

The history of the administrative and territorial division of the city of Shusha

On November 8, 2020, during the Second Karabakh War (September 27, 2020 – November 10, 2020), the Azerbaijani army liberated the city of Shusha from the Armenian occupation. On May 7, 2021, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev signed an order declaring Shusha the cultural capital of Azerbaijan. Qarabag.com has prepared material on the history of the administrative and territorial division of the city of Shusha from the time of the founding of the Karabakh Khanate to the present.

The administrative center of the Shusha district – the city of Shusha (formerly Panahabad) is located in the foothills of the eastern slopes of the Karabakh Range.

[\[Abbas-kuli-gha Bakikhanov. Gulistan-i Iram. 1991, p. 77\]](#)

[\[V.P.Leviatov. The essays from the history of Azerbaijan in the XVIII century. 1948., p. 99\]](#)

[\[The General Map of Georgia. With the indication of postal and large carriageways, stations and the distance between these versts. St. Petersburg. 1823\]](#)

[\[V.Sidorov. Across Russia. 2. Caucasus. A travelogue and impressions. Practical information for tourists. St. Petersburg. 1897, pp. 235-236\]](#)

Shusha was founded in 1752 (1754) by Panakh Ali Javanshir who was the first Khan of Karabakh.

[\[K.Nikitin. The essay on the city of Shusha and Shusha Uyezd. Elisavetpol. 1873., pp. 4-5\]](#)

[\[V.M.Sysoev. A short guidebook to the most famous monuments of antiquity and nature in Azerbaijan. 1930, p. 11\]](#)

In 1813, according to the Treaty of Gulistan, the Karabakh Khanate (including Shusha) became a part of the Russian Empire. In 1823, the Russian Governance was introduced in

Shusha.

[\[E. Weidenbaum. A guidebook to the Caucasus. Tiflis, 1888., page 146\]](#)

[\[Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary: Volume XL \(79\). 1904., p. 261\]](#)

In 1835, the Karabakh province (including Shusha) was incorporated into the Muslim provinces of Transcaucasia of the Russian Empire.

[\[O. Evetsky. The statistical description of the Transcaucasian region. St. Petersburg, 1835., p. 24\]](#)

In 1840, Shusha was officially approved as a city. In the same year, the Karabakh province (including Shusha) was incorporated into the newly formed Caspian region, all magals were renamed into districts and provinces were renamed into uyezds. Consequently, the Karabakh province was renamed to Karabakh Uyezd.

[\[The USSR: administrative-territorial division of the Union Republics as of January 1, 1980. 1980, p. 439\]](#)

[\[The Caucasian calendar as of 1871. Tiflis, 1870. Section 2. The historical overview of the Baku governorate, pp. 44-45\]](#)

In 1846, Karabakh Uyezd was renamed to Shusha Uyezd in honor of the city of Shusha.

[\[The Caucasian calendar as of 1868. Tiflis, 1868. Section 3. The historical overview of the civil institutions of the Caucasus and the Transcaucasian region., p. 398\]](#)

In 1868, Shusha Uyezd (including Shusha) was incorporated into the Elizavetpol governorate.

[\[The Caucasian calendar as of 1869. Tiflis, 1868. Section 2, p. 115\]](#)

[\[The Caucasian calendar as of 1892. Tiflis, 1891. Section 11. Chronological index., p. 33\]](#)

During the years of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920), Shusha was part of the Shusha Uyezd of the Ganja province. In 1919-1920, Shusha was incorporated into the Karabakh Governorate-General.

[\[Azerbaijan Democratic Republic \(1918-1920\) Legislative acts \(The Collection of Documents\) 1998, p. 126;389\]](#)

On July 5, 1921, by the decision of the Plenum of the

Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP), the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh was left within the Azerbaijani SSR and was granted autonomy with the administrative center in the city of Shusha.

[\[The history of the Formation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of the Azerbaijani SSR. 1918-1925: Documents and Materials.1989// From the minutes of the meeting of the Plenum of the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP \(b\) on July 5, 1921, p. 59\]](#)

On July 4 (July 7), 1923, in accordance with the Decree of the Presidium of the the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Azerbaijan (AzCEC) (*the highest organ of state authority in the republic in 1922-1938*), the The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKA0) was established in the mountainous part of Karabakh. With a view to diluting the administrative significance of the city of Shusha to change the number and ethnic composition of the population in Karabakh in favor of Armenians, the administrative center of the newly formed autonomy was moved from the city of Shusha to the village of Khankendi (which was later renamed to Stepanakert).

[\[The History of the Formation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani SSR. 1918-1925. Documents and materials. Baku, 1989, p. 94;116\]](#)

[\[V.M.Sysoev. A short guidebook to the most famous monuments of antiquity and nature in Azerbaijan. 1930, p. 11\]](#)

[\[The USSR: administrative and territorial division of the Union Republics as of October 1, 1938. 1938, p. 183\]](#)

[\[The Azerbaijani SSR: administrative and territorial division as of January 1, 1977. 1979, p. 6\]](#)

On July 21, 1923, by the decree of the Presidium of AzCEC of Soviets and the Council of People's Commissars of Azerbaijan SSR (*Government of the Republic*), the city of Shusha was incorporated into the NKA0. However, according to the administrative division of the USSR as of 1923-1924, the city of Shusha is indicated as the administrative center of Shusha Uyezd.

[\[The History of the Formation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani SSR. 1918-1925. Documents and materials. From the minutes of the meeting of the Presidium of the AzCEC of Soviets and the Council of People's Commissars of the ASSR on July 21, 1923, pp. 97-98\]](#)

[\[The administrative divisions of the USSR according to data related to May 15, 1923. 1923, p. 21;56\]](#)

[\[The administrative division of the USSR according to data related to May 1, 1924. 1924, p. 34;69\]](#)

As of 1925, Shusha was indicated as the center of the Khachensky district of the NKA0.

[\[The territorial and administrative division of the USSR as of January 1, 1925. 1925, p. 204\]](#)

In 1926, Shusha was designated as the center of the Kachinsky Uyezd and of the Shusha region of the NKA0.

[\[S.I.Sulkevich. The administrative and political structure of the USSR \(materials on territorial transformations from 1917 to July 1, 1925\) 1926, p. 184\]](#)

[\[The territorial and administrative division of the USSR on January 1, 1926, 1926, p. 193\]](#)

As of 1929, Shusha was mentioned as the center of the Shusha dayr (presumably a district) of the NKA0.

[\[The administrative and territorial division of the USSR and the list of the most important settlements with a chronological list of resolutions on changing the borders of provinces, regions and republics from 1917 to 1929, 1929, p. 117;286\]](#)

On August 8, 1930, the Shusha district was formed with the center in the city of Shusha.

[\[The Azerbaijani SSR: administrative-territorial division as of January 1, 1977. 1979, p. 7\]](#)

[\[The administrative and territorial division of the USSR. Districts and cities of the USSR. 1931, p. 230\]](#)

In 1936, the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which included the city of Shusha, was renamed to the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKA0).

[\[Constitution of the USSR. 1936, p. 31\]](#)

[\[Baku Worker Newspaper No. 63, 03/16/1937\]](#)

January 4, 1963, the Shusha district was abolished, and Shusha was made part of the Stepanakert district. On January 6, 1965,

the city of Shusha again became the center of the restored Shusha district.

[\[The Azerbaijani SSR: administrative and territorial division as of January 1, 1977. 1979, p. 71\]](#)

[\[The USSR: administrative and territorial division of the Union Republics as of January 1965., p. 696\]](#)

On November 26, 1991, by the resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijani SSR, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was liquidated, and with the collapse of the USSR (26.12.1991), the NKA0 ceased to exist. However, the Shusha district retained its administrative and territorial status with the center in the city of Shusha.

[\[Baku Worker Newspaper No. 230, 11/27/1991\]](#)

On May 8-9, 1992, the city of Shusha was occupied by Armenian armed formations.

[\[Thomas de Waal: Black Garden. Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War. 2005., p. 384\]](#)