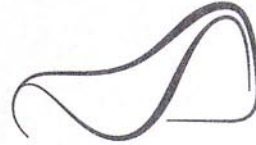


THE SERIES OF "THE TRUE FACTS ABOUT KARABAKH"



KHOJALY GENOCIDE



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The Washington Post

"NAGORNO-KARABAKH VICTIMS BURIED IN AZERBAIJANI TOWN - REFUGEES CLAIM HUNDREDS DIED IN ARMENIAN ATTACK"

By Thomas Goltz, Aghdam, Azerbaijan, 27 February

Officials of the main mosque in this town just east of the embattled enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh said they buried 27 bodies today, brought from an Azerbaijani town inside the enclave that was captured Wednesday by Armenian militiamen.

Refugees fleeing the fighting in Khojaly, a town of 6,000 northeast of the enclave's capital, Stepanakert, claimed that up to 500 people, including women and children, were killed in the attack. No independent estimate of deaths was available here. The Aghdam mosque's director, Said Sadikov Muan, said refugees from Khojaly had registered the names of 477 victims with his mosque since Wednesday.

Officials in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, estimated the deaths in Khojaly at 100, while Armenian officials in their capital, Yerevan, said only two Azerbaijanis were killed in the attack. An official from Baku said here that his government fears Azerbaijanis would turn against it if they knew how many had been killed.

Of seven bodies seen here today, two were children and three were women, one shot through the chest at what appeared to be close range. Another 120 refugees being treated at Aghdam's hospital include many with multiple stab wounds.

The Armenians who attacked Khojaly Tuesday night "were shooting, shooting, shooting", said Raisa Aslanova, who reached Aghdam Wednesday night. She said her husband and a son-in-law were killed and her daughter was missing.

Among the refugees who fled here over the mountains from Nagorno-Karabakh were two Turkmen soldiers from former Soviet Interior Ministry forces who had taken refuge in Khojaly after deserting from their unit last Friday because, they said, Armenian non-commissioned officers had beaten them "for being Muslims".

The two deserters claimed their former unit, the 386th Division, was supporting the Armenian militiamen who captured Khojaly. They said they tried to help women and children escape. "We were bringing a group through the mountains when the Armenians found us and opened fire", said Agamehmet Mutif, one of the deserters. "Twelve were killed".

The Washington Post, 28 February 1992

THE INDEPENDENT

"PAINFUL SEARCH"

The gruesome extent of February's killings of Azeris by Armenians in the town of Khojaly is at last emerging in Azerbaijan - about 600 men, women and children dead.

The State Prosecutor, Aydin Rasulov, the chief investigator of a 18-man team looking into what Azerbaijan calls the "Khojaly Massacre", said his figure of 600 people dead was a minimum on preliminary findings. A similar estimate was given by Elman Memmedov, the mayor of Khojaly. An even higher one was printed in the Baku newspaper Ordu in May - 479 people named and more than 200 bodies reported unidentified. This figure of nearly 700 dead is quoted as official by Lella Yunusova, the new spokeswoman of the Azeri Ministry of Defence.

Francois Zen Ruffinen, head of delegation of the International Red Cross in Baku, said the Muslim imam of the nearby city of Aghdam had reported a figure of 880 bodies received at his mosque from Khojaly, most of them civilians. "We did not count the bodies. But the figure seems reasonable. It is no fantasy", Mr. Zen Ruffinen said. "We have some idea since we gave the body bags and products to wash the dead".

Mr. Rasulov endeavours to give an unemotional estimate of the number of dead in the massacre. "Don't get worked up. It will take several months to get a final figure", the 43-years-old lawyer said at his small office.

Mr. Rasulov knows about these things. It took him two years to reach a firm conclusion that 131 people were killed and 714 wounded when Soviet troops and tanks crushed a nationalist uprising in Baku in January 1990.

Officially, 184 people have so far been certified as dead, being the number of people that could be medically examined by the republic's forensic department. "This is just a small percentage of the dead", said Rafiq Yussifov, the republic's chief forensic scientist. "They were the only bodies brought to us. Remember the chaos and the fact that we are Muslims and have to wash and bury our dead within 24 hours".

Of these 184 people, 51 were women, and 13 were children under 14 years old. Gunshots killed 151 people, shrapnel killed 20 and axes or blunt instruments killed 10. Exposure in the highland snows killed the last three. Thirty-three people showed signs of deliberate mutilation, including ears, noses, breasts or penises cut off and eyes gouged out, according to Professor Yussifov's report. Those 184 bodies examined were less than a third of those believed to have been killed. Mr. Rasulov said.

"There were too many bodies of dead and wounded on the ground to count properly: 470-500 in Khojaly, 650-700 people by the stream and the road and 85-100 visible around Nakhchivanik village", Mr. Manafov wrote in a statement countersigned by the helicopter pilot.

"People waved up to us for help. We saw three dead children and one two-years-old alive by one dead woman. The live one was pulling at her arm for the mother to get up. We tried to land but Armenians started a barrage against our helicopter and we had to return".

There has been no consolidation of the lists and figures in circulation because of the political upheavals of the last few months and the fact that nobody knows exactly who was in Khojaly at the time - many inhabitants were displaced from other villages taken over by Armenian forces.

The Independent (London), 12 June 1992