



Report

On the Terrorist Act Carried Out by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces Ambush Group on March 5, 2023

Stepanakert, 2023

**HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH**



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Introduction

In the period after the Trilateral Statement on Ceasefire¹, signed by the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Russian Federation on November 9, 2020, the Azerbaijani side has repeatedly grossly violated the provisions of the Statement, resorting to military escalation, disrupting the normal life and activity of the civilian population of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), initiating physical and psychological attacks and violence against the population, disrupting the vital infrastructures and agricultural works.

In the period following the establishment of the ceasefire, more than 150 cases of criminal acts against the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) by the Azerbaijani armed forces have been recorded, as a result of which 21 people were killed (6 civilians, 15 militaries), 166 people were subjected to attempted murder (79 civilians, 87 militaries), 71 people (20 civilians) were injured and subjected to physical violence. Azerbaijanis stole vehicles, residential buildings were subjected to direct fire from different firearms, agricultural equipment, and vehicles were damaged or destroyed, small and large cattle were stolen from the civilian population, and gardens were set on fire.

Moreover, to suppress, psychologically, and physically intimidate the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), since December 12, 2022, under the fake pretext of protecting the environment, Azerbaijani government agents have blocked Goris-Stepanakert highway - the only road connecting Artsakh to Armenia and the external world, which passes through the Lachin corridor defined by the Trilateral Statement. The blockade has led to gross violations of basic human rights: an adequate standard of living, freedom of movement, right to healthcare, education, and many other rights.

Under the conditions of an 86-day-long blockade, the Azerbaijani side began to regularly resort to armed attacks from the end of February and the beginning of March.

On February 28, 2023, at about 16:55, shots from rifles of various calibers were fired from Azerbaijani combat positions at 53-year-old A.Avanesyan from the village of Myurishen, Martuni region, who was engaged in agricultural work with a Jonder tractor in the area

¹ Statement of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, President of the Russian Federation: <https://www.primeminister.am/hy/press-release/item/2020/11/10/Announcement/>

called “Asfalten tak” of the administrative district of the village of Berdashen. As a result, agricultural work was stopped.

On March 1, 2023, in the area called “Davala” of the village of Berdashen, the Azerbaijani side opened fire from small arms at 59-year-old S. Vardanyan from the Berdashen community who was performing agricultural work on a Belarus tractor. Agricultural work was forced to stop.

On March 5, 2023, the Azerbaijani side resorted to a new terrorist act, in particular, an ambush group of the Azerbaijani armed forces crossed the line of contact defined by the Trilateral Statement of the Armed Forces of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Azerbaijan and attacked the car of the Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh, driving from Stepanakert along a road about 1km from the contact line.

The Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Artsakh has constantly and consistently informed the representatives of international organizations and the human rights community about the regularly committed crimes of the Azerbaijani side, demanding that necessary measures should be taken to purposefully assess the situation and introduce real mechanisms to protect the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). However, despite all the alarms, the situation remains tense, threatening the life, health, physical and psychological integrity, and fundamental rights of 120.000 people of Artsakh.

The ongoing blockade of Azerbaijan, as well as the regular and consistent armed attacks, aim at subjecting Artsakh to ethnic cleansing through physical and psychological intimidation, creating unbearable conditions and destroying the indigenous Armenian population of Artsakh.

This report presents the facts and information collected by the staff of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Artsakh from competent authorities and open sources regarding the terrorist activities carried out by the Azerbaijani armed forces ambush group on March 5, 2023. The details of the incident were clarified through an interview with the only survivor of the car, the injured Davit Ashot Hovsepyan, as well as through the analysis of available videos.

The report was prepared in open and closed versions in Armenian and English languages.

1. Collected Facts on the Terrorist Act Committed by the Azerbaijani Ambush Group on March 5, 2023

- On March 5, at about 10:00, in the area called “Khaipalu” which is located between the cities of Stepanakert and Shushi, an ambush group of 12-15 servicemen of the Azerbaijani armed forces crossed the line of contact between Artsakh and Azerbaijan and entered the territory under the control of the Republic of Artsakh and the responsibility of Russian peacekeepers, attacked “UAZ” car carrying the servicemen of the Passport and Visa Department of the Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh.
- There were 4 policemen in the car: Lieutenant Colonel Armen Mayor Babayan, Major Davit Valery Danielyan, Lieutenant Ararat Telman Gasparyan, and Lieutenant Davit Ashot Hovsepyan.
- Armen Babayan was driving the car, Davit Hovsepyan was next to the driver and Davit Hovsepyan was in the car’s salon.
- The police officers left Stepanakert at about 09:30 and moved to the place of the shift, the area of the Lisagor community of the Shushi region of the Republic of Artsakh where the police checkpoint is located (Image 1).
- The movement of the police car from the building of the Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh to the exit from the administrative area of Stepanakert city was completely filmed by video surveillance equipment.²
- The collected facts clearly show that the car is moving from Stepanakert, therefore, the statements of the Azerbaijani side that the Armenian side was transporting weapons and ammunition from the Republic of Armenia to Artsakh are unfounded and fake. In the car of Artsakh police officers, there were only official documents and their ordnance weapons. (Images 2, 3).
- After about 30-40 minutes of driving, the car crew noticed stones lined up on the road that hindered traffic. The car stopped.
- 5 members of the Azerbaijani ambush group came out from behind the stones, dressed in military clothes, wearing masks, armed with machine guns, and pointing the gun barrels at the car.
- The driver of the car tried to turn the car back but at the same time the 5 members of the Azerbaijani ambush group in the front, as well as other members of the ambush group lying in wait on the right and left sides of the road started shooting at the car. The shooting continued for about 10 minutes.

² Video: the police car is moving from the RA Police building:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1e2exfoWMCY4xQ23CDFIq3vEI_PuZts3D/view?usp=sharing

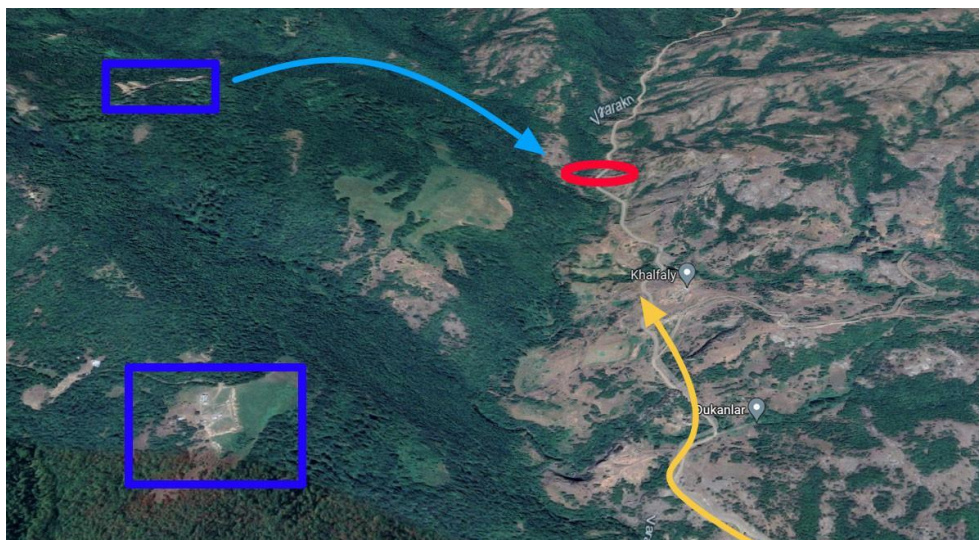
- A comparison of the available facts shows that the car was fired upon by the Azerbaijan ambush group, mainly from firearms. The external examination of the car clearly shows that hundreds of bullets were fired at the car by the Azerbaijani ambush group. (Image 4).
- After the fire stopped, 3 members of the Azerbaijani ambush group approached the car, allegedly inspected the car, and fired a control shot at the driver and the passenger sitting next to the driver. However, according to the testimony of the police officer who survived, the Azerbaijanis did not open the rear compartment door of the car, presumably without noticing that there were passengers sitting in the rear seats (Image 5).
- Then the members of the Azerbaijani ambush group began to leave the crime scene for their armed bases located on a hill opposite. (Image 6).
- During the withdrawal of the Azerbaijanis as a result of the return fire of the Artsakh Defense Army from a combat position near the scene, there were casualties and injuries among the members of the Azerbaijani ambush group.
- About 30-40 minutes after the terrorist attack, representatives of the Russian peacekeeping forces arrived at the scene. After their intervention, the fire stopped. (Image 7).
- After the intervention of the Russian side, the Azerbaijani side continued to withdraw, taking with them the dead and wounded members of the Azerbaijani ambush group (Image 8).
- The Russian peacekeepers recorded that the people sitting in the front part of the car had already died, but A. Gasparyan and D. Hovsepyan sitting in the rear seats of the car were still alive, they were given first aid and taken to the hospital.
- As a result of the Azerbaijani attack, Lieutenant Colonel, Armen Babayan, and Major Davit Danielyan died on the spot, and Lieutenant Ararat Gasparyan died while being transported to the hospital. Lieutenant Davit Hovsepyan received a gunshot wound in the chest and is in the Republican Medical Center.
- According to the information received from the Stepanakert Republican Medical Center, injured policeman Davit Hovsepyan underwent surgery and is in the intensive care unit under the supervision of doctors, his life is not in danger (Image 9).



Image 1. The police car is parked in front of the administrative building of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh at around 09:00



Image 2. The police car left Stepanakert. The Azerbaijani ambush group penetrated from the right side of the picture



*Image 3. Azerbaijani armed positions (marked in blue), the place of the terrorist act (marked in red), the route of the police car (marked in yellow)
(Copyright: hetq.am)*



Image 4. A police car of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh shot down by the Azerbaijani ambush group



Image 5. The attacked car is standing on the road, and a member of the Azerbaijani ambush group approaches



Image 6. Members of the Azerbaijani ambush group withdraw to their combat positions after the terrorist attack

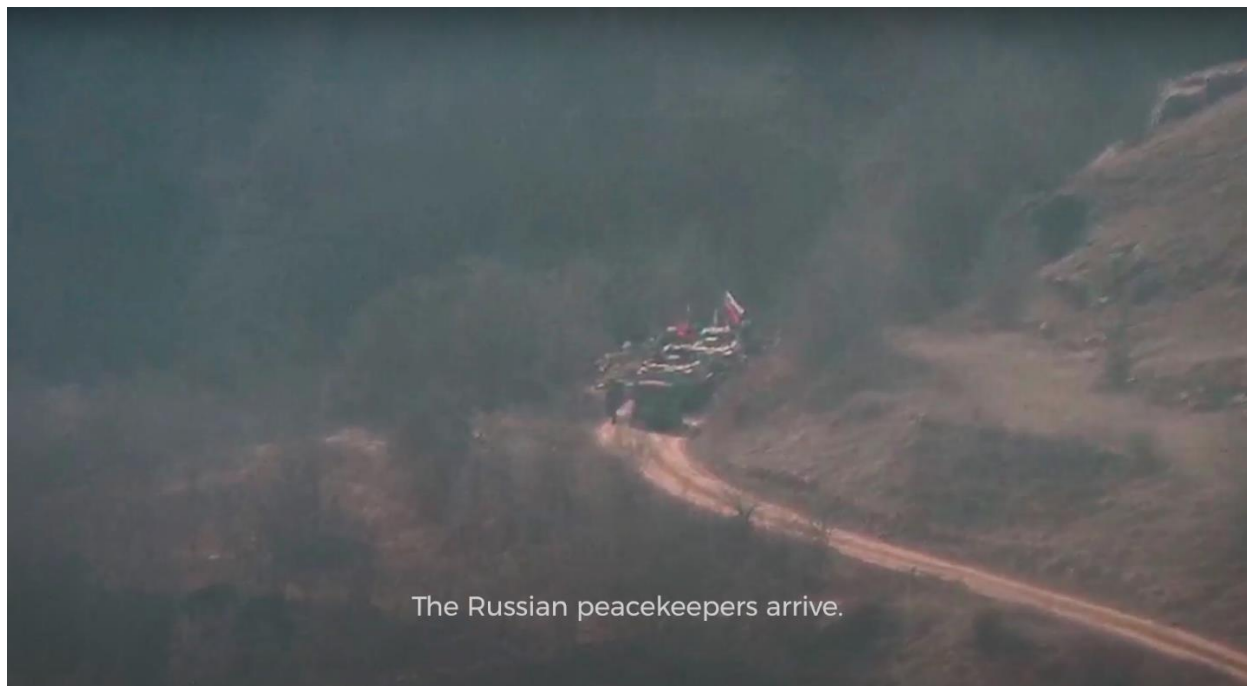


Image 7. Representatives of the Russian peacekeeping troops arrive




Image 8. Members of the Azerbaijani ambush group are withdrawing, taking with them the dead and wounded Azerbaijanis



Image 9. The wounded policeman David Hovsepyan in the intensive care unit of the Republican Medical Center

2. Biographical Data of the Deceased Police Officers and the Results of the Preliminary Forensic Medical Examination

Armen Mayori Babayan	
	<p>Born on January 7, 1976, in the city of Stepanakert. In 1993-1996 he served in the Defense Army of the Republic of Artsakh. Graduated from the Faculty of Law of the Mesrop Mashtots University in Stepanakert in 2007. In 1999 he joined the special forces unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. In 2018, he was appointed Head of the Division of passport control points of the Passport and Visa Department of the Police. Held the rank of lieutenant colonel of the police. He was married and had two children.</p>

Results of the preliminary forensic medical examination

During the preliminary medical examination of Armen Babayan 's body, the following injuries were recorded: multiple gunshot bullet wounds of the head, neck, and thorax, paired upper and right lower extremities penetrating into the cavities of the skull and chest, extensive craniocerebral lesion, multiple fractures of 6-7 cervical vertebrae, multi-sectional fractures with penetration into the spinal cord tube, a fracture of the left humerus, exit wounds of the lobes of lungs on the left and right, multi-sectional fractures of the ankle joint on the right at the level of the middle third of the ankle joint, multi-sectional fractures of the right hip and workbenches.

At least 18 gunshot bullets or shrapnel wounds were recorded on the body.

Davit Valery Daniyelyan



Born on August 22, 1980, in the village of Azokh, Hadrut district, lived in the city of Stepanakert.

In 2002, he entered the Faculty of Theoretical Economics of Artsakh State University, and in 2008 graduated from the Faculty of Law, receiving a Master's degree. In 2010, he served in the Passport and Visa Department of the Police. Since 2019, he held the position of the Deputy Head of the Division of passport control points of the Passport and Visa Department of the Police. Held the rank of the major of the Police.

He was married and had 3 children.

Results of the preliminary forensic medical examination

During the preliminary medical examination of Davit Daniyelyan's body, the following injuries were recorded: multiple gunshot bullet, through and blind wounds penetrating into the cavities of the head, chest, abdomen, paired upper and paired lower extremities with numerous lesions of the liver, brain, lungs, and intestine. Multiple bullet and shrapnel wounds of the forehead on the right, the anterior and external side of the chest on the right, the anterior abdominal wall, the external side of the hand on the left, the shoulder girdle areas on the left, and other injuries were also recorded.

At least 28 gunshot bullets or shrapnel wounds were recorded on the body.

Ararat Telmani Gasparyan



In 2022, graduated from the Shushi Technological University.

In 2019, joined the Shushi District Police Department. Since December 8, 2020, he continued his service at the Askeran District Police Department.

In 2022, he was appointed inspector of the officer battalion of the road patrol service at the Road Police with the rank of lieutenant.

He was married and had one child.

Results of the preliminary forensic medical examination

During the preliminary medical examination of Ararat Gasparyan's body, the following injuries were recorded: combined gunshot bullet, blind and through wounds penetrating into the cavities of the face, neck, chest, abdomen, and paired upper extremities; multiple gunshot bullet wounds of the face on the left, the arm on the left, the wrist on the left, the anterior and outer walls of the chest on the left, the inguinal area on the left; multisectoral fractures of the nasal bones, left cheekbone, left upper jaw, with rupture of the dome of the left diaphragm, gastric eucentration, bilateral hemothorax of the left thoracic cavity.

At least 13 bullet or shrapnel wounds were recorded on the body.