

Garakand tragedy

On November 20, 1991, Azerbaijani Mi-8 helicopter was shot down by Armenian armed formations near the village of Garakand in the Khojavend district. As a result of the Garakand tragedy, negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict, mediated by the Presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan, broke down. After the tragedy near the village of Garakand, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict escalated into a full-scale war. Qarabag.com has presented a brief chronicle of the events that took place in Azerbaijan 30 years ago. Russian and Soviet archival newspapers such as "Novoe Russkoe Slovo", "Izvestia", "Pravda", "Bakinskiy rabochiy", "Komsomolskaya Pravda" were used in the compilation of the material.

On November 18, 1991, Armenian armed formations attacked the village of Khojavend in the Martuni district of the NKA0 (now Khojavend district). In order to clarify the situation in Khojavend, a commission was established. Its members included senior Azerbaijani statesmen, representatives of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR and members of the Russian-Kazakh peacekeeping mission.

[\["Novoe Russkoe Slovo" 12/23/1991., p. 4\]](#)

On November 20, at 13:30, the commission flew from Aghdam to Martuni by Mi-8T helicopter (Flight No.72) to visit the village of Khojavend. About an hour later, the helicopter exploded near the village of Garakand, Khojavend district. As a result of an expert assessment conducted in the laboratory of the Scientific Research Institute of the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan, it was found out that the helicopter was engaged by machine guns and submachine guns from the ground.

[\["Novoe Russkoe Slovo", 12/23/1991., p. 4\]](#)

[\["Bakinskiy Rabochiy" No. 227 \(22252\), 22.11.1991., pp. 1-2\]](#)

[\["Pravda" No. 2, 01/03/1991., p. 6\]](#)

According to one of the versions, the helicopter exploded in the air, and its fragments and the bodies of the dead began to fall to the ground. However, according to the testimony of E.Saryeva, a local resident from the village of Marzili, the downed helicopter did not explode and the crew still managed to land it on the ground. Then a truck rushed to the landing site, and 15-20 minutes later, shots were clearly heard from the helicopter landing site.

[\["Novoe Russkoe Slovo", 12/23/1991., p. 4\]](#)

[\["Komsomolskaya Pravda" No. 270-271 \(20270-20271\), 23.11.1991., p 1\]](#)

[\["Izvestia" No. 249 \(23515\) 18.10.1991., p. 1\]](#)

The militants who arrived at the helicopter crash site mutilated the remains of many of the dead (traces of gunshot wounds on the corpses) and looted. They stole weapons belonging to military and law enforcement officers as well as videotapes, a video camera of TV journalists and valuables of the victims.

[\["Izvestia" No. 283 \(23549\), 28.01.1991., p. 1\]](#)

[\["Novoye Russkoe Slovo", 23.12.1991., p. 4\]](#)

The "black box" of the downed helicopter was transferred by the Azerbaijani authorities to Moscow and was soon declared burnt out. [\[Y.A.Pompeyev. "The Bloody pool of Karabakh", 1992., p. 62\]](#)

Three days of mourning were declared in Azerbaijan in connection with this tragedy.

[\["Bakinskiy rabochiy" No. 227 \(22252\), 22.11.1991., p. 1\]](#)

The list of the victims of Garakand tragedy:

1. Tofik Ismayilov – State Secretary of Azerbaijan, People's Deputy of the USSR.
2. Vagif Jafarov – People's Deputy of the USSR, former Chairman of the Shusha District Council of People's Deputies of Azerbaijan.
3. Ismet Gayibov – Attorney General of Azerbaijan.
4. Magomed Asadov – Major General, State Adviser of

Azerbaijan (former Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan).

5. Veli Mammadov – People's Deputy of the USSR.
6. Gurban Namazaliyev – People's Deputy of Azerbaijan, First Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources of the Republic.
7. Zulfi Hajiyev – Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan.
8. Osman Mirzoyev – Honored Journalist of Azerbaijan, Head of the Press Department of the Office of the President of Azerbaijan.
9. Ali Mustafayev -correspondent of Azerbaijani television.
10. Fakhraddin Shahbazov- operator of Azerbaijani television.
11. Arif Huseynzade- lighting cameraman of Azerbaijani television.
12. Rafik Mammadov – Assistant Secretary of State of Azerbaijan;
13. Nikolay Zhinkin – Major General of the Internal Service, Commandant of the Emergency Area.
14. Vladimir Kovalev – Major General of the Internal Service, Head of the Department of Internal Affairs of the NKA0 of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
15. Sergey Ivanov – Head of the NKA0 Department of the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan.
16. Igor Plavskiy – Prosecutor of the NKA0.
17. Sailau (Sanlan) Serikov – Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan.
18. M.D. Lukashov – Major General of Militia, Head of the Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RSFSR.
19. Oleg Kocherov – Lieutenant Colonel, Representative of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR.
20. Vyacheslav Kotov – major, crew commander.
21. Dmitriy Yalovenko (Yakovlev) – lieutenant, senior pilot-navigator.
22. Gennadiy Dolgov – captain, senior technician.

[\["Bakinsky Rabochiy" No. 227 \(22252\), 22.11.1991., p. 2\]](#)