

KHOJALI "GENOCIDE" BAKU FABRICATION

Posted on March 2, 2012 by Keghart



Original Photo from Kosovo



Azeri doctored photo as Khojali

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Keghart.com Editorial Board, 1 March 2012

People following the Armenian/Azerbaijan conflict in the past few months couldn't have missed the Azerbaijani campaign to convince the world that the three-and-a-half hour midnight attack on Feb. 25, 1992 by Artsakh Self-Defense Forces on Azeri-held village of Khojali was genocide. The charge is so ridiculous that a well-informed person would be tempted to dismiss it out of hand. But in these days of true lies, blatant invasions depicted as peace-making humanitarian missions, and the tiresome deception that "in 1915 Armenians were transported to Syria for their protection," we are forced to assert the truth again and again. It's a Sisyphean task, but there's no alternative.

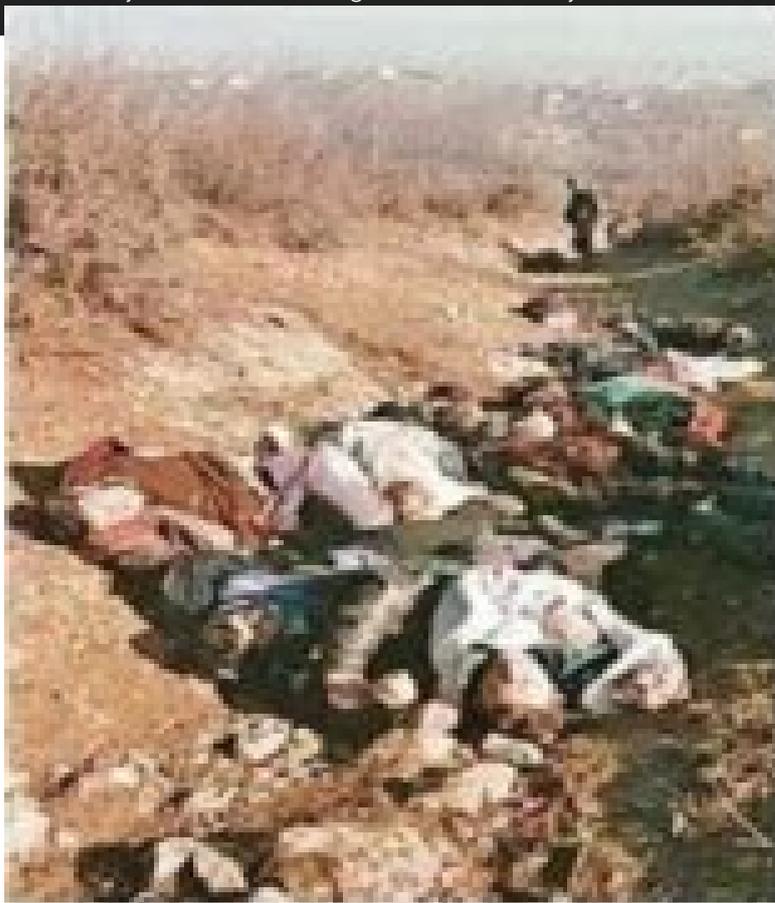
This is what happened in Khojali. For most of 1991 and early 1992 the Azeri OMON (Special Purpose Militia Detachment) had systematically shelled Armenian civilian targets, using rockets. The Azeris had also blockaded the nearby airport. As a result of Azeri attacks, Armenians had suffered many civilian casualties, hundreds had been kidnapped and thousands of cattle had been driven away. The blockade had also resulted in lack of food, fuel and medical supplies, especially in Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh. Armenian forces had to neutralize Azeri fire in Khojali and terminate the blockade. It was also obvious to the Armenians that the Azeris were planning to attack the Armenian centre of Askeran before moving on to the capital.



Demonstrations in Istanbul

Using loudspeakers, for ten days the Armenian forces announced to Khojali inhabitants (mostly Meskhetian Turks who had been settled in the village during Soviet times) and forces that an Armenian attack was imminent. The announcements also informed Azeris that Armenians had dedicated a corridor for the safe passage of civilians to Azeri-held areas. But the Azeri authorities did nothing to facilitate the evacuation of their people. On Feb. 25, at 11:30 p.m. the Armenian self-defense forces attacked Khojali. A number of Azeri civilians tried to flee through the corridor. However, Azeri forces fired at the column, killing an unknown number. Although the Armenians were successful in neutralizing the Azeri fire power, Khojali remained in Azeri hands for many months. Soon after the attack, Azeri authorities claimed that Armenians had committed not only genocide by firing at the fleeing Azeris but had also mutilated the bodies of the dead. Although there was not a shred of evidence for their allegation, Azerbaijan repeated the charge. In recent months, Azeris decided to turn the Khojali operation into the focus of their full court anti-Armenian campaign. As a result, Baku has achieved a number of propaganda and political victories.

- In late February the world witnessed the Khojali "Genocide" demonstrations in various parts of Turkey. The events were funded by Baku and orchestrated by the Turkish government. Turks and Azeris who live in Turkey or had traveled to Turkey took part in the "kill the Armenians" campaign.
- A few weeks ago US Congressmen Bill Shuster and Dan Boren urged fellow politicians to honor the memory of the Khojali "genocide" victims.
- A member of the Texas House of Representatives has proposed a resolution to commemorate the Khojali "massacre."
- An Azeri woman has sent a highly-publicized open letter to the presidents of Armenia and of France, claiming--falsely--that Armenians had killed 613 civilians and taken 1,275 prisoners.
- Azeri diplomats are seeking international recognition of the Khojali "genocide."
- Pakistan has recognized the Khojali "genocide" and Mexico might do also.
- Azerbaijan may use its current seat at the UN to spotlight the "genocide" by Armenians.
- Members of the Azeri Diaspora have been busy in Europe and in North America appealing for the recognition of the Armenian operation as genocide. Latvian Azeris are collecting signatures to protest the Khojali "genocide." A petition will be sent to the French Senate, the Latvian Parliament and the European Parliament to demand recognition of the "genocide."
- Five Turkish universities and a technical college are commemorating the Khojali "genocide."
- A few days ago a Khojali "genocide" public commemoration was held at the central square of Bursa, Turkey.
- Azeri embassies are holding commemorations and are inviting diplomats from various countries to join in the recognition of the "genocide."
- Photographs of Khojali casualties will be exhibited in Europe, and a submission will be made to the International Court.
- Baku has launched an Internet war with daily updates on "genocide" recognition successes.



Original Photo from Kosovo



Azeri doctored photo as Khojali

The above is by no means a comprehensive list of the Azeri propaganda campaign. While Baku is marketing its false genocide by deploying baseless "evidence," Armenia/Artsakh, which have a ton of information discounting the Azeri allegation have remained silent in the face of this new Baku threat. The Diaspora likewise.

Several weeks ago Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a letter to Armenians around the world requesting that they distribute an accompanying press release. While the press release made a convincing case against the veracity of the Khojali "genocide," it is a failure as a communication tool: its language is pure bureaucratism and it's an incredible 286 lines long! Why would Yerevan bureaucrats imagine that in these days of Tweets, people would plod through a densely-written "booklet" on the Internet? That informative news release could have been far more effective had it been packaged as ten sharply focused news releases, as an Internet clip, a YouTube expose.

There are so many facts which disprove Baku's allegations that one doesn't know where to begin. Space restrictions limit us from giving chapter and verse of the evidence against Baku's allegations.

Even the most cursory research reveals that the Azeri charges are utterly baseless.

-Azeri photographer Chingiz Mustafaev photographed the Azeri corpses immediately after the fight and two days later. His latter photos show that the position of the casualties had been changed and their injuries had strikingly become more brutal. During both of his assignments, the territory was still controlled by the Azeris.

Shortly after, President Ayaz Mutalibov said to the photographer, "Chengiz, do not tell anybody about what you have noticed. Or, you'll be killed." Undeterred, Mustafaev began to investigate on his own. But after his findings were made public by the DR-Press Information Agency in Moscow that the Azeri forces had participated in crimes against Khojali inhabitants, the journalist was killed not far from Aghdam. His death remains a mystery.

--After visiting Khojali immediately after the fight, Czech journalist Dana Mazalova reported that he hadn't seen any trace of barbarity on the corpses.

--Azeri human rights activist Arif Yunusof wrote in "Zercalo" Azerbaijani newspaper (July 1992), "The town and its citizens were deliberately sacrificed to the political goal." He was referring to the quarrel between President Mutalubov and his enemies. The latter, who wanted to topple the president, ordered the killing of their own citizens to portray Mutalibov as incompetent.

--Tamerlan Karaev, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan Republic, said in "Mukhalifat" Azeri newspaper (April 28, 1992): "The tragedy was committed by Azerbaijan authorities, specifically by a top official."

--Vagif Guseynov, former Azeri minister of national security, said shortly before his arrest that the January 1990 Baku doings and the events of Khojali are the doing of the same people .

--A month after his resignation, Mutalibov told Mazalova in "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" that according to the "Khojali inhabitants who escaped, all this was organized to dismiss me. Some forces acted to discredit the president. I don't think that the Armenians, strictly and professionally treating similar situation, could let the Azerbaijanis gain any documents" which would incriminate them. He also said that he couldn't believe Armenians would provide a safe corridor and then shoot at the escaping civilians.

--Eynulla Fatullaev of "Monitoring" Azeri magazine wrote that Khojali refugees in Naftalan had told her that a few days before the attack, Armenians, with loudspeakers, kept warning the population of the scheduled operation, suggesting civilians to leave the settlement and break out of the encirclement via the humanitarian corridor. These refugees also told Fatullaev that they had taken advantage of the corridor and the Armenian forces had not fired at them. A few days after the report was published, the magazine's editor was shot (March 2, 2000) by a stranger at the entrance to his house in Baku.

--The former Khojali mayor told "Megapolis-Express" of Moscow that he had asked for helicopters to evacuate Khojali residents, but no assistance was provided.

--The number of Khojali victims Azeri claim increases from year to year. Immediately after the attack, Azeris reported their casualties as 100. A week later that was inflated to 1,234 . In 1992 Azeri journalists Ilya Balakhanov and Vugar Khaliov presented to the Memorial Human Rights Centre in Moscow a video cassette they had shot from a helicopter. It showed that Khojali civilian casualties did not exceed 60 people. Armenian forces reported 11 Azeri civilian casualties. Armenians handed over all civilians to Azeri authorities.

--According to the RoA (Republic of Armenia), barbaric mutilations of bodies took place near Aghdam (some seven miles from Khojali), on territory controlled by Azeri forces.

The above is just a sampling of evidence Armenian authorities in Armenia and in Artsakh have at their disposal. They also have audio, photographic and video evidence.

So despite the lame evidence of genocide, why does Baku invest so much effort to prove that Armenians committed genocide?

- To distract the Azeri populace from the shortcomings of the corrupt and incompetent Aliiev regime.
- To prove the failings of their predecessor government.
- To succeed in the information war when they have failed on the battlefield.
- To distract world attention from the Genocide of Armenians. As junior partners in the Turkbeijan axis, Azeris have to support their Big Brother.
- To pre-empt talk of Azeri pogroms of Armenians in Sumgait, Baku and Maragha, the ethnic purges in Nakhichevan, Kirovabad, and the indiscriminate killing of civilians in Stepanakert.
- To cover up their pre-Feb. 25 crimes around Khojali: Azeri forces had killed Armenian civilians in the surrounding region through the use of highly-lethal weapons; they didn't evacuate Khojali civilians despite numerous warnings from Armenians; they slew their civilians who had opted for the humanitarian corridor; to transform Armenians into ogres, Azeri authorities mutilated their own people. They doctored photos of casualties, using Photoshop and other technical means. Photos of the casualties in the Kosovo War and the Kurdish conflict have been depicted as Azeri casualties. There's extensive forensic proof of this in Armenian hands.
- The current Baku leadership had a hand in the Khojali killings. They did so to show to Azeris that Mutalibov is incompetent. Blaming Armenians is an effective way to silence the suspicions of Azeri citizens.

Although Azeris have stepped up their diplomatic efforts into intensive international initiatives, Armenians have done practically nothing to counter the Azeri propaganda onslaught. Armenia says that Azerbaijan is using Khojali as a speculative political capital against Armenia. While Diaspora Armenians realize that an information war is a novelty to their brothers and sisters in Armenia, they themselves haven't done anything to challenge the Azeri propaganda machine. A few days ago political scientist Alexander Manasyan of Yerevan said, "We are lions in the battlefield, whereas we

are peaceful and indifferent when at peace...We must flood the Internet with documents...Armenians should sue Azerbaijan for disinformation...We thought the truth can win, but it cannot, unless true facts are protected." While Armenians of Armenia are novices in the information war, the Diaspora doesn't have that excuse. Why HAVE Armenian organizations and media in the Diaspora been silent about the Khojali "genocide" fabrications? Don't they realize that the firefight can gain the same weight as the Genocide of Armenians in the minds of an uninformed non-Armenian public? Don't they realize that Turkbeijan is using the false Khojali genocide to deflate the impact of the horrific crimes of Turkey in 1915?

We eagerly wait for a speedy Armenia and Diaspora joint campaign to refute the Turkbeijan mythinformation. Although it's easier to "sell" the truth than to turn lies into truth, we still have to know how to disseminate that truth: it's not a job for amateurs: Turkbeijan has hired international public relations firms to spread the Baku-Ankara lies. Let's get our act together; let's get communication-savvy Armenians to come up with a campaign which will send the liars back to Baku with their tails between their legs. Let's show them that we can win the war on the battlefield and in the hearts and minds of people.

