



**THE HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENDER OF ARMENIA**



**THE HUMAN RIGHTS
OMBUDSMAN OF ARTSAKH**



**FORTH AD HOC REPORT
ON TORTURE AND INHUMAN TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF ARTSAKH DEFENSE
ARMY AND CAPTURED ARMENIANS BY AZERBAIJANI ARMED FORCES
(FROM NOVEMBER 4-18, 2020)**

WARNING!

18+

**YEREVAN
STEPANAKERT
NOVEMBER 2020**

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
1. Treatment of Prisoners of War and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces	4
2. Humiliating Treatment of Dead Persons	10

Introduction

Since October, 2020 the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) has presented to international community three ad hoc reports on inhuman treatment of members of Artsakh Defense Army and captured Armenians as the Azerbaijani armed forces continued the offensive against Artsakh along with committing new war crimes.

The mentioned ad hoc reports include findings of the Ombudsman concerning the inhuman and cruel treatment of captured Armenians, prisoners of war and bodies of killed members of the Artsakh Defense Army (hereinafter referred to as ADA) that constitute war crimes under international law. Those reports include results of monitoring initiated by the Ombudsman starting from September 27 to November 4.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijani armed forces have maintained the adopted criminal approach and have continued committing atrocious acts towards prisoners of war, captured Armenians and bodies of deceased ADA members. Hence, the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh and the Human Rights Defender of Armenia continue to carry out monitoring and documentation of materials demonstrating the inhuman treatment of prisoners of war and bodies of killed ADA members by Azerbaijani armed forces which are being emerged until now.

Both National Human Rights Institutions constantly stress out that the impunity and the absence of appropriate condemnation for committed war crimes serve as a favorable environment for Azerbaijani side for committing new atrocities with even more violence, cynicism and hatred towards ethnic Armenians, whether they are combatants, rendered *hors de combat* or are members of peaceful civilian population even in case of established ceasefire.

These acts that violate and disregard the principles of international law and human rights must be condemned in a strict manner.

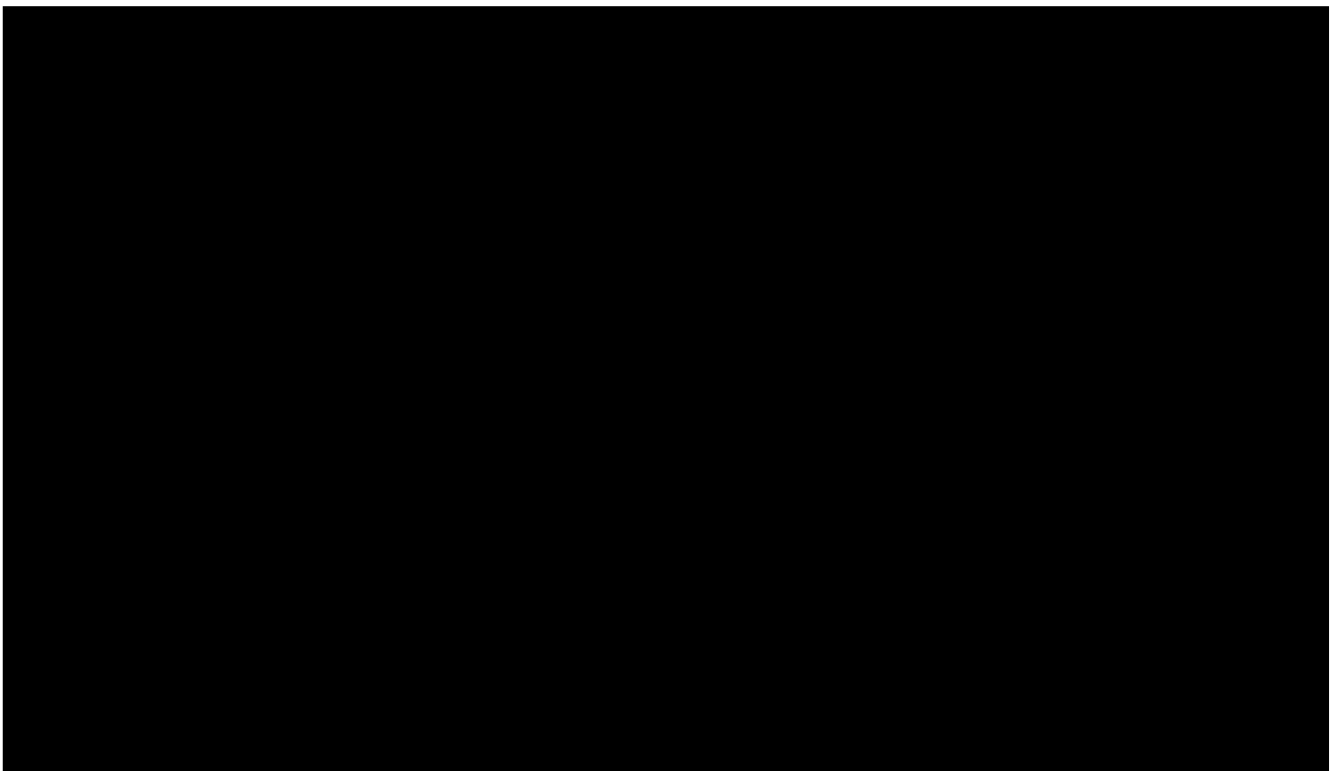
Viewer warning: the following Report and its Annexes contain violent and gory materials.

1. Treatment of Prisoners of War and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces

The Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh and the Human Rights Defender of Armenia continue obtaining evidence of war crimes committed by Azerbaijani armed forces concerning the treatment of prisoners of war, persons rendered *hors de combat* and captured Armenians.

A video footage (Annex 1¹) that has been disseminated through Azerbaijani internet sources demonstrates how a member of Azerbaijani armed forces approaches a helpless wounded ADA member lying in a trench and brutally kills him with multiple shots (*see images a and b*).

The video contains Russian subtitles according to which member of Azerbaijani armed forces is told to “*shoot to the last bullet*” at a captured ADA member. This deliberate action constitutes a war crime of willful killing as a former combatant, who was obviously wounded and non-resistant, was ruthlessly murdered, instead of receiving appropriate support that is prescribed by International Humanitarian Law.



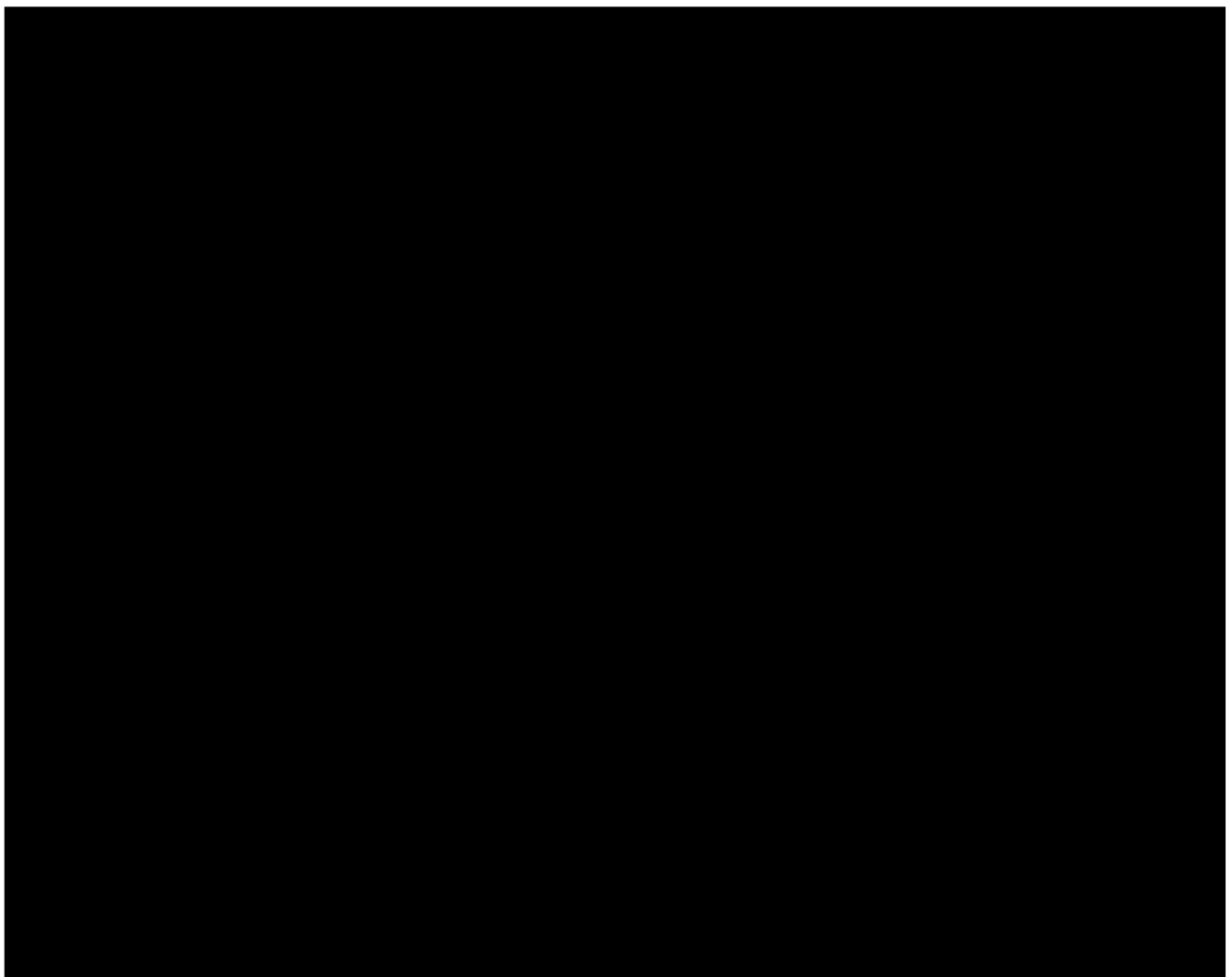
(a)

(b)

¹ Available at [REDACTED]

Azerbaijani internet sources uploaded another footage (Annex 2²) claiming that members of Azerbaijani armed forces captured an Armenian spy. In the mentioned video, a member of Azerbaijani armed forces in an extremely cruel manner cuts with a knife the whole ear of an alive person with civilian clothing (apparently elder) who was lying on the floor with his face down and with his hands tied up behind his back moaning in pain (*see image c*).

Afterwards, another member of Azerbaijani armed forces grabbed captured Armenian by the hair and hit his head to the ground twice which resulted blood splash (*see image d*). At the same time another person hit the shoulder of the captured Armenian using his feet.



(c)

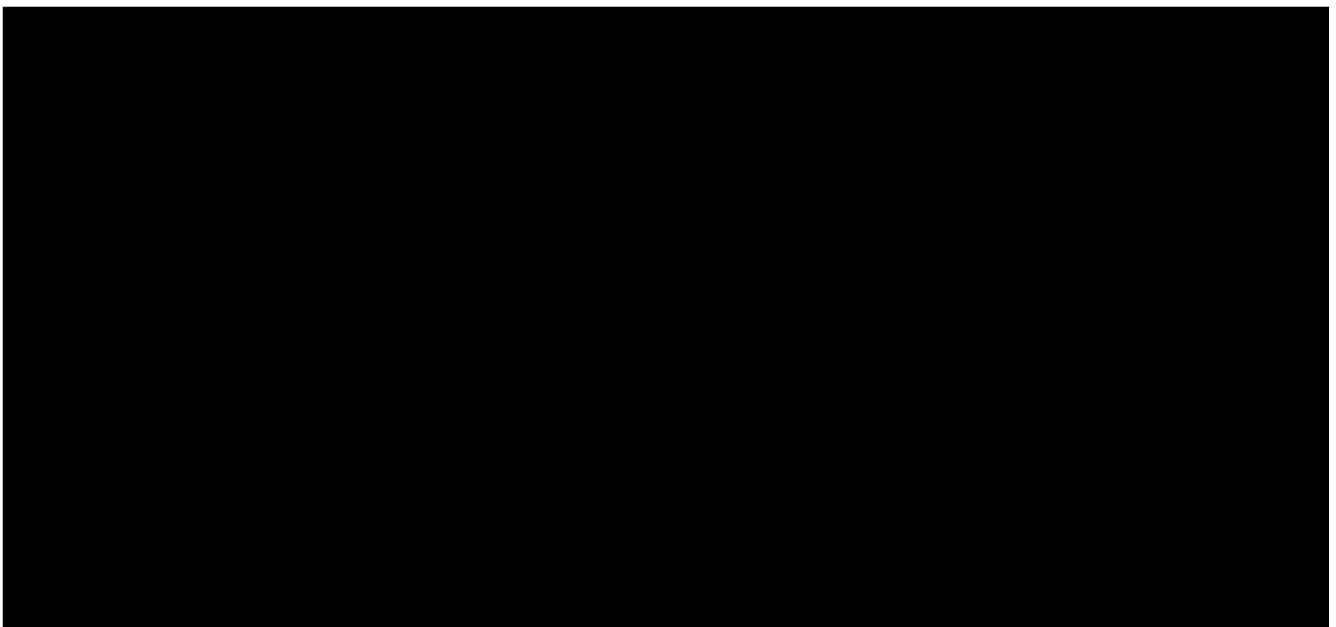
(d)

² Available at [REDACTED]

This extremely cruel footage demonstrating the process of torture by Azerbaijani military has been disseminated through social network by Azerbaijani internet sources.

It should be emphasized that willful killings of non-combatants (including former combatants) are internationally banned war crimes and torture is universally prohibited. These undeniable war crimes committed by members of Azerbaijani armed forces must be condemned internationally and those committed the criminal actions and those responsible for them must be punished by all means of international criminal law. No one shall escape the responsibility for committing those horrific crimes. Furthermore, the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh and the Human Rights Defender of Armenia continuously stress out that the impunity and the absence of an appropriate condemnation serves as a favorable environment for committing new war crimes, thus no prevention of the above-mentioned acts could be expected.

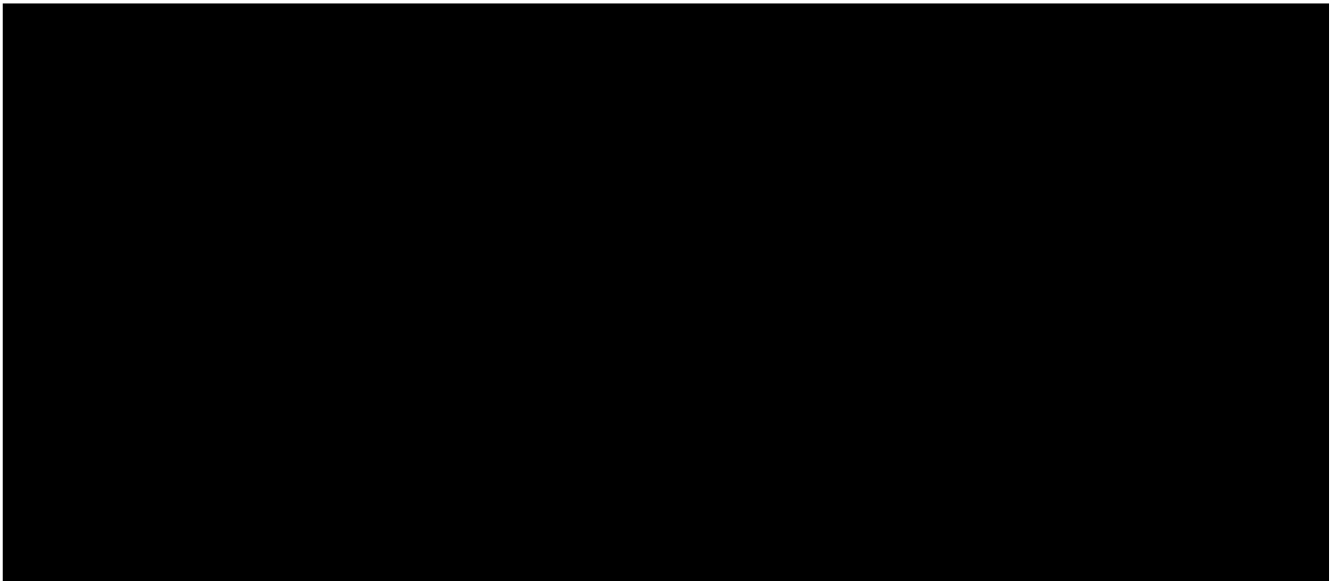
Another video (Annex 3³) demonstrates the treatment of ADA member by Azerbaijani armed forces who claims that is wounded and has been in the stuck position (see image *e*) for a week. In the mentioned footage members of Azerbaijani armed forces are not providing any assistance, including medical, to the wounded ADA member, instead they are insulting and shouting at him, as well as continuing shooting the video with the mere purpose of sharing it on social network.



(*e*)

³ Available at [REDACTED]

In particular, the both Offices received calls from the relatives of the Armenian prisoners of war from the mentioned video (██████████) who told that they had watched the video on Facebook. In the footage, the two Armenian blindfolded prisoners of war are standing with their heads against the wall and their hands tied behind their back.



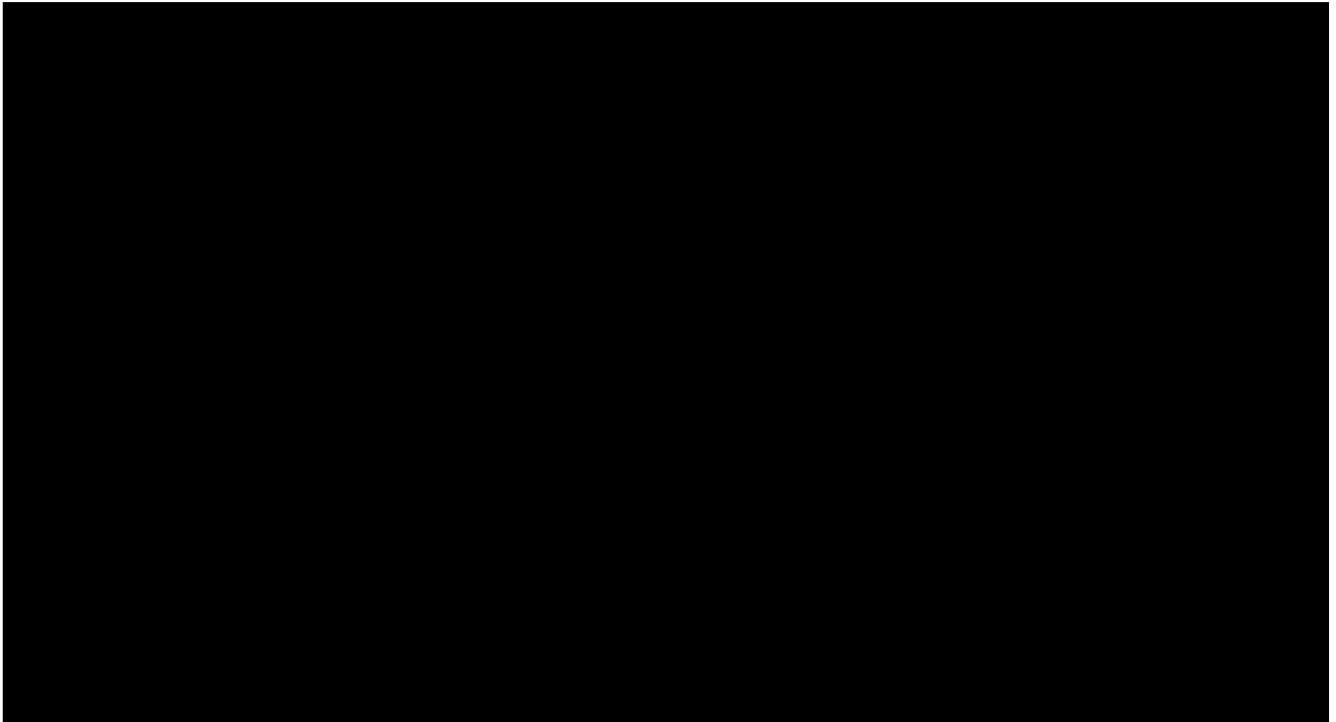
(g)

The [REDACTED] of one of the mentioned captured Armenians [REDACTED] in the abovementioned footage has applied to the Ombudsman of Artsakh and to the Human Rights Defender of Armenia.

⁴ Available at [REDACTED]

⁵ Available at

walk barefooted (see image *j*). In the video the captured elderly person walked with difficulties and was hit to his back by a member of Azerbaijani armed forces.



(j)

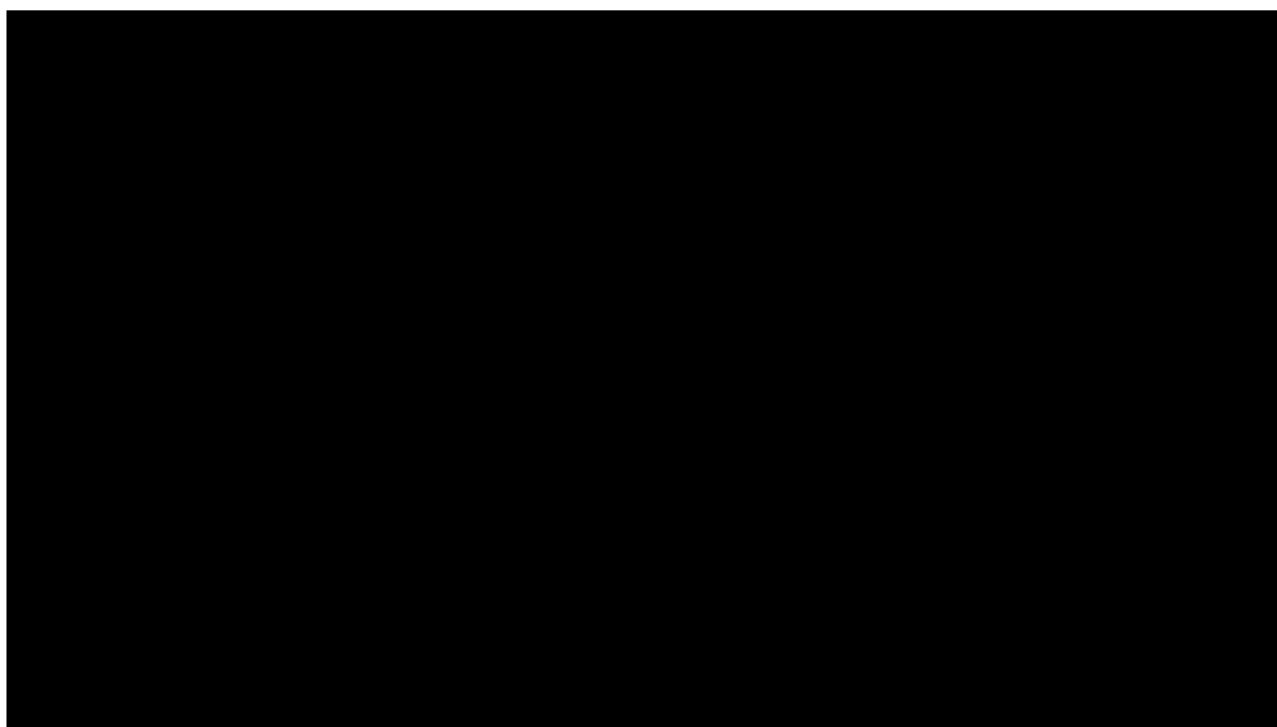
The monitoring demonstrates that Azerbaijani armed forces are continuously applying the adopted cruel and terroristic manners. The Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians are being repeatedly subjected to inhuman treatment even after the established ceasefire which is an evidence that this approach is supported by the state.

Though the previous three ad hoc reports of the Artsakh Ombudsman on the same issue have been presented to the international community, an appropriate and sufficient response has not been acquired, which could at least make pressure on the perpetrators and prevent the new atrocities which the people of Artsakh and Armenia are facing.

2. Humiliating Treatment of Dead Persons

As described previously, the outrage upon personal dignity of dead constitutes a war crime under the International Humanitarian Law. However, monitoring of social media reveals new footages demonstrating how bodies of dead ADA members are being humiliated by Azerbaijani armed forces. These criminal actions are being recorded and uploaded to social media, where the hatred against ethnic Armenians intensifies calling for continuing spreading violence and terror.

In one of the obtained footages (Annex 7⁷) member of Azerbaijani armed forces puts the cut ears of a dead ADA member on the latter's body and in excessively cruel manner stabs the knife in his face multiple times demonstrating unimaginable hatred and violence. The footage also shows a close picture of the face of the killed ADA member after hysterical stabbing by the member of Azerbaijani armed forces. There are numerous stab wounds on his face including in the parts of nose, eyes, cheeks, forehead, etc (see images *k* and *l*).

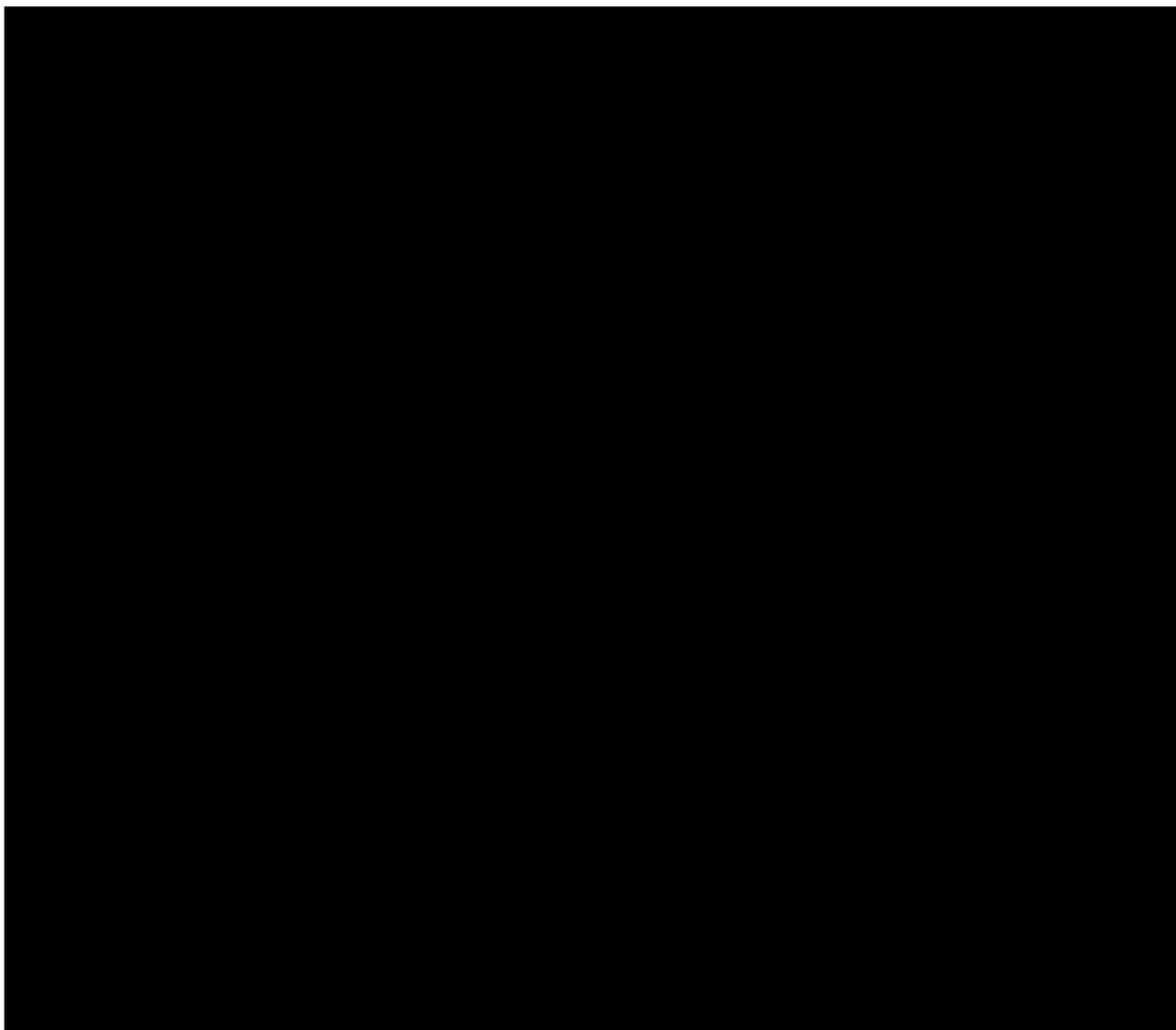


(*k*)

(*l*)

⁷ Available at [REDACTED]

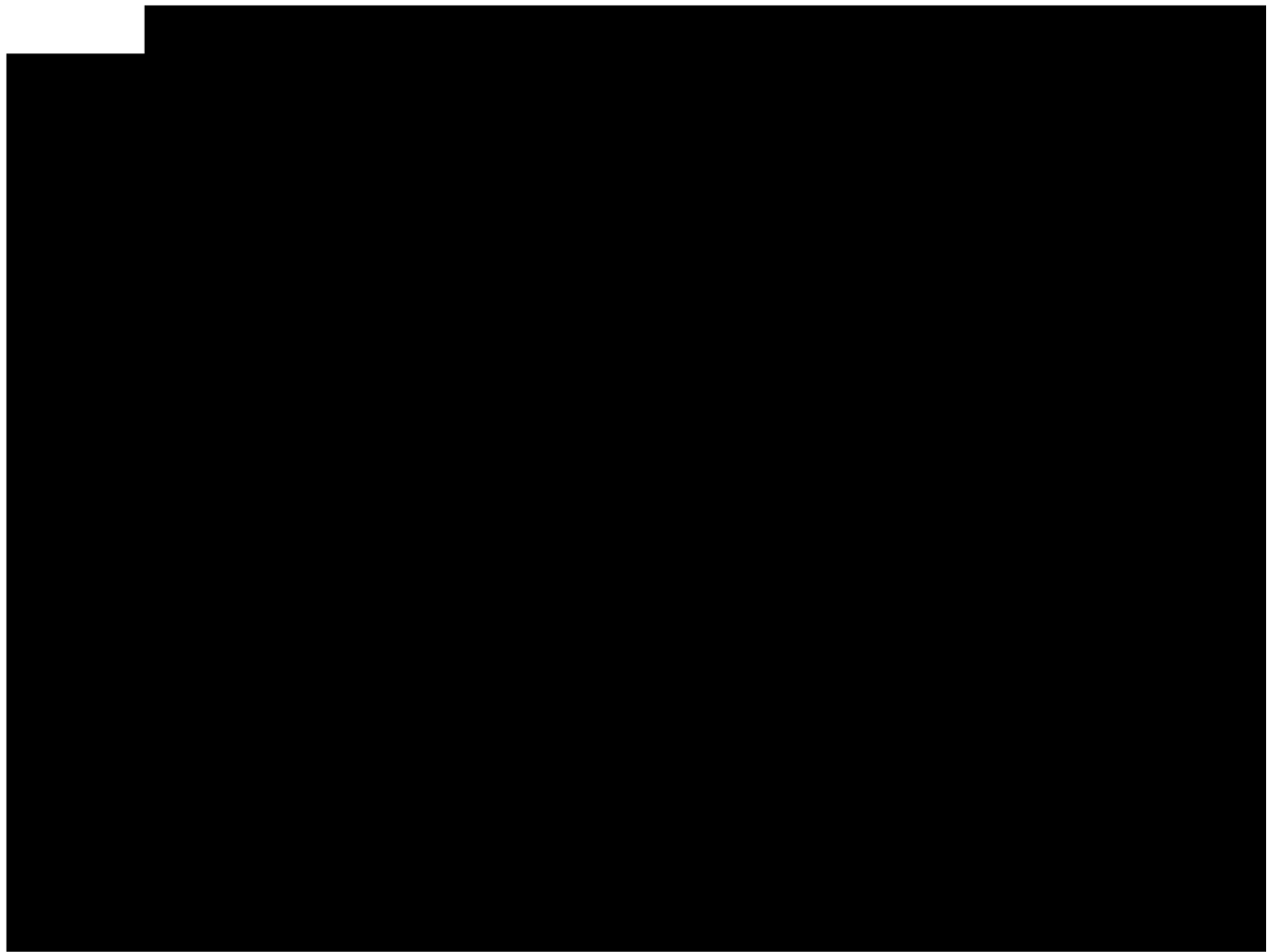
In another footage (Annex 8⁸) disseminated by Azerbaijani internet sources, members of Azerbaijani armed forces cut ears of killed members of ADA. The video depicts the whole process of cutting an ear of deceased member of ADA by member of Azerbaijani armed forces in a coldblooded manner. Then, the mentioned person passes the knife to another member of Azerbaijani armed forces who brutally cuts the ear of another killed ADA member (see images *m*, *n*, *o* and *p*).



(*m*)

(*n*)

⁸ Available at [REDACTED]

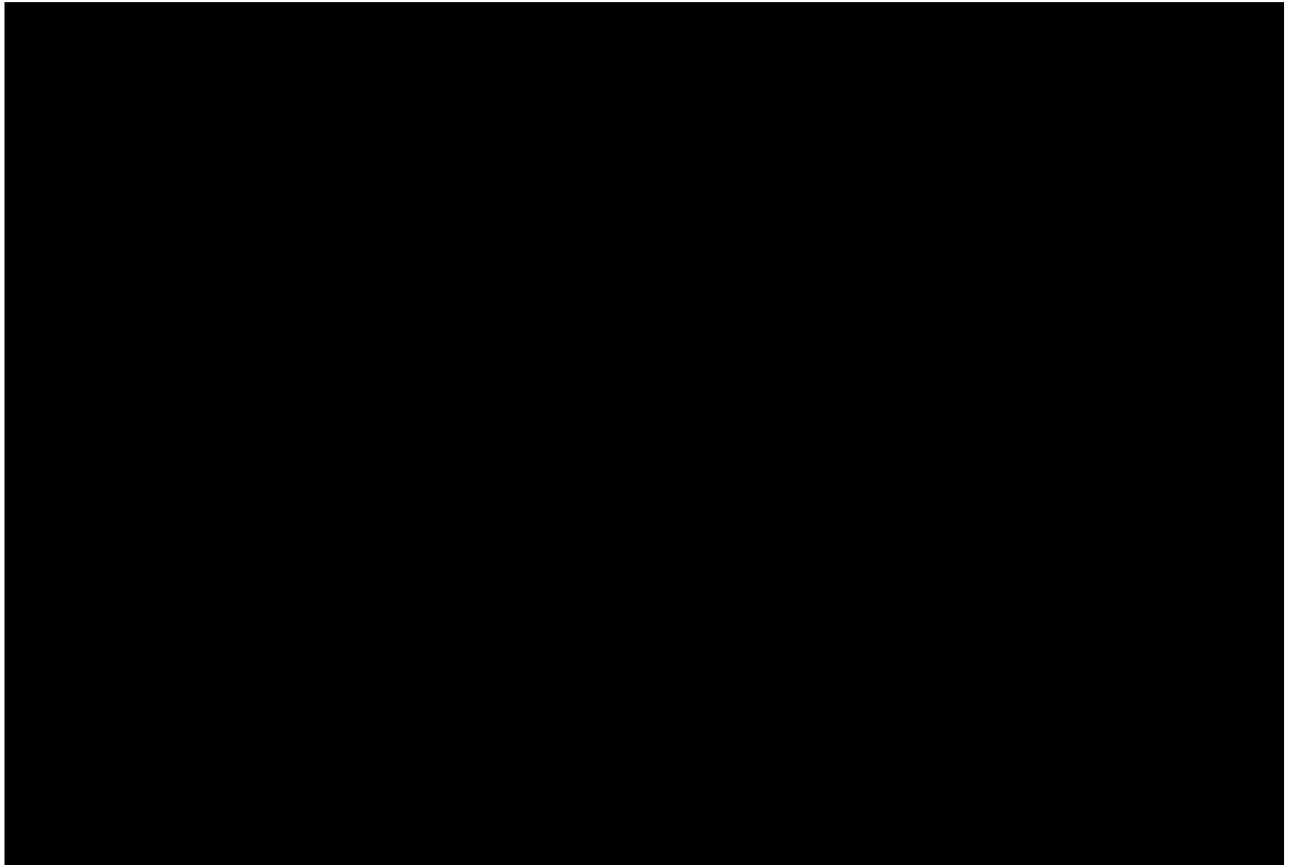


(o)

(p)

Azerbaijani internet sources have also disseminated a video (Annex 9⁹) demonstrating the remains of burned bodies of members of ADA (see images *q* and *r*). The person shooting the video (apparently member of Azerbaijani armed forces) laughs and mocks the remains of members of ADA, [REDACTED] etc.

⁹ Available at [REDACTED]



(q)

(r)

The Artsakh Ombudsman and the Human Rights Defender of Armenia constantly highlight that the cruel and absolutely disrespectful actions by Azerbaijani armed forces outraging personal dignity of members of ADA are consequences of extremely high level of state supported hatred towards ethnic Armenians.

They reiterate that filming and disseminating these kind of video footages throughout social networks have the exact purpose of mocking and humiliating the relatives of the dead ADA members. It is hard to imagine how the sufferings of people who lost their relatives can be aggravated by the videos with such content.

It is important to underline once again that the described treatment of bodies of ADA members by Azerbaijani armed forces grossly violates the International Humanitarian law. The outrage of personal dignity, even in case of dead, constitutes war crime and should be punished. The bodies of all fallen soldiers should be managed in an honorable manner.