# AZERI WAR CRIMES AGAINST NAGORNO-KARABAKH ARMENIANS

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# But Who Really Cares?

**Joachim Hagopian**, LewRockwell.com, 16 April 2016

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An Armenian Yezidi soldier was also beheaded, the all too familiar brutality that's become an Islamic State trademark in its ethnic cleansing of thousands of Yezidi Christians in Iraq. The Yezidi soldier's parents said that when their son's body was returned, they buried him not knowing he had been beheaded. They only learned of his cruel fate after the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) arranged a plan for each side to exchange corpses of dead soldiers that returned their son's severed head. The coffin had to be dug up to bury their son's head with his body on April 9.

Moreover, the retrieved corpses of 18 Armenian soldiers showed signs that they had been mutilated and tortured. After the major fighting broke out from April 2-7, the ICRC acted as mediator for deceased soldiers to be recovered. Officials from the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons observed that all 18 bodies of the Armenian soldiers had been badly mutilated and tortured and issued the following statement:

Those acts, being a flagrant manifestation of inhumanity, run counter to the laws and customs of war and are in grave violation of the international humanitarian law, in particular, the Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (1949), Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (1949) and the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I).

The NKR Prosecutor General's Office has charged Azerbaijan with seven criminal cases in violation of international law: "using prohibited methods and means of warfare, targeting of civilians, shelling of populated areas motivated by national, racial or religious hatred or religious fanaticism."

The Yezidi Armenian soldier apparently wasn't the only Armenian in uniform who was decapitated. Chairman of the Foundation Against Violation of the Law Michael Aramyan disclosed that at least two other Armenian soldiers, one from Yerevan and another from Artsakh, "have been subjected to torture and then beheaded." Murder, ill-treatment, torture, humiliation all constitute violations of the Criminal Code.

On April 11 the Armenian Ministry of Defense (MoD) confirmed the Red Cross mediated bodies to

be exchanged and that authorities in both Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are collecting and compiling overwhelming evidence of Azerbaijan's humanitarian crimes of international law. Earlier this week the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs met in Yerevan with Armenia's Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian who also met on Wednesday with OSCE ambassadors stating:

With its aggressive actions Azerbaijan actually tried to refuse from its international commitments of solving the issue in a peaceful way, thus grossly violating the basic principles of international law, the decisions and declarations of a number of OSCE summits and Ministerial Councils, obviously ignoring the statements on the heads of OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries on the settlement of the Karabakh issue.

James Warlick, the US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group responsible for resolving the Azeri-Armenian conflict since the Nagorno-Karabakh War ended in 1994 had this to say at an April 9 press conference:

We are deeply distressed by our reports of human rights violations. We have seen the photos, we have heard the reports… we are deeply troubled, deeply concerned by any human rights violations.

Meanwhile every day since the Russian-brokered ceasefire on April 5 repeated violations by Azeri forces are tallied, inflicting more injury and death. As a typical example, on the overnight of April 11-12, both rifle and heavy artillery fire from the Azeri army contact line was observed. Though both sides have perennially claimed ceasefire violations, the Armenians have long agreed to have Minsk Group investigators enact a mechanism by which to document ceasefire violations but as a member of the European Parliament from Cyprus just stated the Baku government has consistently refused to cooperate. This could also be ameliorated by a deployment of a Russian peacekeeping force that Moscow's Defense Minister Lavrov as well as Armenian President Sarkisian have been recently alluding to, although the Russian Minsk group chair Igor Popov has relegated the peacekeeping plan to a final stage in conflict resolution, not an immediate intervention.

In the meantime as the facts emerge pointing to a premeditated Azeri military offensive with US Empire approval, a diversionary game is devised that desperate, among the world's most corrupt dictators Ilham Aliyev uses to his advantage to diffuse his mounting troubles and unrest at home. A typical wag the dog politician trick to take pressure off by playing the jingoistic game of targeting a foreign enemy for war to manipulatively unite and distract Azeris from their slumping oil economy driving high domestic unemployment and growing civil unrest against an oppressive totalitarian criminal regime. Add BP among Western oil giants to the self-serving mix to make sure the despot stays in power if only to bleed maximum profits after already investing $58 billion in recent years to develop the oil-rich Caspian oil and gas fields, along with newly proposed pipelines to deflate Russian gas export to Europe. Ultimately all Empire-dictator roads lead to eliminating their biggest scapegoated threat – the tiny independent NKR enclave. Hence, conjure up a religious war against the Armenians.

Part of this devious strategy involves Turkish and Azeri public displays calling for unity amongst all Islamic groups and nations in support of Azerbaijan's "holy war" against NG Armenians "till the end of time," thus fomenting an anti-Armenian crusade spilling over into public protests by Muslims in Paris and Stockholm. Turkish and Azeri nationals chanted "death to Armenians" inspired by a hate filled speech delivered by a prominent Turkish leader in Sweden. Of course there's nothing new in hatred of Armenians but its public expression currently being acted out to fuel the thinly veiled hints from Turkish leadership promoting a religious war against Christian Armenians neatly timed with the Armenian genocide's 101st anniversary underscores a surging information propaganda war. Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister Savarsh Kocharyan astutely sees what Turkey et al's up to:

Foreign Minister of Turkey in his speech at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation speculated on the Islamic solidarity and made a dangerous attempt to artificially present the Azerbaijani military operations against self-determined Nagorno-Karabakh as a religious conflict.

Erdogan's spending millions on US public relations lobbyist firms that have included an ex-CIA director targeting Armenians as the latest enemy to demonize at the same time a recent billboard briefly went up in Boston, home of a large Armenian American community, denying the Armenian genocide.

Then the virtual news blackout of events in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. What little coverage there has been typically refers to the NK Armenians as "separatists" occupying Azeri land rather than Armenians who are forced to defend themselves and their ancient homeland against a malevolent invading force. The US media's overt blockade suppressing the truth of Azeri atrocities in Artsakh (the Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabakh) is designed not only to keep America in the dark but also to cover-up US Empire's complicity in Azerbaijan's criminal aggression as yet another proxy war against Russia.

The neocons are still fuming as much as Erdogan over their precious proxy war terrorist allies getting their asses kicked by Putin in Syria. So what do they do? Immediately unleash Aliyev's unilateral attack turning up more cold war heat by starting yet another war on Russia's doorstep. It's getting as predictable as all the Western state-sponsored terrorism. Manufactured wars and manufactured mass migration crises are all designed to stir up more divide and rule racial and religious hatred spawning yet more wars and widespread violence as the globalist calling card agenda delivered by US Empire-Israel-NATO allies. The war against Armenians is not some unrelated, randomized accident. Virtually every major world event is preplanned according to the diabolical scheme of the ruling elite bent on its New World Order and one world government.

But fortunately with the truth clearer than ever now, the tide is turning. The EU parliament has taken up debate over the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and a growing number of vocal members are calling for recognition of the current NKR as an independent sovereign enclave leaving it up to its citizens to determine their own fate to become part of Armenia or not. Cyprus EU member Eleni Theocharous

not only recommended sanctions against Azerbaijan, she summed it up this way:

It is therefore the EU's responsibility to support the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, who fight for their freedom, and thus not to support the continuation of an unjust status quo. Peace equals recognition of the right to self-determination for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Luxemburg EU member Frank Engel also recognizes Azerbaijan as the chief villain in the Azeri-Armenian conflict:

The only solution is the recognition of the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh, because today Azerbaijan is the aggressor, and it was the aggressor 24 years ago, and continued to violate the ceasefire on a smaller scale, and Baku glorifies a convicted killer, Ramil Safarov and believes that all Armenians in the region must disappear.

Safarov was the Azeri soldier who in 2004 took an axe and hacked up an Armenian officer who was asleep while both were participating in a NATO "Partner for Peace" program in Hungary. After a short prison spell in Hungary, Aliyev welcomed the axe murderer home as a war hero with a promotion and back pay.

Even a couple of US Congress members are pushing to ban arms sales and foreign aid to Azerbaijan. So are a few Israelis whose government's latest missile shipment arrived in Azerbaijan the day before the Azeris' military attack. In recent years Israel has signed $5 billion in arms deals with Azerbaijan. Concerned over another shipment of drones set to be delivered to Baku in the next few days, in a letter to Israeli Defense Minister, the Meretz head Zehava Galon stated:

There is a serious fear that laws of war were violated with Israeli weapons. I ask that you order the halting of additional drone supplies to Azerbaijan until a commitment is obtained not to use them in battles in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) has just sent a letter to Obama and Congress recommending economic sanctions against Azerbaijan for its war crimes pending the outcome of a Leahy law investigation. War crime violators by law are prohibited from receiving US military aid of any kind.

Twenty-seven nations have officially recognized the Armenian genocide. Germany may be the 28th as its Bundestag is scheduled to vote on formal recognition on June 2nd. Support for the Armenian people around the world is growing and self-determination is the operative word for the little independent de facto government of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Though Russia is considered Armenia's closest friend and ally, some believe that Russia is not behaving like it. Despite its mutual defense pact, well known Russian TV and radio journalist and political analyst Vladimir Solovyov urged Russia not to shrink from its duty as a Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) ally of Armenia. He points out the fact that Azerbaijan was clearly the

aggressor that attacked Nagorno-Karabakh. Solovyov warns Moscow that continuing to arm Azerbaijan in view of its unilateral attack on Armenians without any preconditions for future arms sales risks – in absence of Russian support, Armenia turning away from Russia, implying that Armenia could potentially align itself with the United States. As its closest CSTO ally in the South Caucasus, and the Russian Federation's weakest link in the southern part of the nation, Solovyov maintains that Russia is ill-advised to lose Armenia as its most loyal friend in the region. His criticism of Russia not taking more of a stand in support of its supposed ally seems well taken:

Interestingly enough, we don't discuss the question of who started it. Why don't we want to see the broadcasts about beheaded Armenian soldiers, about capture and torture of people? I realize that we must consider the interests of both sides, but does it mean that we're no longer interested in the truth? Turkey publicly declared it would support Azerbaijan; did we issue a similar statement with regard to our ally? Let us remember that Azerbaijan fired at Tavush Province of Armenia. That is the territory of Armenia and the CSTO kept silent about that fact.