



**The Human Rights Defender of the
Republic of Armenia**



Communiqué by the Human Rights Defender of Armenia

Updated 14 September 2022 (by 14h00)

Yerevan, Armenia

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UPDATE

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES/RIGHT TO LIFE, HUMAN DIGNITY

PoWs

1. According to videos (3) disseminated on Azerbaijani social media, the Azerbaijani armed forces have a number of captured Armenian prisoners of war¹. Three Armenian PoWs have been identified by HRDO upon the application of the families and relatives and based on the videos being circulated in the Azerbaijani media environment. This information was shared with ICRC.

Dead Armenian soldiers being sneered

2. The recording of the bodies of the killed/dead Armenian servicemen and its dissemination on social platforms is widespread. ² HRDO office is carrying out thorough verification work. So far, we were able to verify the following videos:

- A video depicts the transfer of Armenian prisoners of war on the floor of a military truck. In particular, the Armenian prisoners of war have their hands tied, lying face-down on the floor of the truck, although it is clearly visible in the video that there are seats, which are not even occupied³.
- Another video is being disseminated where the bodies of killed servicemen wearing the uniform of the Armenian Armed Forces are being subjected to mutilation and desecration (the alleged Azerbaijani serviceman who is recording the video is walking on the dead bodies, stands on the body of a killed serviceman, hits his head, etc.).⁴

Displaced persons/vulnerable persons not being evacuated

3. As a result of the Azerbaijani aggression, the residents of Norabak, Kut, Sotk communities were already evacuated at the time of the visit and were located in the cultural house of the Vardenis community, in the cars, or were staying outside of the cultural house. Most of them were children, women, and elderly people without any condition.

4. At least 2750 persons were displaced from the Sotk, Kut, Norabak, Azat, Ayrk, Pretuk, Kutakan, Tsav, Nerkin Hand, Shikahox, Chakaten, Axitu, Akner, Veri Shen communities.

5. The private interviews held by the representatives of the Defender's Office, which have been double-checked with the Administrative Head of the Community, proved that 2 elderly

¹ Sensitive content <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FuBMqa-AmczVRMoLXJsK0EipA7bT8Ba8/view?usp=sharing>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rr1uXBtAzue9CN2dybd3xkiGtnDFFmXv/view?usp=sharing>
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1puJ7d8ZM7zfbkZkMbJdNjFIYb-MeXlI0/view?usp=sharing>

² Sensitive content:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Yu0lqUeENhA7_i8OGOEvzpR58mxyPMBc/view?usp=sharing

³ Sensitive video:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19NVYIBIOycpnDavnW446bPoYKyegKhNh/view?usp=sharing>

⁴ Sensitive content:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dPljV08ihPR8Z0gqQQEV7TiNqZixcMNA/view?usp=sharing>

women, one of which is a woman with a disability (MSD) remained in Sotk village, and still are unable to evacuate. According to the information received on September 14, 1 person is still in the village.

Injured soldiers and civilians

6. According to data of the HRD Office, 77 soldiers were injured in Gegharkunik province, including 3 civilians. During the visit to Gegharkunik province, the HRD team visited 2 civilians in Martuni medical center. One of the civilians was an older woman, who had received a shrapnel wound in her thigh. The other civilian was a man, who had injuries on his hand.

7. 1 civilian was injured in Jermuk, Vayots Dzor Province. 1 civilian had received a shrapnel wound in Sisian, Syunik Province. 1 civilian was wounded in the head in Tegh community, Syunik Province.

TARGETING CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE:

Houses

8. The Azerbaijani military attack on Armenia is deliberately targeting peaceful civilians and the civilian infrastructure, including houses, of the border communities in three major regions: Gegharkunik, Syunik and Vayots Dzor. The indiscriminate attacks pose a real danger to the rights of the civilian population, including their health, and life, as well as their property.

9. On September 13-14 the Azerbaijani military forces opened fire in the direction of civilian settlements in the vicinity of Goris. In particular, two hours after the attack, 5 houses were bombed in Verishen village.

10. On September 13-14 in the Kut community 4 houses were damaged, garage and other household buildings, as well as cars, were damaged. (See Annex 1, Photo 1)

11. On September 13-14 in the Sotk community, 200 houses were damaged, 50 of which were totally demolished.

12. One of the residents of Verishen village informed that the basement and the house walls were destroyed. She said they were near the basement of the house when they heard the loud noise of the bombing and saw the rising smoke.⁵

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https://www.civilnet.am/news/674428/%D5%BD%D5%B5%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6%D5%AB%D6%84%E2%80%A4-%D5%BE%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%AB%D5%B7%D5%A5%D5%B6-%D5%A2%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%BE%D5%A1%D5%B5%D6%80%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B4-%D5%A9%D5%AB%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%BE%D5%B8%D6%80%D5%BE%D5%A5%D5%AC-%D5%A7-%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%B2%D5%A1%D5%B2-%D5%A2%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%B9%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%A9%D5%B5%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6%D5%A8/?fbclid=IwAR3sLglY4vbumY22vv_TUH29tlmCjq0vbo4-bjRB9PwyO4ZfWIvKKQsQkzs

13. In Akner village the house was shelled on September 14 (around 12:30). (Annex 1, Photo 2)

Administrative buildings, cars

14. The monitoring conducted by the Defender's office and the study of collected facts prove that the actions of the Azerbaijani armed forces continue to be accompanied by targeted and indiscriminate attacks on civilian infrastructures, in gross violation of international humanitarian law, and the Geneva Conventions.

15. In the Kut community of Gegharkunik province, the municipality building, the part of which served as a medical center, was shelled⁶.

16. The administrative building of the Geghamasar community of Gegharkunik province was damaged.⁷

17. On September 14, a civilian car was shelled in Jermuk, where 1 civilian was hospitalized (See Annex I, Photo 3).

Electricity supply lines, etc

18. Objects deemed indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies, and irrigation works, are also protected under IHL.

19. Power cords and two auxiliary buildings were damaged in the Aghitu settlement of the Sisian community. The village has been deprived of electricity since September 13.

20. In the Srashen and Noravan settlement of the Sisian community, power cords were also damaged. (See Annex 1, Photo 4)

MATERIAL DAMAGES / RIGHT TO PROPERTY

21. The use of ammunition against populated settlements is a grave breach of international humanitarian law, and a grave breach of Azerbaijan's international human rights obligations, including its positive obligations with respect to the right to property.

22. Due to the unlawful actions of Azerbaijan, many houses were damaged, and people were deprived of the opportunity to use their houses in a proper way or at all.

ENVIRONMENT

⁶ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q3sFn3R-Vxwgh4krfFTgrbbnf5x0Skmd/view?usp=sharing>

⁷ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j0Y4yGhws2tKCs3oBOSsZZDg_pcR3eRA/view?usp=sharing

23. Under Protocol III to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, it is prohibited to make forests or other kinds of plants cover the object of attack by incendiary weapons except when such natural elements are used to cover, conceal or camouflage combatants or other military objectives, or are themselves military objectives.

24. A fire has broken out in the forested areas in the vicinity of Jermuk city with 3 main fire flames. The firefighters can't effectively function on the ground due to unstopped danger of being targeted. The coverage of the fire was about 5-6 hectares. On the morning of September 14, the fire was put out. 3 firefighters were injured.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

25. As a result of the Azerbaijani aggression, children are not able to realize their right to education. Teachers and children of the schools of border villages of Kapan, Goris, or other settlements in Syunik province were deprived of the opportunity to reach educational institutions, due to the security issues of the roads under the direct target of the Azerbaijani armed forces.

26. The use of weapons of various calibers by the Azerbaijani armed forces in the Vayots Dzor, Syunik, and Gegharkunik provinces had become more intense on the morning of September 13, when children had to go to school and kindergarten.

27. In some schools of Syunik province, for example, in Sisian, Tsav, Ishkhanasar, Nerkin Hand, and Bardzravan communities, as well as in some communities of Vayots Dzor, for example, in Jermuk, classes were not taking place at all. In some schools, for instance, in Shurnukh, Tchakaten, classes were held remotely.

28. Although instructions of the territorial administration bodies to conduct classes remotely, due to continuous intense shelling, in the majority of schools in the affected regions, it is not practically possible to organize the class process in any way. This was caused, among other things, by the repetitive internet connection interruptions.

29. The educational institution of the Sotk village of Gegharkunik province was damaged.

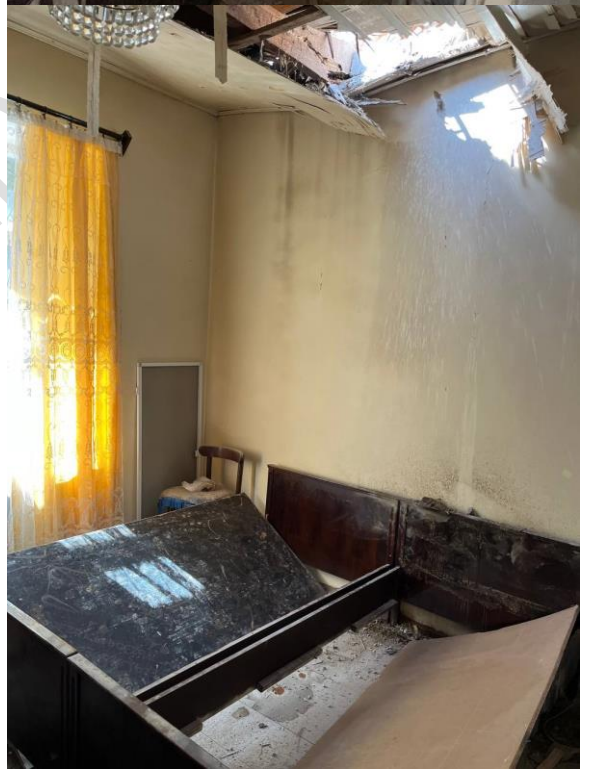
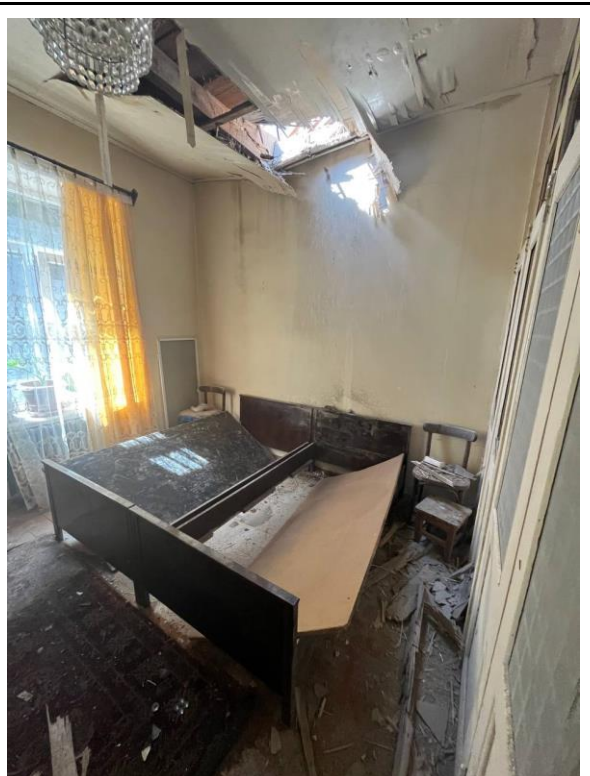
30. The RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports took a decision to provide leave in case of necessity to the educational institutions in Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor, and Syunik provinces, on the condition that the missed lessons will be filled in the future.

Photo 1



House shelled in Kut community

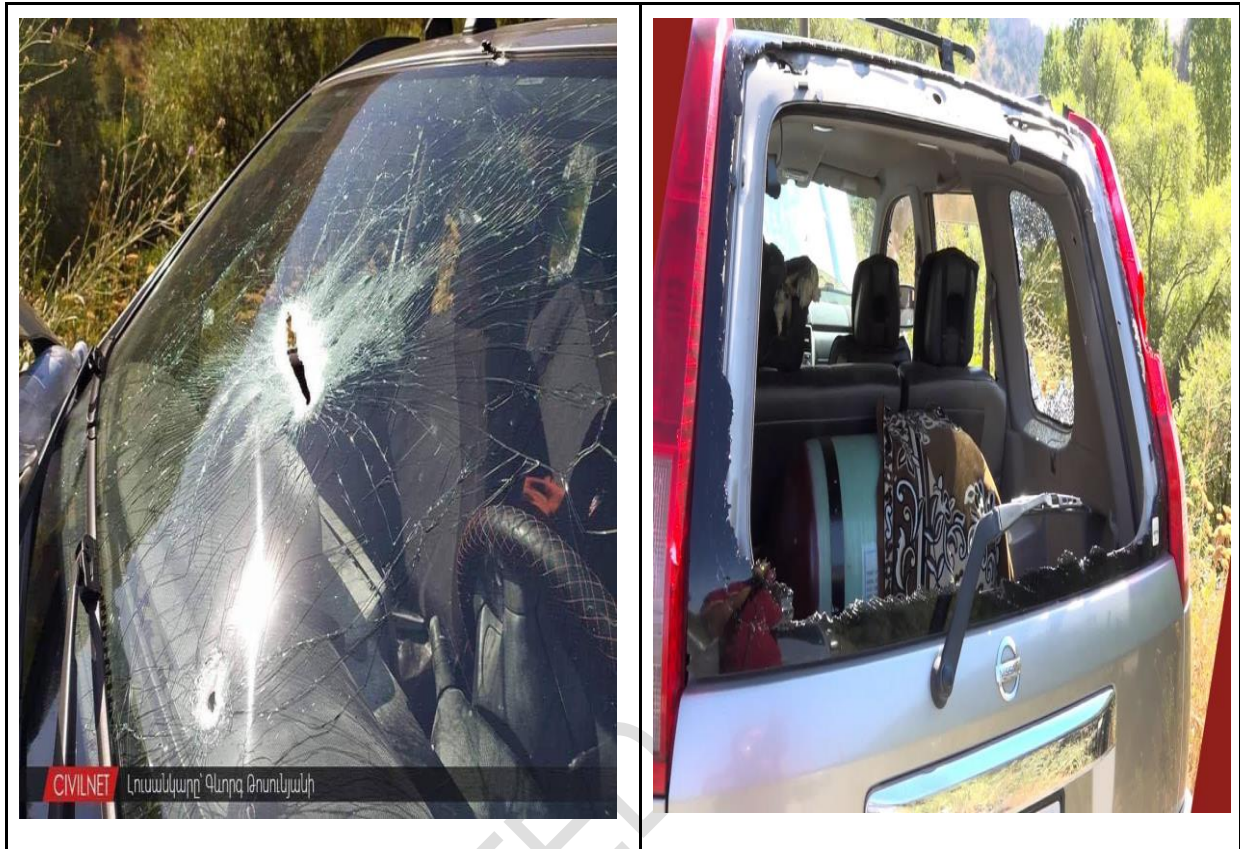
PHOTO 2





House shelled in Akner community on September 14

PHOTO 3



A civilian car was shot in Jermuk city and the driver was hospitalized, September 14

PHOTO 4



Power cords of Srashen community