

Torture and Sexual Abuse of the Armenian Female Servicemen and Civilians by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces

Warsaw Human Dimension Conference 2022

Warsaw, Poland

October 4, 2022

Plenary Session VI: Rule of Law I

On behalf of Open Society foundations- Armenia.

We express our outrage with the recent cases of war crimes, including torture and sexual abuse, committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces against the Armenian female soldiers and civilian women during the aggression against Armenia, which took place on September 13.

Amid the recent attack waged by Azerbaijan against Armenia, human rights organizations documented disturbing video footage and photos of corps of the Armenian female civilians and soldiers that were subject to torture and sexual abuse by the Azerbaijani forces.

One of the victims- Susanna Margaryan, volunteered to defend her home and fell under the control of the Azerbaijani armed forces. As apparent from the photos, she was tortured, mutilated and denigrated. All the while, the Azerbaijani soldiers were filming and mocking her. The other victim (Anush Apetyan) suffered the same fate with clear evidence of sexual assault and bodily mutilation. Azerbaijani soldiers are actively sharing the footage and priding themselves of their "accomplishments". Moreover, the Azerbaijani soldiers marked the name of their special forces – "YAŞMA" or "YASHMA" – on the tortured body of one of the Armenian women.

To remind, on the night of September 13, Azerbaijan launched a large-scale attack against the Republic of Armenia, targeting both military objects and civilian infrastructures inside Armenia, and subsequently seized territory on the Armenian side of the international border. At least 23 localities along the Armenian border in Syunik, Gegharkunik, and Vayots Dzor provinces were hit by Azerbaijani missiles and shelling. This an unprecedented aggression and the deadliest since the war in 2020, which was ceased with conclusion of a Tripartite Agreement on November 9, 2020.

It is urgent that OSCE uses all its mechanisms

- to inquire, investigate and request remedial action from Azerbaijan for mutilations, molestation, torture and sexual violence of ethnic Armenians, including civilian hostages, POWs,
- to demand immediate release and repatriation of all ethnic Armenians detained by Azerbaijan since 2020 and recently,
- to report and recommend that international mechanisms are created to ensure accountability for the political and military leadership of Az for committed crimes.