



Armenian Bar Association

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To: **Honorable Dr. Alice Jill Edwards**

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

United Nations Office at Geneva

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Email: hrc-sr-torture@un.org

To: **Honorable Morris Tidball-Binz**

UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Summary or Arbitrary Executions

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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To: **Honorable Aua Baldé (Chair-Rapporteur), Honorable Gabriella Citroni (Vice-Chairperson), Honorable Grażyna Baranowska, Honorable Luciano Hazan, Honorable Angkhana Neelapaijit**

Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

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To: **Honorable Fabián Salvioli**

UN Special Rapporteur for the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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Dear Mandate-Holders,

At midnight on 13 September 2022, Azerbaijan launched a flagrant, large-scale aggression against the Republic of Armenia, using heavy artillery and unmanned aircraft and targeting the Armenian positions and civilian infrastructures in the Goris, Kapan, Vardenis, Sotk, Ardanish and Ishkhanasar in the Gegharkunik, Vayots Dzor and Syunik regions of the sovereign territory of

Armenia. As a result of the Azerbaijani military incursions into Armenia, there were numerous casualties.¹

We have closely followed the atrocities committed by Azerbaijan since 27 September 2020, when Azerbaijan, in overt violation of international law and with the assistance of its military ally Turkey and jihadist mercenaries, launched a large-scale military operation against Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh.

Throughout the 44-day Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020, Azerbaijani military personnel recorded and posted videos on social networks, including Telegram, Tik-Tok, Twitter and Instagram, broadcasting and grandstanding deliberate executions, torture, inhumane treatment, and even beheadings of Armenian women and men.²

These gruesome videos recorded and posted on social networks, following the 13 September 2022 attack, prove that the Azerbaijani soldiers and their command staff continue to act with complete disregard for human life. These bombastic recordings of homicidal atrocities featuring the torture and murder of Armenians have taken place not only on Azerbaijani-controlled territory, but also within the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Armenia, and have been repeatedly reposted on social networks in order to intimidate and terrorize ethnic Armenians.

Perhaps the most heinous of these videos recorded and posted on social networks by Azerbaijani soldiers to date is that of the brutal killing of an Armenian servicewoman, who was abducted alive in the town of Jermuk in the Republic of Armenia, and then ravaged, tortured, and dismembered by Azerbaijani soldiers. The footage, filmed by an Azerbaijani soldier, shows a pile of bodies of Armenian soldiers, including two females both fully bare and brutalized.³ The mutilated body of the Armenian servicewoman can be seen stripped naked with the name of the Azerbaijani special forces – "YAŞMA" or "YASHMA" – chiseled in across her breasts and stomach, with a stone crammed in her eye socket and a severed finger jammed in her mouth.⁴ The video was posted on social media by Azerbaijani soldiers, and received euphoric comments cheering on the abject desecration of Armenian soldiers.⁵ In the same video, the Azerbaijani soldiers filming the video mention in the Azerbaijani language that they killed two Armenian female soldiers and showcase the mangled body of a second naked female soldier.

¹ See Annex to S/2022/688 (13 September 2022); see also: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3987341?ln=en>.

² See The Republic of Artsakh Human Rights Ombudsman, Interim Report at 15 (27 September 2021), <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/785>; see also, Armenian Bar Association, *Report to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions*, [Arbitrary-Killings-Report_SR-Extrajudicial-Executions.pdf](https://www.armenianbar.org/Arbitrary-Killings-Report_SR-Extrajudicial-Executions.pdf) (armenianbar.org)

³ **Warning: Graphic and Disturbing Content:** RAGEX, <https://www.ragex.co/post/azeri-war-crimes-against-an-armenian-woman-soldier-21-horrific>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ **Warning: Graphic and Disturbing Content:** RAGEX, <https://www.ragex.co/post/azeri-war-crimes-against-an-armenian-woman-soldier-21-horrific>.

This video, as well as many others, are posted on a Telegram channel called Khacherubka: “khach” is a racial slur referring to Armenians, and “rubka” means grinder or chopper.⁶ The channel has over 7,300 subscribers.⁷ Of note, in many of these videos, the perpetrators do not cover their faces. This indicates their certainty that they will not be held responsible, despite calls by international bodies, including most recently by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, for Azerbaijan to prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes.⁸

These mutilations are glorified on social media, and turned into “stickers” depicting mutilated and tortured Armenians. They have been uploaded and used by tens of thousands of Azerbaijani users.⁹ Women are targeted in posts by Azerbaijani users, one user posting a photo of the Armenian servicewoman mentioned above, stating: “Please find the photo of her dead body I will make a sticker and mutilate her.”¹⁰ Others have posted images of Armenian servicewomen with comments such as: “Future Armenian women with their fingers in the mouth.”¹¹

Following the 9 November 2020 ceasefire statement signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan continues to systematically spread fear and loathing among the Armenian populations of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia, trying mightily to destabilize the region through its abhorrent rhetoric and actions.

As the result of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, Azerbaijan took control of several regions of Nagorno-Karabakh. In those territories today, no ethnic Armenians remain, as they were detained, tortured, killed, and/or expelled.¹²

Two years later, the Azeri assaults on the Armenian population continue, but now also take place within the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Armenia. Moreover, this past week, in another act of terror, Azerbaijan blocked the only road offering a supply line for food, medicine and other necessities of life to the Armenians who remain in Nagorno-Karabakh under the protection of Russian Peacekeepers.

⁶ Arzu Geybulla and Bahruz Samadov, *How Azerbaijan’s Telegram Channels Fuel Intimidation*, INST. WAR & PEACE REPORTING (Oct. 25, 2022), <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/how-azerbajjans-telegram-channels-fuel-intimidation>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations on the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Azerbaijan at 2, CERD/C/AZE/CO/10-12 (Sept. 22, 2022).

⁹ See The Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia, Ad Hoc Public Report on Consequences of Azerbaijani Military Attack on the Republic of Armenia at paras. 34-38 (Sept. 2022), <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/bb0ed8808617aa8b63c6a52e2891c7b3.pdf>

¹⁰ *Id.* at Appendix 1.5.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² See Freedom House, Nagorno-Karabakh, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/nagorno-karabakh/freedom-world/2022> (last accessed June 25, 2022); see also, Jacki Abramian, *A Year After Unleashing War Crimes Against Indigenous Armenians, Azerbaijan’s Threats And Violations Continue*, FORBES (27 September 2021), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackieabramian/2021/09/27/a-year-after-unleashing-war-crimes-against-indigenous-armenians-azerbajjans-threats-and-violations-continue/?sh=37db9a688cc1>.

Such continued, horrifying acts in blatant disregard of international humanitarian law and in gross violation of Azerbaijan's international legal obligations, which amount to war crimes, must not be ignored or left unpunished.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to issue a public statement:

- 1) condemning, in no uncertain terms, the racially motivated torture, mutilation, and arbitrary killing of ethnic Armenians by Azerbaijan; and
- 2) calling on the Government of Azerbaijan to identify the perpetrators of these heinous crimes against humanity and to punish them accordingly.

We thank you for your attention to this pressing issue and stand ready to provide your respective offices with further information.

Submitted by:

Armenian Bar Association