 41) with depictions of Azerbaijani war crimes as reaction tools to express emotions.



40



41

68. The continued public and media exposure given to the Armenian soldiers who have fallen into captivity of the Azerbaijani side, demonstrate the extent to which Azerbaijani armed forces are disposed to be disregarding international humanitarian standards for the treatment of POWs. The fact of the matter is that the gravity of the committed crimes is exacerbated when their footages are posted on the worldwide web, placing them as subjects of public curiosity. Such trend is a direct continuation of Azerbaijani state practices, which has seen life and been reported on multiple occasions previously and continues to be prominent for the current and any future escalations.

**69. These cruel and absolutely disrespectful actions by Azerbaijani Armed Forces outraging upon personal dignity of members of Armenian soldiers are consequences**

<sup>29</sup> Items that are similar to emojis – used for expressing certain feelings

**of extremely high level of state supported hatred towards ethnic Armenians. Filming and disseminating these types of footages throughout social networks have the precise purpose of mocking and humiliating the relatives of the POWs and dead Armenian soldiers as well as terrorize the Armenian society in general.**

**70. This policy must be condemned in a strict manner and all the persons responsible for committing these cruel war crimes must be brought to justice. Azerbaijani authorities must investigate and prosecute the responsible military officers. Otherwise, the impunity will pave the way for willful killings of Armenian soldiers and the members of Azerbaijani military will maintain their cruel, criminal approach towards the ethnic Armenians. A fact that has been emphasized on multiple occasions in previous reports of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia<sup>30</sup>.**

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<sup>30</sup> See e.g. Ad Hoc Public reports *“Responsibility of Azerbaijan for Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Armenian Captives: Evidence-Based analysis”* and *“A Park of Killed Armenian Soldiers and Chained Prisoners of War Opened in Baku”*, available at: <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/5c7485fdc225adfd8a35d583830dcd17.pdf> and <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/fec534aee0fe528fe043e41c90cd83b5.pdf>