



Armenian terrorism

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ARMENIA'S STATE- BACKED TERROR: MISSILE STRIKES ON AZERBAIJANI CITIES



A successful counter-offensive was carried out last year by Azerbaijani armed forces from September 27 to November 10. As a result, the territory of Karabakh and seven surrounding districts started to be liberated from the Armenian invaders. The Armenian leadership, which was suffering a crushing defeat by the opposing side on the frontline, resorted to terrorism, the favorite “weapon” of Armenian nationalists. Thus, Armenia, in fact, confirmed that it supports terror at the state level.

Ganja, the second largest city of Azerbaijan, was one of the areas affected by Armenia’s terror attacks. Since Ganja was located 60 km away from the war zone, it could not be considered a frontline area. On October 4, 2020, one person was killed and 32 others were wounded after missiles were launched on Ganja from the Armenian territory in the vicinity of Vardenis and the town of Goris. Initially, the Armenian side denied the strike. However, Vagram Pogosyan, the spokesman for the leader of the self-proclaimed “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic”, shared a Facebook post later, calling on Azerbaijan “to wise up before it’s too late”. Otherwise, Pogosyan claimed, “archaeologists would not be able to find where Ganja was located in just a few days”.

It became clear that an attack on a peaceful city was planned beforehand and carried out deliberately. Statements by the Armenian side alleging that the strike had targeted a military facility were dismissed even by

foreign journalists, given that the closest military facility was 7 km away from the impact point in a densely populated city block.

The center of Ganja was hit by an “Elbrus” ballistic missile at 2 a.m. on October 11, 2020. The missile was launched from the territory of Armenia’s Berd district. Armenian politicians stated that they were unaware of the implementers and whereabouts of the strike origin. However, foreign journalists proved that those allegations were false. Three buildings housing 31 apartments each were completely destroyed as a result of the shelling. Moreover, four houses and a privately owned home became dilapidated and unsafe for dwelling. A total of 10 civilians were killed and more than 20 wounded.

Furthermore, 14 people died after Ganja was shelled with the use of “Elbrus” ballistic missiles in the early hours on October 17. Three children were among those killed, including a 16-month-old girl. A total of 53 civilians were wounded, including five children. The Armenian claims that the strike was aimed at military targets were once again rebuffed by foreign journalists, who did not find any military facilities in this part of the city.

The Azerbaijani city of Barda, which is also located away from the zone of military action, was also targeted by Armenia’s terror attacks. In September-October 2020, the city, which had a population of over 40,000, additionally hosted thousands of families from the peaceful



towns of Tartar and Aghjabadi, as well as villages of the Aghdam region, which were also regularly shelled by Armenian armed forces.

Armenian forces launched a strike on Barda using a Smerch multiple rocket launcher at around 1 p.m. on October 28, 2020. The missiles hit trade outlets, killing 21 people and wounding over 70. The Armenian side

denied the missile strike had ever occurred. However, members of The New York Times camera crew working on a report involving refugees settled in Barda were among the eyewitnesses. The group of reporters prepared footage that covered not only the casualties and damage inflicted by the attack, but also fragments of the fired missiles. It was clear that the strike on a peaceful city was planned ahead of time and carried out deliberately. Rights groups Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch confirmed that Armenia had used outlawed cluster munitions against civilian population, having studied the photos, eyewitness accounts and missile fragments on the spot.



The missile strike on Barda caused the highest number of civilian casualties among all clashes that occurred during the fighting in the Karabakh war zone in fall 2020.

The Azerbaijani town of Tartar, which is located at a significant distance from the frontline, was targeted by Armenia's terror attacks as well.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities last September, over 100,000 people resided in the town and villages of the Tartar district. From September 27, the town and adjacent villages sustained massive shelling on a daily basis. On certain days, residential areas of the district were hit by up to 2,000 missiles. A total of 21 Smerch missiles and 16,277 artillery projectiles were fired upon the Tartar district during the 44-day war. Civilian death toll equaled 17 people, including a child and a woman, and 63 more residents were wounded as a result of the shelling. Significant damage was inflicted to the Azerbaijani district. More precisely, 3,548 privately owned homes, 1,735 apartments in 65 buildings, 163 outlets of entrepreneurs and 47 social facilities were destroyed or significantly damaged, including 14 schools and three hospitals, as well as 28 administrative buildings, 103 vehicles and two boiler rooms. In total, more than 4,000 facilities were destroyed or damaged in over 40 residential areas of the district.

The shelling carried out in the town on October 15, 2020 and witnessed by Vasily Polonsky, a correspondent of the “Dozhd” (Rain) TV channel, was a manifestation of utmost cynicism and cruelty. Armenian servicemen targeted a local cemetery during a funeral service, killing three people, including a mullah, and wounding five, including one who died in hospital thereafter. Most of the graves and gravestones were damaged at the cemetery.

The Armenian military targeted not only borderline Azerbaijani regions (for example, Tartar), major cit-

ies (for instance, Ganja) and strategic facilities, such as Mingachevir Hydro Power Station, but also regions that lacked facilities of strategic importance or those serving military purposes that were situated far enough from the battle zone. Thus, regional centers and villages of the Beylagan, Barda, Aghdam, Aghjabadi, Goranboy and Naftalan districts were regularly subjected to shelling during the warfare that lasted 44 days. On October 5, 2020, a Smerch missile hit the courtyard of a kindergarten located in the Barda district. Casualties were avoided only because children were evacuated from the region in the beginning of hostilities immediately after it became clear that barbaric Armenian shooters were targeting civilian facilities. Separate governmental commissions as well as taskforces within Azerbaijan’s Prosecutor General’s Office were established to evaluate the war crimes committed by the Armenian leadership and the inflicted damage. Experts concluded that over 10,000 residential, household and public structures had sustained damage.

According to the Prosecutor General’s Office, 101 Azerbaijani civilians were killed and 43 others wounded from September 27, 2020 to December 14, 2020 as a result of shelling, acts of sabotage and mine blasts. Afterwards, representatives of diplomatic missions and military attaches based in Baku as well as journalists from the world’s major news agencies who visited the ravaged areas once again became convinced of the crimes perpetrated by the Armenian leaders. ❖





