

The OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM), 2018

Warsaw, Poland

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Thursday, 20 September 2018
Working session 16 (specifically selected topic)

- Combating racism,
 - xenophobia,
- intolerance and discrimination.

Combating Racism, Xenophobia, Intolerance and Discrimination

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Indeed, manifestations of discrimination and intolerance, including hate crimes, continue to pose a serious threat to peace and security across the OSCE region. It is also a matter of serious concern that today even an entire people are continuously becoming the target of discrimination, intolerant discourse and hate crimes that can escalate into wider scale conflict and violence. Over the past years, the propaganda of hatred and intolerance in Azerbaijan to everything Armenian has reached an unprecedented scale. The fact that the situation has reached a critical point is indicated by the following:

- Armenians have been declared the main enemy of Azerbaijan at the presidential level,¹
- An Azerbaijani officer who committed a hate crime, killing a fellow Armenian officer during NATO language courses in Budapest, was made a “hero” and role model in Azerbaijan,
- Anyone with an Armenian name, regardless of age or citizenship, is treated as an enemy or spy, and is prohibited from entering Azerbaijan,
- Azerbaijani children from preschool age are taught to hate Armenians.

Unfortunately, this policy of cultivating Armenophobia, consistently carried out in Azerbaijan, remained largely unnoticed by the international community, which, apparently, underestimated also the threat it posed to regional peace and security. In the absence of any effective reaction to the growing aggression and hatred in Azerbaijan, Baku unleashed another

¹ *"Closing Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the conference on the results of the third year into the "State Program on the socioeconomic development of districts for 2009–2013"". Official website of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. 28 February 2012.*



war against Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2016, during which the Azerbaijani army committed numerous violations of international humanitarian law both against civilians and servicemen of Defence Army of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

In particular, there is documented evidence of the brutal murder by Azerbaijani soldiers of three elderly people in the village of Talish, followed by mutilation of the bodies. The bodies of more than two dozen soldiers of the NKR Defence Army have also been desecrated. At least two of them were tortured while they were still alive.

I apologize for mentioning all these facts, but they show how far the Azerbaijani side can go in their hatred towards Armenians. The fact that these actions have been encouraged by the leadership of Azerbaijan in the person of its president, who awarded the Azerbaijani soldiers posing with the severed heads of Armenian servicemen is also a matter of grave concern.

Therefore, the international community, including OSCE participating States, must unequivocally and strongly condemn such atrocities, as well as their encouragement in order to prevent their recurrence in the future. It is also necessary to take effective measures to stop the propaganda of hatred and xenophobia, which serves as a breeding ground for such crimes.

Thank you for your attention.