



Genocide Watch  
The Alliance Against Genocide

## Country Report: Azerbaijan

The establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918 coincided with a systemic violence and extermination campaign against the Armenian populations living in Azerbaijan and the disputed provinces of Nakhichevan and Nagorno-Karabakh. Often viewed as an extension of the 1915 deportation and genocide of Ottoman Armenians, Azerbaijani forces in Baku slaughtered upwards of 15,000 Armenian civilians in what has been known as the '[September Days](#).' Azerbaijanis also slaughtered 1,000 more Armenians from 1919 to 1920 in the Karabakh cities of Shusha and Khaibalikend. These tragic events weigh heavily on the Armenian collective consciousness and their distrust of Azerbaijan today.

Soviet rule brought the violence against Armenians to an end, but the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh during the dismantling of the Soviet Union reignited Azerbaijani violence against the Armenian minority. From 1988 to 1990, Azerbaijani mobs robbed, beat, raped, and murdered ethnic Armenians in the towns of Sumgait, Baku, and Kirovabad. This violence eventually led to the mass expulsion of all Armenians living in Azerbaijan.

In the 6-year long war over Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijani forces indiscriminately shelled the city of Stepanakert, killing over 100 Armenian civilians. Azerbaijani forces also often destroyed Armenian villages, killed civilians, and mutilated corpses; a [significant massacre](#) in the village of Marga occurred when forces systematically killed over 100 civilians in April 1992. Currently, the Azerbaijani government under Ilham Aliyev consistently denies any past violence against Armenians and is also a frequent [denier](#) of the 1915 Armenian Genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire.

Today, Azerbaijan denies displaced Armenians the right to return and *forbids* a person of Armenian heritage from entering its territory. The Azerbaijani government also often promotes hate speech and encourages violence against Armenians. There are many current examples of Azerbaijani attacks on Armenians such as the case of Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani soldier who murdered Armenian soldier Gurgen Margaryan with an ax in 2004. Upon Safarov's return home, the Azerbaijani government promptly acquitted Safarov of murder and awarded him praise for his services to [Azerbaijan](#).

Azerbaijani artillery along the "[Line of Contact](#)" in Karabakh often hits Armenian villages and civilians. Their military offensives, both past, and present, clearly violate the Geneva Convention concerning prisoners of war. Most notably in 2016, Azerbaijani troops decapitated the Yazidi-Armenian soldier [Kyaram Sloyan](#) and posted his severed head on the social media site VKontakte. Due to its frequent denial of past atrocities against Armenians, its frequent use of hate speech, and the current targeting of civilians, **Genocide Watch considers Azerbaijan to be at Stage 9: Extermination and Stage 10, Denial**

Genocide Watch recommends:

1. Increased international pressure on Azerbaijan to stop all offensive maneuvers against the Republic of Artsakh and Armenia.
2. A third-party peacekeeping force is positioned along the Line of Contact to deter violence between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
3. Global condemnation of all hate speech and genocide denial from the Aliyev regime.

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