

To: Mr. Günter Schirmer, Head of the Secretariat of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Re: Gross human rights violations by Azerbaijan

STATEMENT BY ARMENIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

In the early morning of 27 September 2020 Azerbaijani armed forces launched aggressive military air and artillery shelling against Nagorno Karabakh. For more than eighty hours peaceful population is being subjected to indiscriminate attack accompanied with massive hate speech against ethnic Armenians.

The armed forces of Azerbaijan opened large scale shelling¹ using military aircraft, UAVs, armored vehicles and artillery, with anti-aircraft missiles towards major settlements of Nagorno Karabakh, including Stepanakert, Askeran, Martakert, Martuni, Hadrut and Shushi.

Currently a number of settlements, the population of which reaches approximately 150.000, is under direct and continuous bombardment. In Stepanakert as well as in a number of borderline settlements civilian objects are targeted and attacked². Information headquarter of Nagorno Karabakh reported that Azerbaijani forces targeted a residential area of Stepanakert utilizing 122-mm Grad projectile.³ Public schools and other educational centers in Stepanakert were heavily shelled on 27 September. Main roads between settlements were targeted and destroyed, resulting in many injuries among civilian population⁴. Numerous homes in villages of Martakert, Martuni, Mataghis were damaged in the result of the act of aggression.

Dozens of civilians, including children, pregnant women and elderly persons, were also injured as a result of drone strikes. The indiscriminate attack lead to the death of seven civilians were fatally wounded in different borderline settlements within these four days. Hundreds of civilians lost their homes and were to flee from their villages and towns becoming homeless.

It is of utmost importance to note that settlements within the internationally recognized borders of Armenia were also bombarded. According to the official information Turkish forces were directly

¹https://www.forbes.com/sites/sebastienroblin/2020/09/27/tanks-ablaze-as-azerbaijani-forces-attack-armenian-troops-in-disputed-nagorno-karabakh/?fbclid=IwAR26EF3VAgEsO_xXTK9C4bW5HGii8Y6ajEB1CbS6QRb0kaqv9FPz7n76T9A#463451542f90

² Attachment 1 to this statement

³https://hetq.am/en/article/122181?_cf_chl_jschl_tk_=3a755cfcafe75182aeb485d0fee7e1bf873e131d-1601469172-0-AU1J3fBVPa5rr-SWiyA4Yq-v5Dnzzb6v5RJUOPCctWkXOSzryMijl8kIPALFyUWtEohqXmIlg7y45tjEAM8R899puHZdylpabA8vaoP51PpP-kHS-qiNUi22eouby-YVJmTIAUptkalud4nv817lb363i7ov-vritvC-Ea_g8vHjIekxQR2EntIMhvuNdAWl6VwFOVQ-QiRRnmbr5Gqoo1gHcnRYo5OoKzOgNBBrvRQ1LBrjcUNgOkJOVVIIlBK3rvqxZv0Z0B4xykdnOedSRg6FZ62Yhr_5XNcapm3k4iMbX3

⁴ <https://armlur.am/1045759/?fbclid=IwAR2gxcM-3hn5Y255iuGawSyDwZg8uXuzMSERUoYS8l1fL1C2ot7aTi4J3Co>

involved in the attacks of civilian population and infrastructure within the territory of the Republic of Armenia. Turkish air forces shelled a number of settlements, including Vardenis, Mets Masrik, Sotk of Vardenis region⁵. The attacks caused not only pecuniary damages to the civilian population, but also instigated injuries and death.⁶

We express our deep concern and regret that Turkey provided political and military support to Azerbaijan in its hostilities against civilians in Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia⁷.

We also invite your attention to the official information provided by the Armenian Government in respect of the use of all 300-caliber rocket launchers existing in the arsenal of the Azerbaijani army, including Smerch, Kasirga, Polonez, TOS-1A heavy flamethrower systems. This information is also confirmed by inhabitants' testimonies and the disseminated photo and video footages⁸.

We respectfully request the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights to urge Azerbaijan to cease its hostilities against the civilian population and follow the calls of international community as well as the European Court of Human Rights to immediately discontinue any actions that put the lives of civilian population under imminent risk.

Sincerely,

Protection of Rights without Borders
Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor
Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center
Open Society Foundations-Armenia
“CPI” Armenian Centre
Women's Resource Center

⁵ <https://mil.am/en/news/8440>

⁶ https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2020/09/29/Vardenis-Foreign-Ministry/2370160?_cf_chl_jschl_tk_=5ec990fb0f9a0650b2298fae3904928abd3ba358-1601453098-0-AQs0QQOuc3RV0mV9Y1alBh-DyIIYf7wkVJqSBhQ06li2P9rIdsGCFrQzBsnB0wXT7dop8HG9i09LwKMyyP9LpymQgoYHW14J8mi-UPHZg_fj4iTRMdcWNuzkEwyvwWuTNUox492fal7GRFTfL_G0-tHSaHya0_gvqJVZI7PobVkmldAz7vXvmWR-IthwyxnXMAcFzHRRLEFGBbshDbbqMcJGhX3vfAcOPFzPIpFuc3u3bHnpSnLJqGI-hF7vHwB5gU9TZYRp-WfjCGKZQe3-qhV8O8xYe2RVL33ckNDGa-bBH19_nbipRtznIyuZVv2LkfdU0-K6vSxcqxBdIda4s

⁷ https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/syrian-rebel-fighters-prepare-to-deploy-to-azerbaijan-in-sign-of-turkeys-ambition?fbclid=IwAR2XciNwfD0yv0orWiWk0SJS4vCe0MywaIvDFGk2nBrb_OeN5aySRdCnOyo

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-turkey-syria-idUSKBN26J25A?fbclid=IwAR1AVyw1qldaa2kijN32Yb_Jy7hvYOx_XP-DezkhPtm5SNubIMN8Hsru02c

<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-support-azerbaijan-with-all-its-means-against-armenias-attacks-158629>

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200929-is-turkey-a-brother-in-arms-or-just-extending-its-footprint-into-nagorno-karabakh>

⁸ <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-support-azerbaijan-with-all-its-means-against-armenias-attacks-158629>

Pink human rights defender NGO
Helsinki Committee of Armenia
Union of informed citizens
Analytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation
Journalists' Club Asparez
For Equal Rights NGO
Public Journalism Club
Armenian Progressive Youth NGO
Peace Dialogue NGO
Helsinki Association for Human Rights NGO
Unison NGO
Human Rights House Yerevan
Law development and protection foundation
Non-discrimination and Equality Coalition
Mission Armenia
Armenian Rehabilitation Center of Torture Victims
Women's Rights House
Institute for Public Policy
Socioscope
Protection of Rights without Bounders
New Generation Humanitarian NGO

ATTACHMENT 1

Photos demonstrating civilians' injuries and pecuniary damages caused by Azerbaijani attacks





