



Red Flag Alert for Genocide

Azerbaijan

UPDATE

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A recent Telegram video making its way through Azerbaijani social media shows an Azerbaijani soldier tying what is allegedly an Armenian skull dug up from a nearby Armenian cemetery to the back of a military truck while fellow soldiers cheer.

In the wake of this new apparent atrocity, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention is once again issuing a Red Flag Alert for Azerbaijan, warning of threatened genocide against Armenians, both in the breakaway Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh (Artsakh) and in Armenia proper. The desecration of graveyards and other burial sites is a commonly seen atrocity in genocide, as it seeks to target, humiliate, destroy the identity, and deny the dignity of the target group, even after death.

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention would like to emphasize, in particular, one statement from our first Red Flag Alert for Azerbaijan, where we stated: “Given the extreme racialized othering of Armenians by the Azerbaijani government, military, press, and educational system, any Azerbaijani incursions into territories that include ethnic Armenians can be expected to be characterized by genocidal atrocities.”

The risk of genocidal atrocity is especially significant now, given the recent news of the transfer of the Armenian-populated towns of Aghvano and Berdzor to Azerbaijan as well as the continued documented violations of the ceasefire agreement by Azerbaijan. Former Armenian Human Rights Defender Arman Tatoyan has reported Azerbaijani soldiers mass slaughtering animals and leaving their organs in water sources used by Armenian villagers in the region and poisoning the water supply. Tatoyan also reported that Azerbaijani soldiers have been firing on Armenian farmers in their fields outside of the towns, which endangers both the farmers’ livelihoods and an important source of food for the villagers in Aghvano and Berdzor.

The conduct of Azerbaijani soldiers during the 2020 war with Artsakh, where torture, murder, and beheading videos involving captured Armenian soldiers and civilians were common, as well

as the many statements made by Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliiev that Yerevan (the capital of Armenia) is Azeri “historic land,” provide the larger genocidal context for current Azerbaijani atrocities.

The international community, especially NATO and its member countries, continues to ignore Azerbaijan’s genocidal statements, genocidal domestic ideological culture, and genocidal actions, all of which are supported and furthered by Turkey.

We call on all international and state bodies to monitor Turkey and Azerbaijan for genocidal ideology and practices, to place pressure on Turkey and Azerbaijan to cease their genocidal threats against the Armenian people, and to reinforce the security of Armenians and the Armenian identity in the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Artsakh, and in Diaspora communities worldwide.

Genocide prevention must be at the top of the list of diplomatic considerations and priorities if the world wishes to prevent the repeat of the Armenian Genocide (1915-1923) and the large-scale genocidal massacres leading up to it.