



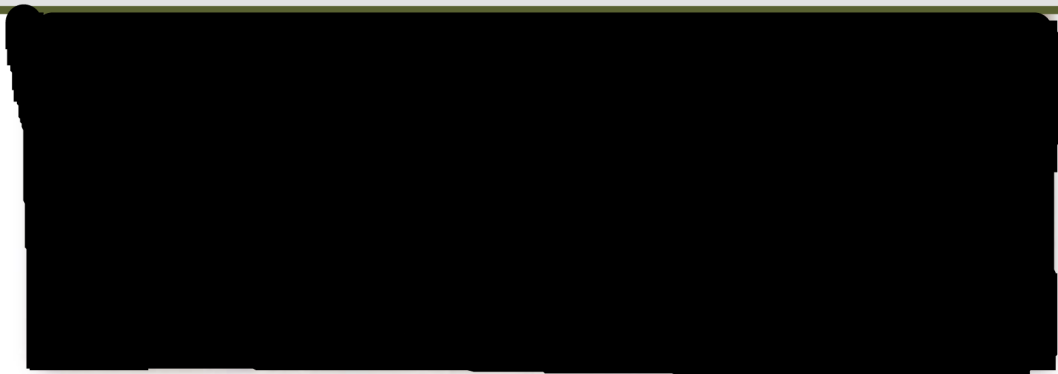
**THE HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENDER OF ARMENIA**



**THE HUMAN RIGHTS
OMBUDSMAN OF ARTSAKH**



**SIXTH AD HOC REPORT
ON TORTURE AND INHUMAN TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF ARTSAKH DEFENSE
ARMY AND CAPTURED ARMENIANS BY AZERBAIJANI ARMED FORCES
(FROM DECEMBER 2-16, 2020)**



WARNING!

18+

**YEREVAN
STEPANAKERT
DECEMBER 2020**

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Introduction

From the very beginning of the Azerbaijani military aggression against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) initiated on September 27, 2020, and after the established ceasefire on November 10, 2020, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh have been monitoring treatment of the members of Artsakh Defense Army (hereinafter referred to as ADA) and captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces.

Monitoring and evidence gathered by the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh clearly show that Azerbaijani Armed Forces committed a large amount of severe war crimes (willful killings, beheadings, torture, ill-treatment, etc.) against ethnic Armenians, including former combatants and members of peaceful civilian population.

The findings and concrete evidence of war crimes and gross violations of International Law committed by Azerbaijan Armed Forces are illustrated in five ad hoc reports (including the materials obtained from September 27 to December 2) that have been submitted to the international bodies.

Until now, the mass media, particularly the Azerbaijani social media sources, ceaselessly publish videos and photos, that depict the degrading treatment by the Azerbaijani military towards the bodies of ADA members, torture and degrading treatment of the captives, no matter they are civilians or former combatants. These footages are being documented, translated for better understanding and analyzed by the two Human Rights Institutions.

Consequently, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh have been constantly stressing that impunity and absence of appropriate condemnation for committed war crimes serve as a favorable environment for Azerbaijani side in order to commit new atrocities with more cruelty and cynicism towards ethnic Armenians, regardless of the fact whether they are combatants, rendered *hors de combat* or members of peaceful civilian population even in case of established ceasefire.

It is important to mention that during this time various articles and publications concerning the treatment of Armenian prisoners of war and other captives, as well as the

treatment of the bodies of fallen members of ADA have been published by international independent organizations and journalists. An important report has been published by the Human Rights Watch, insisting that the Armenian prisoners of war are being badly mistreated¹. Another comprehensive study has been made by the Guardian², etc.

At this point, it should be emphasized that Azerbaijani authorities are artificially protracting the process of exchange of bodies and captives, which has been the case during the military activities, and continues now after the completion of military actions. By all these delays Azerbaijan grossly violates the fundamental requirements absolutely guaranteed by International, including Geneva Conventions.

It is obvious, that the aim of Azerbaijani side is to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and tension in the Armenian society, disrupt the mental immunity, cause mental suffering to the family members of the deceased soldiers and prisoners of war.

Studies of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh prove that such treatment is a result of the organized and disseminated hatred and Armenophobia, as an inseparable systematically applied policy of torture and inhuman treatment.

Therefore, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh, call upon the international community, in particular the organizations, which have a mandate to protect human rights: It is an urgent necessity to resolve this issue with all the means possible and by real actions to release the people from the most atrocious war crimes and cruel continuous captivity.

VIEWER WARNING:

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

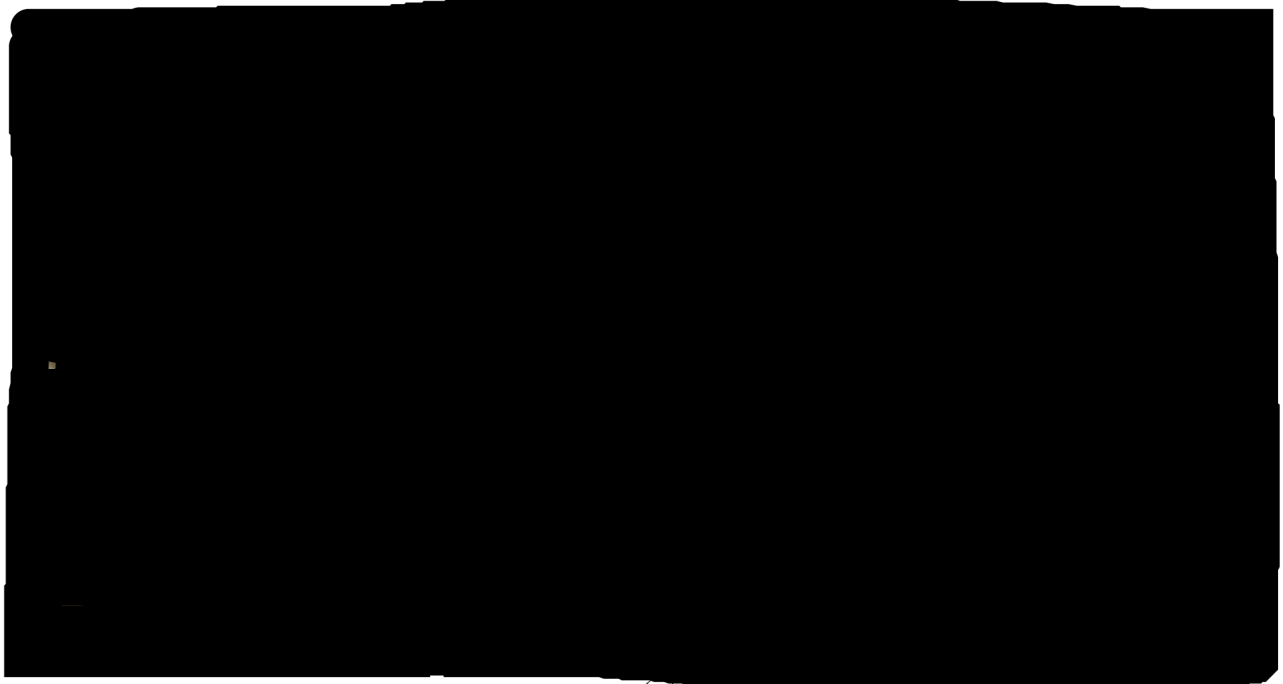
¹ Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/02/azerbaijan-armenian-prisoners-war-badly-mistreated?search=execution>.

² Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/15/two-men-beheaded-in-videos-from-nagorno-karabakh-war-identified>.

1. Willful Killings, Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Prisoners of War and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces

Numerous videos and photos depicting atrocious actions of Azerbaijani Armed Forces against Armenians have been continuously published through Azerbaijani and Turkish sources of social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, etc.)

The previous ad hoc report³ of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh provided a video where the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces put the severed head of an Armenian on a body of a dead animal, accompanied with insults and mockery (see image *a*). On the basis of noteworthy details provided by the mentioned report, it has been assumed that the Armenian has been ruthlessly decapitated while he was alive.



(a)

In this regard, another video (Annex 1⁴) has been uploaded to social media platforms, that precede the events demonstrated in the abovementioned video. The new footage confirms the obvious assumptions that the Armenian has been brutally beheaded whilst alive. Particularly, the mentioned video depicts that two members of Azerbaijani military hold by the hands of the Armenian, [REDACTED] while the third Azerbaijani soldier

³ Fifth Ad Hoc Report on Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Members of Artsakh Defense Army and Captured Armenians by Azerbaijani Armed Forces (From November 19 - December 2, 2020).

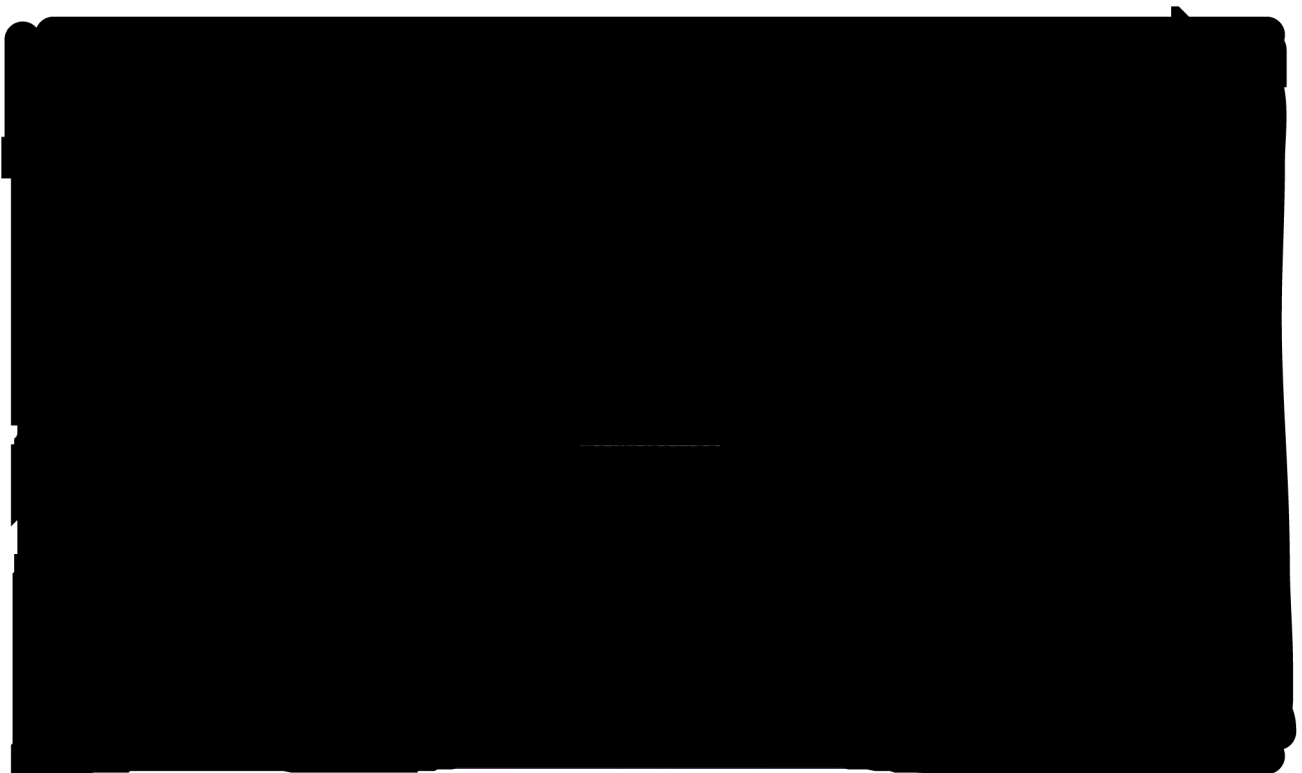
⁴ Available at [REDACTED]

savagely cuts the latter's throat with a knife in order to decapitate him (see image *b*). While the blood flowed from the severed part of [REDACTED] body, a member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces put his foot on the chest of the latter and pushed it to the ground. Another member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces kicked three times the captured Armenian in different parts of the abdomen (see image *d*).

In this video, the mentioned atrocious actions have been accompanied with applauses of the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces, encouraging shouts and insults full of hatred towards the captured Armenian and his ethnicity.

It is also worth mentioning, that in the same video the captured Armenian was without upper wear, barefoot and there was blood below his right knee, apparently flowing from a wound. Therefore, it can be implied that he obviously had been subjected to torture before being brutally killed (see image *c*).

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 of imagination. Moreover, this gruesome crime is followed with actions demonstrating extreme cynicism based on the hatred against ethnic Armenians. The perpetrators must be punished by all means of International Criminal Law.



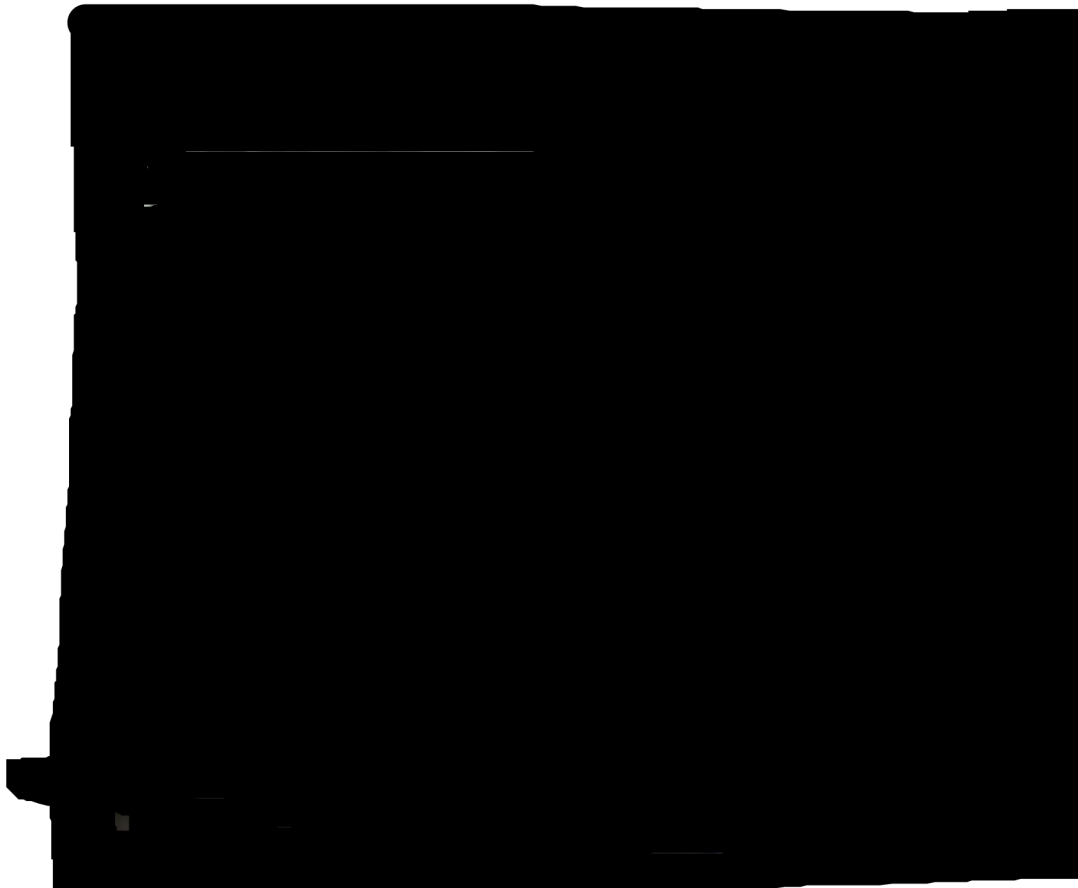
(*b*)

(*c*)

(*d*)

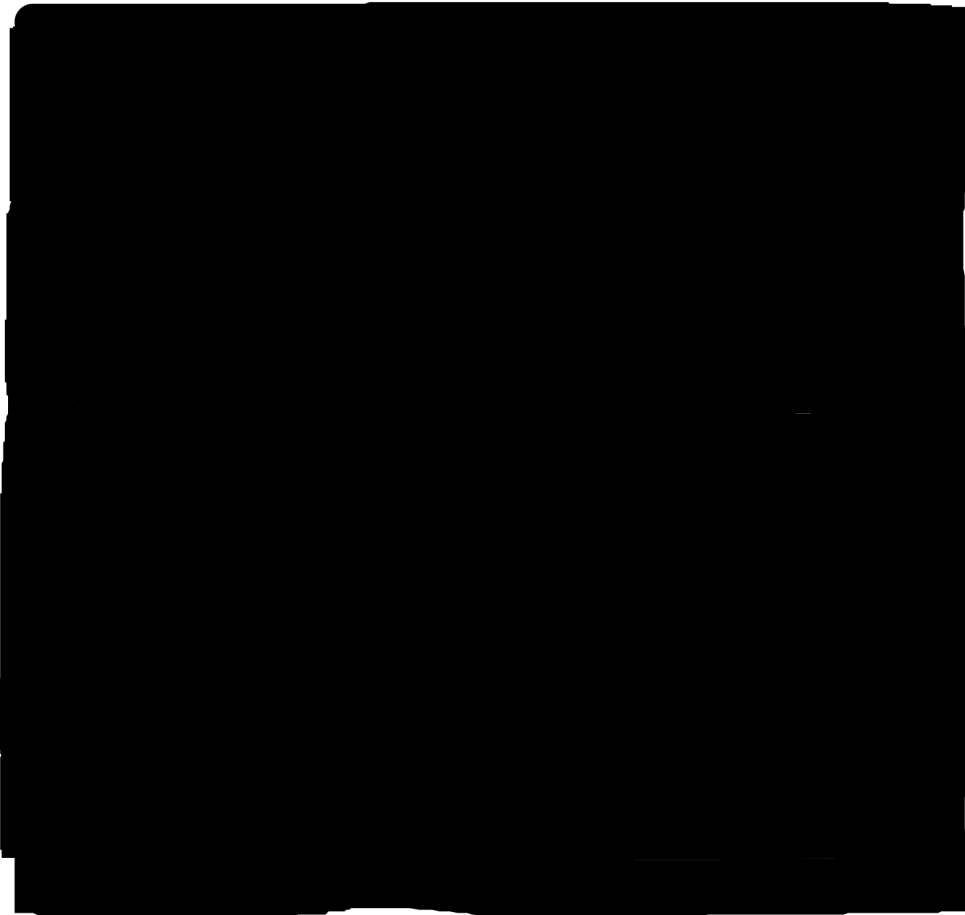
During the military attacks and after the established ceasefire members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces have regularly committed the crime of willful killing against ethnic Armenians. All the materials evidencing the mentioned criminal actions have been documented and presented in the current and preceding reports.

The next video (Annex 2⁵) depicts another grave crime committed against an elderly Armenian, [REDACTED], by the member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces. Particularly, in the mentioned video, the member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces captured the elderly civilian, [REDACTED], who is lying on the ground. The member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces holds the elderly Armenian, presses the latter's hand to the ground with his knee, grabs him by the head and starts cutting his throat with a knife (see images *e* and *f*) passed by another member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces standing beside and watching. During the whole process the elderly Armenian begs to stop and moans, however, it does not cease the perpetrator from his extremely brutal crime.



(*e*)

⁵ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.



(f)

The perpetrators committed this atrocious crime against an unarmed, elderly civilian of an Armenian origin, based on the hatred towards ethnic Armenians, must be condemned and punished for their dreadful deeds by all means of the International Criminal Law.

Azerbaijani internet sources published a video (Annex 3⁶) where thirteen Armenian prisoners of war are kneeled and handcuffed (see image *g*). Further, another video (Annex 4⁷) has been uploaded by the Azerbaijani internet sources claiming that members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces executed Armenian prisoners of war. There are bodies of handcuffed Armenian prisoners of war lying on the ground in the mentioned video (see image *h*). One of the handcuffed bodies has been shot by a member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces, who is not visible in the footage. It is evident that prior to the filming of the video, the Armenians were captured alive, handcuffed and then executed. **Moreover, the close study of the mentioned two videos (see image *i*) indicates that both footages have**

⁶ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.

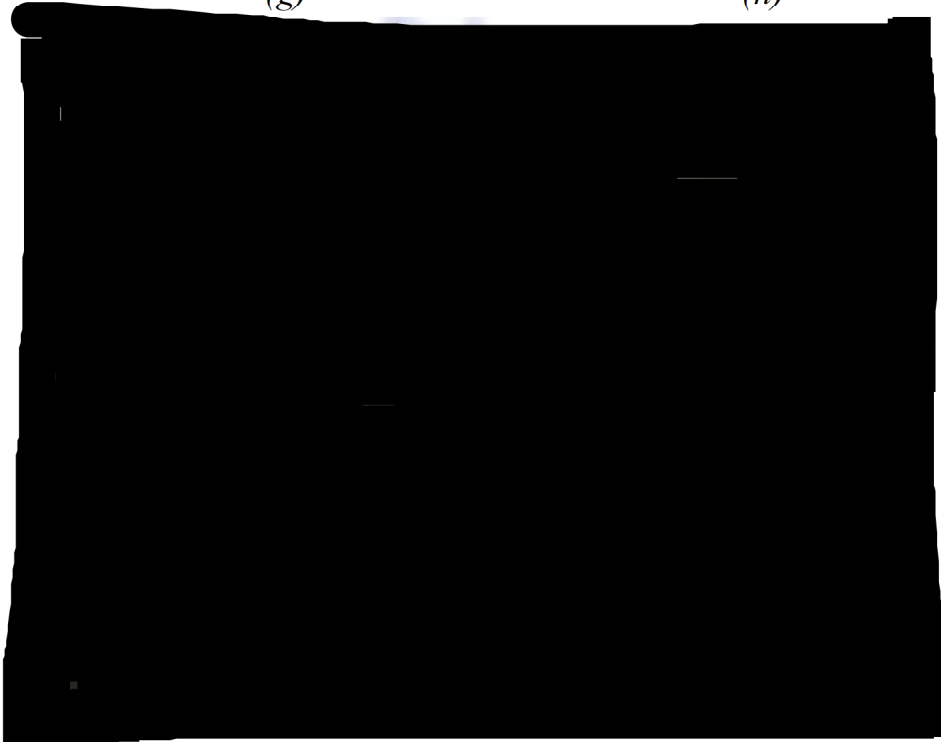
⁷ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.

been filmed at the same place, therefore it can be reasonably assumed that the Annex 4 is the continuation of the video under Annex 5, hence the kneeled prisoners of war have been willfully killed.



(g)

(h)



(i)

The monitoring and the evidence of undeniable war crimes constantly 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.

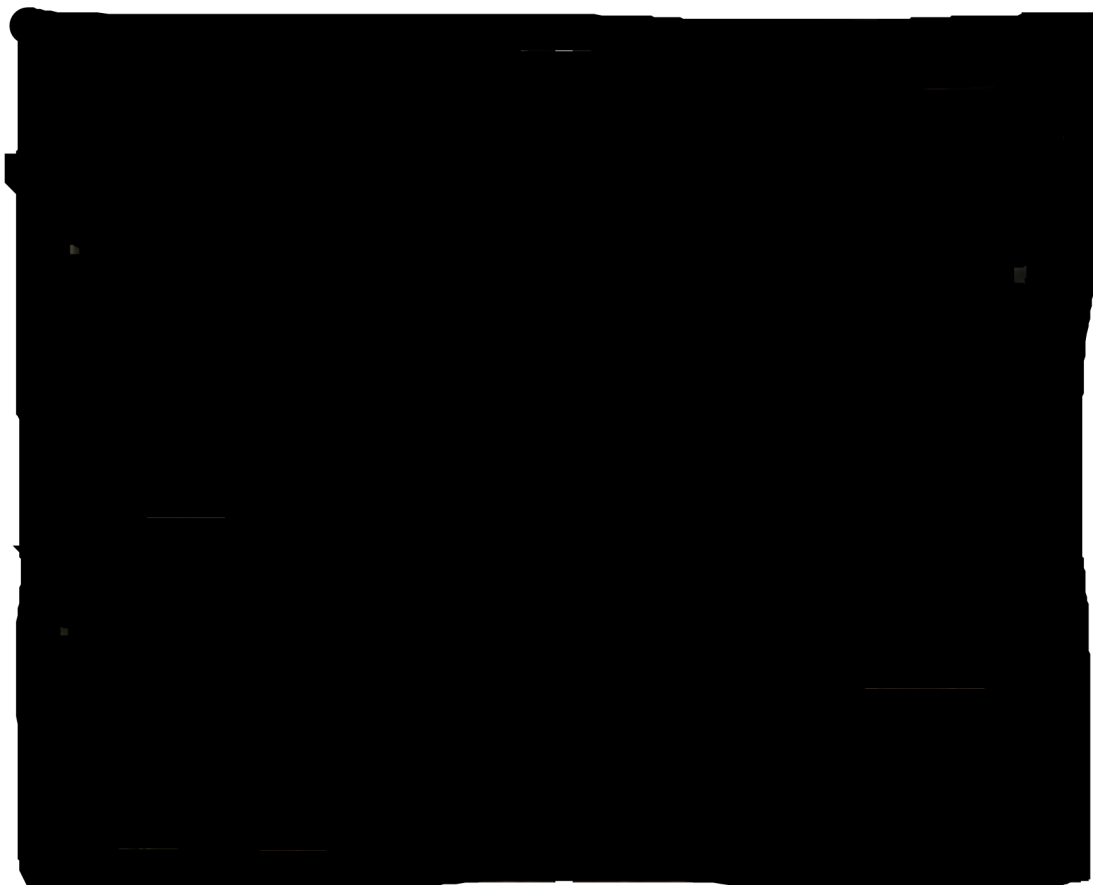
This policy must be condemned in a strict manner and all the persons responsible for committing these cruel war crimes must be brought to justice. Otherwise, the willful killings of Armenians will continue and the members of Azerbaijani military will maintain their cruel, criminal and terroristic approach towards the ethnic Armenians.

Besides committing the crime of willful killing, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces continually subject the captured ethnic Armenians to torture and ill-treatment which has been proved by numerous footages disseminated through internet by Azerbaijanis themselves. The relevant videos, that were available, have been presented in the preceding ad hoc reports of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh. Until now, the social media networks are infested with videos depicting the inhuman treatment of ethnic Armenians by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces. These videos are being uploaded almost every day and are being widely spread through different sources.

Accordingly, in another video (Annex 5⁸) publicized by the Azerbaijani internet sources, the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces surrounded an elderly Armenian, [REDACTED] wearing civilian clothes. In the mentioned video, the captive sits on his knees with his hands tied up behind his back. There is blood on his face near the right eye, nose and mouth, which obviously indicates that the captured elderly person had been severely beaten, before the video was recorded (see image *j*).

In the mentioned video, the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces interrogate the captured Armenian. One of them threatens the captured Armenian (see image *k*) and hits him twice in the head with the weapon's stock, while questioning him in a degrading manner. The same person threatens the Armenian telling him that he will stay alive if he answers the questions. The captive is kicked and also smacked in head multiple times by the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces.

⁸ Available at [REDACTED]



(j)

(k)

These criminal actions of the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces are full of hatred against the Armenians. During questioning the captured Armenian, the member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces continually swears at him, using abusive language. It is noteworthy, that in the discussed footage the same person declares the following:

“we are Azerbaijanis, we are Turks, we will kill all of you [Armenians], jackals”;

“you [Armenians] live as dogs, we will chase you as dogs”;

“all your people [Armenians] will stay on their knees”;

“you [Armenians] are not humans, you hear me? Not humans, you are jackals, not humans”;

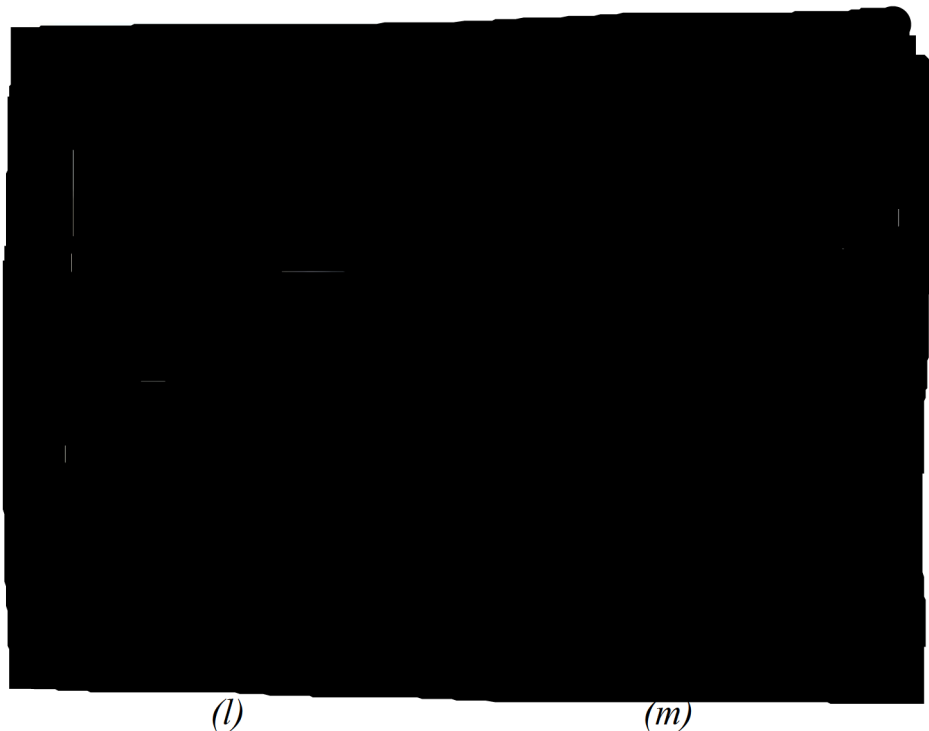
“we [Azerbaijanis] want to kill you all, we will kill all of you – jackals”.

Accordingly, these phrases and, overall, the actions of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces express the extremely high level of Armenophobia and hatred against ethnic Armenians. It is notable, that the presented speech of the abovementioned member of Azerbaijani military repeats the phrase of the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, made in his nationwide address stating that:

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

The mentioned phrase made by the President of Azerbaijan has become a hashtag, a mobilizing motto among Azerbaijanis. Evidence obtained shows that such treatment is a result of the organized and disseminated hatred identical to Armenophobic speeches and words used by the state bodies and politicians¹⁰. As the result of state-supported hatred against ethnic Armenians, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces still continue subjecting the Armenian prisoners of war to inhuman and degrading treatment.

In one of the obtained videos (Annex 6¹¹) Armenian prisoners of war are walking in a row handcuffed, while being beaten and insulted by the armed members of Azerbaijani military (see image *l*). Another disseminated video (Annex 7¹²) depicts the degrading treatment of the Armenian prisoner of war, who is obviously wounded (see image *m*).



⁹ The video is available in Russian at [redacted] see also at [redacted]

¹⁰ See the Ad Hoc Public Report of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh on “Organized Hate Speech and Animosity towards Ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijani as Root Causes of Ethnically Based Torture and Inhuman Treatment by Azerbaijani Armed Forces” at [redacted]

¹¹ Available at [redacted]

¹² Available at [redacted]

In one of the videos uploaded to social network platforms (Annex 8¹³) four Armenian prisoners of war are sitting on their knees holding their hands behind their head. The captives are forced to repeat the words of the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces (are not visible in the footage) in Azerbaijani language. In the video, the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces kick the Armenians when they repeat the words in Azerbaijani language wrongly or not clearly. Moreover, the Armenians are forced to say abusive expressions towards themselves (see image *n*).

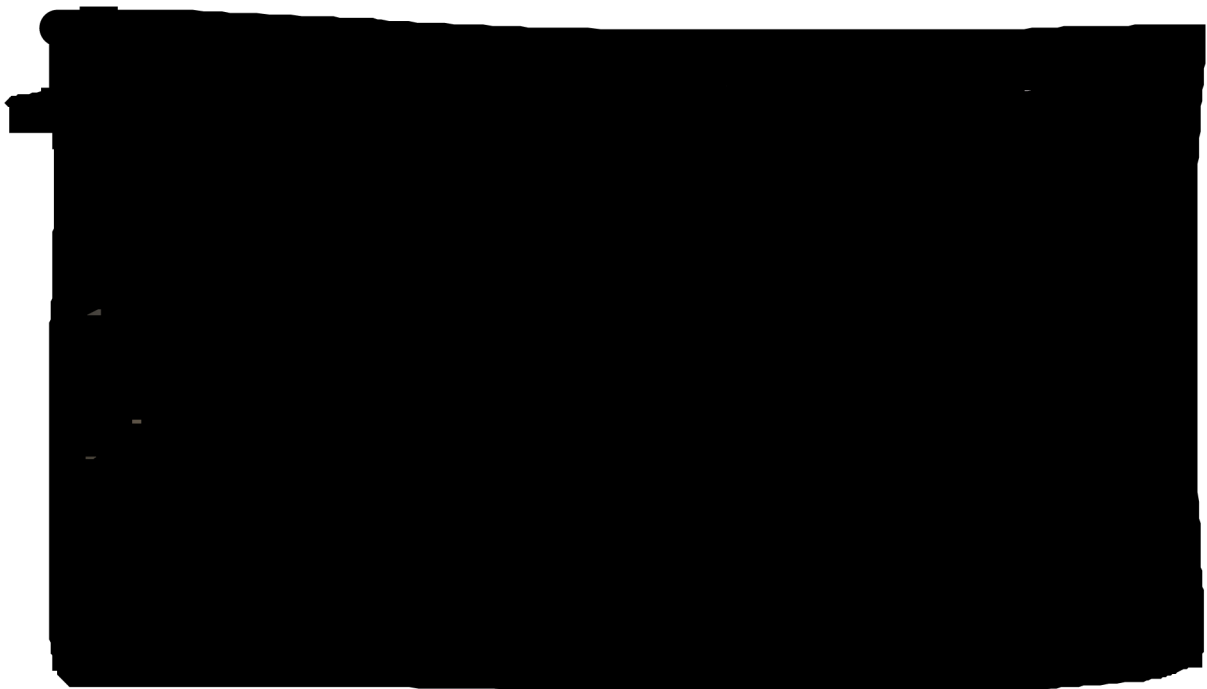


Compelling Armenians to repeat their words, usually of a degrading nature, filming it, and uploading the videos to social networks, is a widespread practice of the Azerbaijani military. Moreover, this dangerous practice continues even after the ceasefire, established on November 10, 2020. **It is important to mention, that on December 11, 2020,**

¹³ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.

Azerbaijani Armed Forces broke the ceasefire established on November 10, and launched an attack against Artsakh. Following these events, new videos have emerged claiming that Azerbaijani soldiers have captured new prisoners of war.

Accordingly, in the videos (Annex 9 and 10¹⁴) that have been uploaded to social network platforms after the Azerbaijani military broke the ceasefire, members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces compel Armenian prisoners of war to tell that “Karabakh is Azerbaijan” and to praise the President of Azerbaijan, under obvious duress, with an intent to humiliate the captives (see image o).

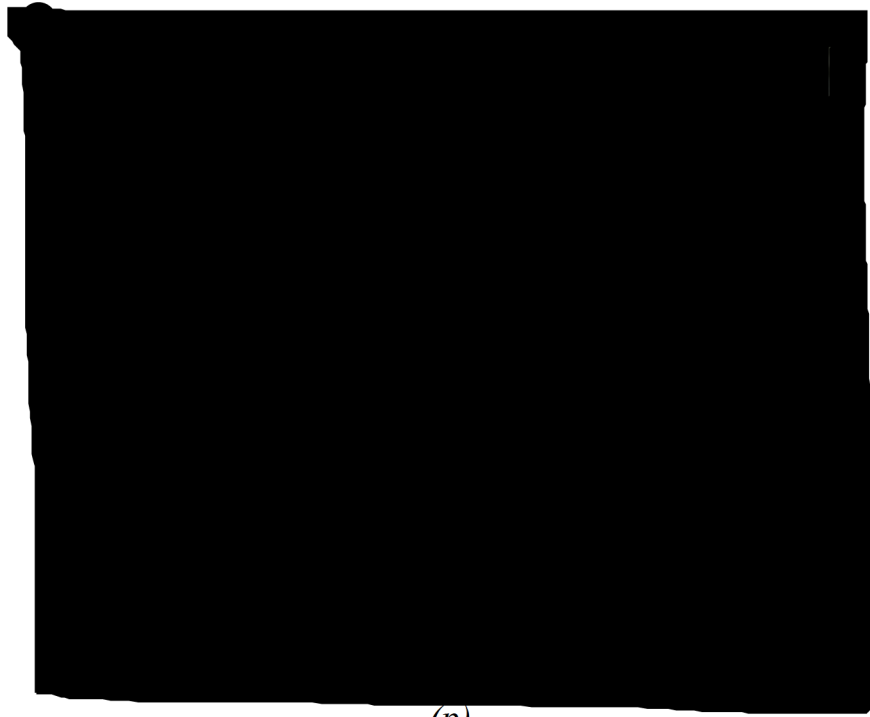


(o)

Furthermore, Azerbaijani internet sources published a footage (Annex 11¹⁵) of a seriously wounded Armenian prisoner of war. Particularly, in the mentioned video the captured person lies on a stretcher and a member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces looks at his wound. The abdomen of the Armenian captive is cut and his inner organs are visible in the video (see image p). Though, it seems that in the mentioned video the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces do not cause an intentional harm to the Armenian captive, however, it is clear that the latter is not provided with appropriate medical support.

¹⁴ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.

¹⁵ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.



(p)

In another video (Annex 12¹⁶) disseminated through social networks, five Armenian prisoners of war are telling their names and stating that they have been captured since October 9, 2020, and all five of them are wounded (see image *q*). It also worth mentioning, that Azerbaijani servicemen continue the practice of taking photos of them with Armenian prisoner of war, which has the purpose of degrading the latter and emphasizing their supremacy over the Armenians (see image *r*).



(q)

(r)

¹⁶ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.

The abovementioned evidence clearly proves that Armenian prisoners of war and captives, who are under absolute protection of International Law, are continuously subjected to inhuman and cruel treatment by the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces. Moreover, these brutal approach is being filmed by Azerbaijani soldiers and published through various platforms. These videos inevitably become available to the relatives of the captives whose sufferings and mental state are being aggravated.

On the other hand, the monitoring indicates that the same videos are being praised by the Azerbaijanis in various social network platforms, which is a result of an extremely high level of Armenophobia.

In this regard, it is worth to mention that the highest authorities of Azerbaijan continue to openly preach hatred and animosity towards Armenians. The President of Azerbaijan continues to generate hatred towards the Armenian people with his public speeches, to make threats against the entire population of Armenia, to make insulting and hateful expressions.

In particular, during the military event held in Baku on December 10, 2020, the President of Azerbaijan delivered a public speech full of open threats of genocide addressed to the entire people of Armenia, as well as systemic hatred. During the same event, the President of Turkey had a public speech with more open threats addressed to lives of the people of Armenia praising the organizers and perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide.

It is especially condemnable that after those speeches, the President of Azerbaijan made similar statements during the December 12, 2020, meeting with the OSCE Minsk Group France and the US Co-Chairs, i.e. not for the domestic, but for the international audience in presence of international figures.

The speech of the President of Azerbaijan of December 12, 2020, is full of expressions inciting hatred and animosity, open threats of mass violence against Armenians. Particularly, he mentioned that "*(...) if Armenian fascism once again raises its head, we will crush its head with an iron fist*". Moreover, this was done with special reference to the speech of the President of Azerbaijan during the military event held on December 10 in the capital of Azerbaijan.

The President of Azerbaijan also stated: *"We gave such a response that destroyed the Armenian army and we can even say the Armenian state (...). We dispelled the dreams of the so-called "Artsakh" of the Armenian nationalists"*.

The same speech used profound expressions of ethnicity towards Armenians, including those that generated hatred on religious grounds. The rhetoric showing hatred and animosity is a clear continuation of the previous public statements and speeches of the President of Azerbaijan. For example, in one case he stated that *"Armenia is a country of no value. It is actually a colony, an outpost run from abroad"*. In another case, Armenians were called *wild beasts and predators*. At the same time, speeches of the Azerbaijani President on Armenia and the Armenian people constantly contain words of *"Armenian fascism"* and it is done to insult the Armenian people and incite hatred towards Armenians among the people of Azerbaijan.

State encouragement for killing Armenians in Azerbaijan has reached such a level that even the country's Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) has publicly stated that Ramil Safarov, who brutally killed an Armenian soldier with an ax during night in a European Union member state, must become an example of patriotism for youth of Azerbaijan.

Such speeches are the direct reasons for war crimes and the crimes against humanity committed by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces in September-November 2020 that do not even fit into the human imagination.

The examinations of videos of atrocities committed by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces have confirmed that Azerbaijani soldiers use the same expressions of the President of Azerbaijan as inspiration when torturing or killing Armenian soldiers or civilians, cutting off the parts of bodies of killed Armenians. Therefore, the mentioned speeches of the President of Azerbaijan directly confirm the war crimes and atrocities committed by the Azerbaijani military forces during the wars of April 2016, September 2020-November and in other periods and still continue.

These speeches also confirm that the described actions envisaged by International Criminal Law are results of an organized state policy of Azerbaijan, which clearly proves the Azerbaijani policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide through terroristic methods in Artsakh.

It is of particular concern that the President of Azerbaijan delivered his speech full of insults and animosity towards the Armenian people in the presence of international figures on December 12, 2020, and surprisingly he has not been condemned by any of these figures. **Such indifference of the international community in response to the hatred and animosity propaganda is one of the main preconditions that has led to systematic and widespread torture and cruelties of Armenians by the Azerbaijani military in Artsakh.**

It must be borne in mind that all the above mentioned violates basic principles of International Law and undermines the entire international system of human rights and humanitarian protection.

The international community and particularly international organizations with mandates to protect human rights must prove that they are dedicated to their titles and missions that they still adhere to the international rules they have established.

Therefore, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh reiterate that the international community must urgently take appropriate measures against the war crimes and gross violations of International Law committed by the Azerbaijani military, in order to immediately stop the willful killings, torture and inhuman treatment towards the ethnic Armenians.

2. Humiliating Treatment of Dead Persons

The monitoring of the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh reveals that members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces continue to subject the bodies of the dead ADA members to humiliating treatment. As the preceding ad hoc reports have stated, these actions constitute the war crime of outrage upon personal dignity.

In one of the footages (Annex 13¹⁷) uploaded to social network platforms by the Azerbaijani internet sources, the member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces tells that he has cut the hand of an ADA member which should serve as a lesson to all Armenians (see image s).



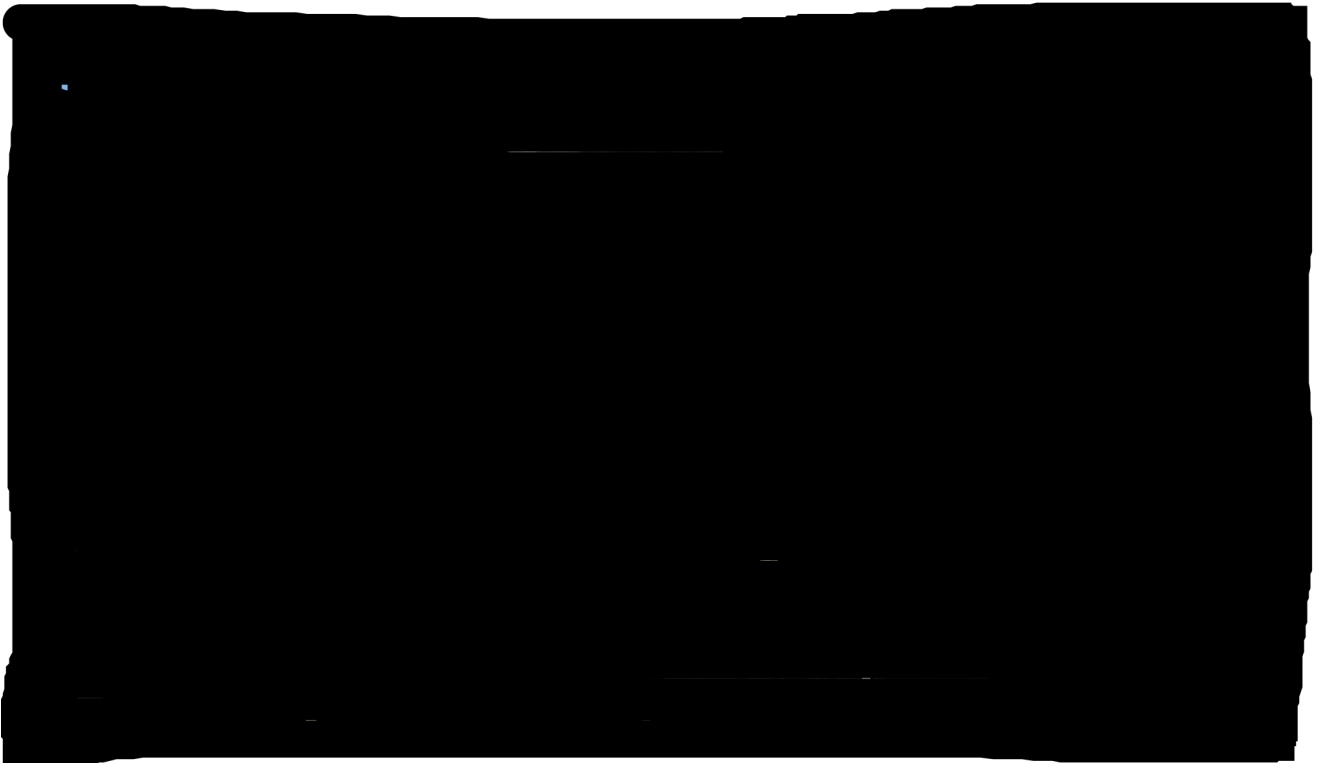
(s)

¹⁷ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.

In another video (Annex 14¹⁸) a member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces (named as “*Commander*”) tells his fellow servicemen surrounding him, that he wants to cut the ears of a dead ADA member, as he promised to bring an ear to one of his friends. Afterwards, the same person cuts the ears of a dead ADA member lying below (see image *t*), puts them beside and tells the following:

“I came here for one purpose, for cutting off the seeds of these immoral people [Armenians] to take revenge”.

The whole footage is full of insults and hate speech against the ethnic Armenians.



(*t*)

Azerbaijani internet sources also uploaded videos (Annex 15, 16¹⁹) where members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces are shooting at the bodies of dead ADA members while insulting the Armenians (see image *u*).

¹⁸ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.

¹⁹ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.



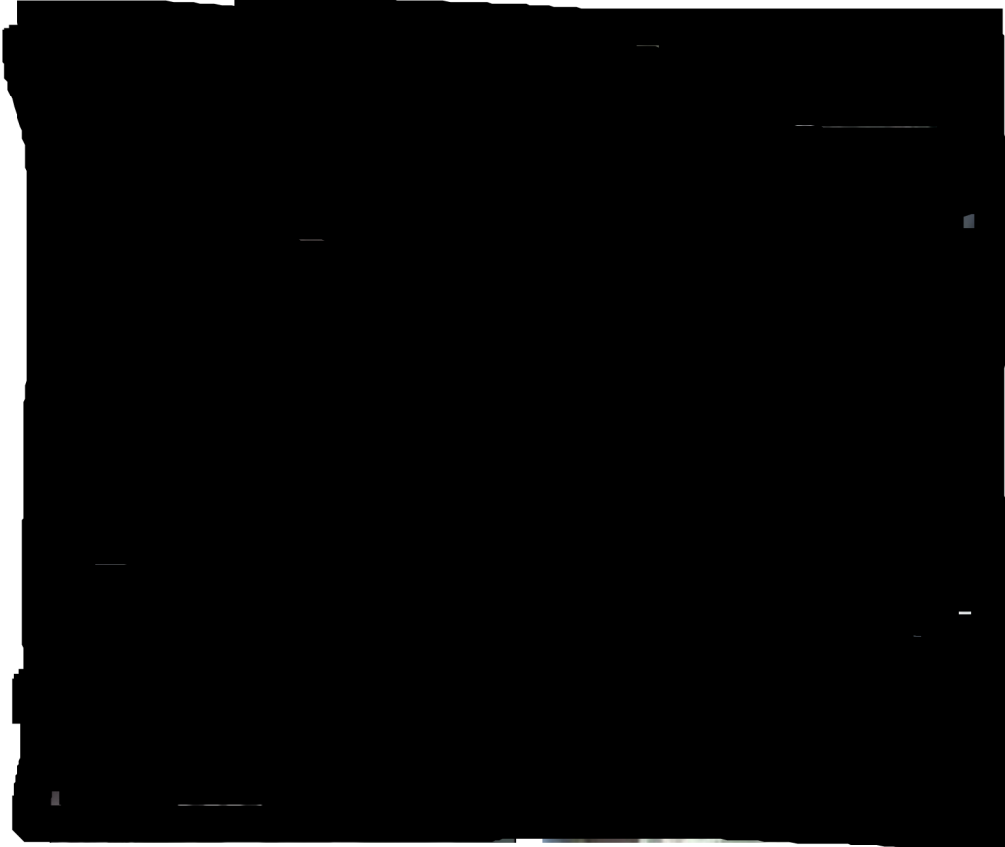
(u)

Furthermore, members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces continue their adopted approach of filming the bodies of dead ADA members while kicking them, stepping on them, using excessive amount of hate speech against ethnic Armenians (see image v and w). These actions are depicted in new videos published by the Azerbaijani internet sources (Annex 17 and 18²⁰).

In one of these videos (Annex 17) the member of Azerbaijani Armed Forces who records the footage, tells that there were wounded soldiers among the bodies of dead ADA members who were killed by Azerbaijani military. Throughout the whole video the same person continuously insulted the dead ADA members, and overall, the ethnic Armenians, with the intent to publicize it later. He also added the following:

“If there is need, I am ready to kill them [Armenians] like animals”

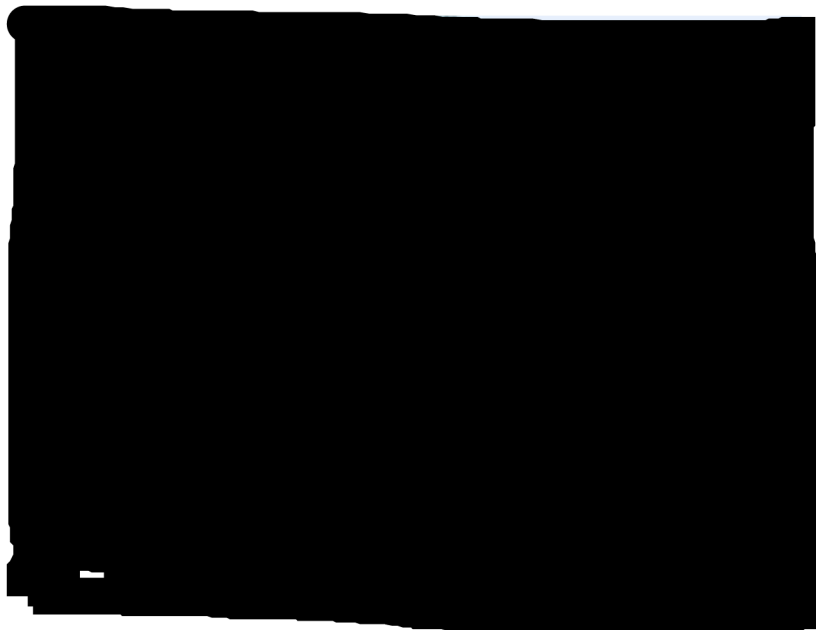
²⁰ Available at <http://cloud.ombuds.am/index.php/s/3GMSTf8dydCj3mH>.

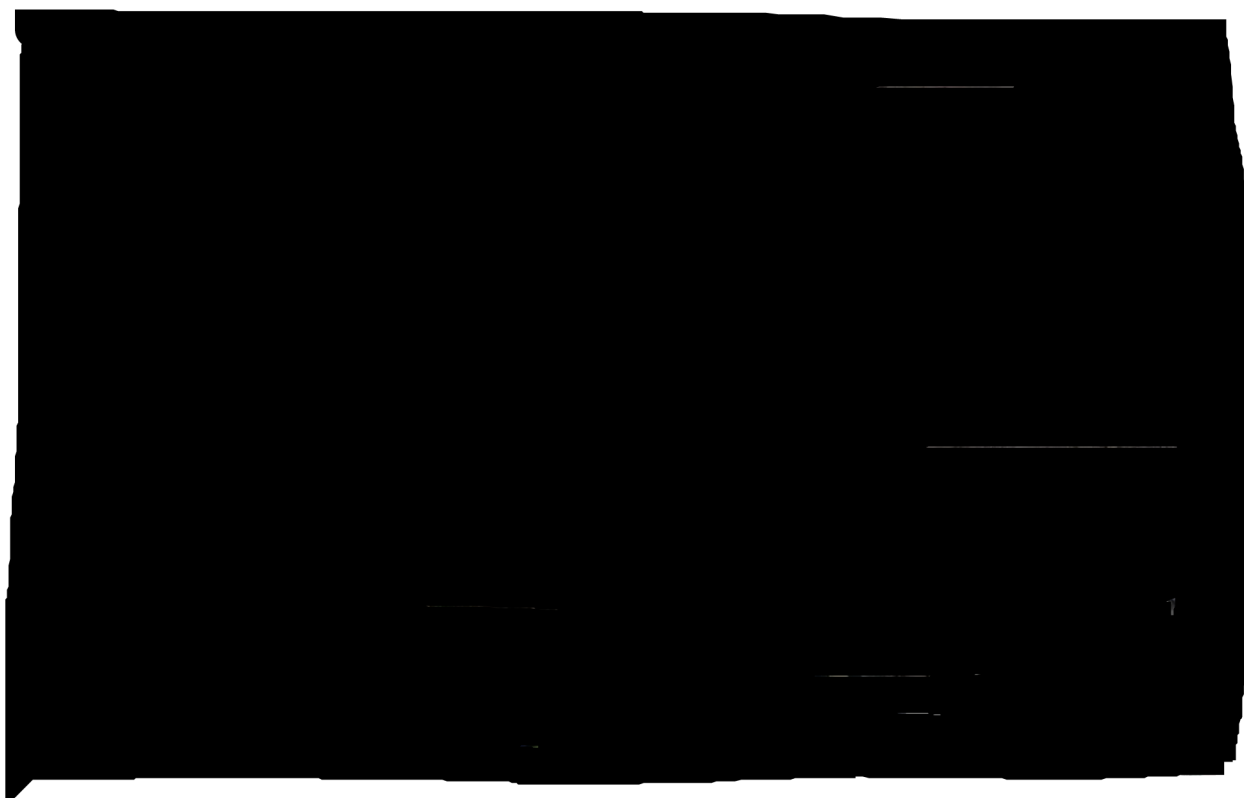


(v)

(w)

Likewise, the members of the Azerbaijani military maintain also the practice of taking photos with the bodies of dead ADA members as a way of expressing their supremacy over Armenians and humiliating the deceased and their relatives. Accordingly, new photos have been disseminated through the social media networks, demonstrating how members of Azerbaijani Armed forces pose with the bodies and, in one of the cases, with the skeletons of fallen ADA members (see images *x*, *y* and *z*).





(y)

(z)

The Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Human Rights Ombudsman of Artsakh emphasize that these kind of actions are totally degrading and disrespectful towards killed soldiers. It is important to state that the outrage upon the personal dignity, even in case of dead, constitutes a war crime under the International Criminal Law and should be punished. The bodies of all fallen soldiers should be managed in an honorable manner.

The both Human Rights Institutions reiterate that filming and dissemination of such content throughout social networks are aimed at mocking and humiliating the relatives of the dead ADA members. These people are subjected to unimaginable sufferings, as they can easily find the videos on social networks, where the members of Azerbaijani Armed Forces humiliate the bodies of their fallen relatives and friends.