

ARMENIAN TERROR IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH

TRAGEDY OF GARADAGHLY

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Preface

One of unexamined in depth pages of the history of Azerbaijan is the genocidal events perpetuated in the villages and regions resided by Azeris in the course of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, stirred up again.

During these events, many historical monuments have been destroyed, along with extermination of a number of local azeri population by the Armenian occupants. From the beginning of the conflict, 547 architectural buildings, including 5 of international, 393 of country and 149 of local importance, 205 archeological monuments, 927 libraries, 808 club institutions, 85 schools of music, 12 monuments, 22 museums, 4 galleries of picture, 10 parks of culture and rest, 4 state theatres and 2 institutions of concert have been destroyed and nearly 40.000 museum exponents of high value of international importance from XI-XIX centuries looted by the Armenian aggressors. (1) Research of historiography of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1988-2010 finds out that numerous books and articles have been published on this subject. (2) But overwhelming majority of these publications were addressed to local readers and the international community is almost unaware of them.

A number of purposeful activities have been conducted to convey the realities of the Khojaly tragedy to the world community after adoption of the decision on the day of the Khojaly tragedy by the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Some books and articles have been published on the Khojaly tragedy (3) and even foreign mass media covered the tragedy during the period of its occurrence. (4)

Association for Civil Society Development in Azerbaijan (ACSDA) also did some important works to deliver objective information about the Khojaly tragedy to the world community and has published 3 books. (5) Online versions of the books are available in the web-site www.avciya.az. Starting from 2006, the Association launched the signature company with demand of international recognition of the Khojaly tragedy, gathered signatures of one million of citizens of Azerbaijan and sent to the international institutions of the book, "Khojaly genocide (in documents, facts and foreign press) in Azerbaijani, English and Russian which he published.

Although some works have been done connected with the piercing the information blockade on the Khojaly tragedy, unfortunately it was not the same with other tragedies. One of such tragedies which stayed aside of attention and was researched little is the tragedy which took place in the Garadagly village of the Khojavand region. Even there is no information in the chronology of 1992 of an article titled "Aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan" posted in the official site of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan (www.meclis.gov.az) about the Garadagly tragedy. In our view, the reason is the huge number of Armenian atrocities in Nagorno-Karabakh and scarcity of information regarding the majority of these crimes.

In modern history, events similar to the Garadagly tragedy happened in different parts of the world and the international community is well aware of them. For example, in July 1995, ethnic Serbian nationalists mass murdered more than 10 thousand Muslim population of the Bosnian town of Srebrenica aged between 17-70, people had been buried lively in mass graves. Mass murders have been perpetuated against Muslims in 13 settlements of Bosnia in this period. More than 200

thousand innocent people have been murdered, thousands wounded and 2 million became refugees as a result of these events. Although United Nations, European Parliament and other international organizations recognized at least Srebrenica genocide, one of the 13 genocides that took place in the 13 Bosnian settlements, they prefer to keep silence numerous genocides perpetuated against Azerbaijanis by Armenians. (6)

Eyewitnesses of this tragedy remember it as equal to Khojaly tragedy. Some call the Garadagly as a second Khojaly.

In our view, reasons for scarcity of information on crimes perpetuated in the Garadagly village of the Khojavand region in Nagorno-Karabakh and other settlements resided by Azeris for long time are followings:

- Efforts by local authorities directed from Moscow to cover-up information on tragedies and hiding from public;
- Efforts by internal and exterior forces to use the tragedies for their own purposes interested in violation of political stability in the Southern Caucasus, as well as Azerbaijan;
- Indifference of international powers interested in collapse of the USSR, to the tragedies;
- Isolation of the tragedy sites from the rest of the world and dangerous and hard conditions of obtaining information from that sites;
- Preventive measures by criminals to dissimulate signs of their crimes;
- Deaf ear of international organizations to the voice of Azerbaijan during the period of crimes or their reluctance to hear the voice of Azerbaijan etc.,

In spite of scarcity of information on Garadagly tragedy, accounts by eyewitnesses help to shed light on dark pages of the modern history.

When researching the tragedy of Garadagly, it was found out that there are 16 villages carrying the same name in regions of Azerbaijan. In brief, there are villages whose names are Garadagly in Shaki, Khachmaz, Gadabay, Salyan, Shusha, Aghdam, Fuzuly, Jebail, Kalbajar, Beylagan, Tartar, Goranboy, Kangarly, Barda, Agdash, Ujar rayons of Azerbaijan, also Darband rayon of Autonomous Republic of Dagestan of Russia resided by Azeris.

Even there has been a village of Garadagly in Gamarly (Artashat) region of Armenian SSR resided by Azeris. But later its name was changed. Existence of Garadagly region in the Southern Azerbaijan, situation of Bazz fortress, residence of khorramids in this region, its being birthplace of Sattarkhan, the heroic son of the Azerbaijani people, leader of the 1905-1911 movement who was named as sardar-e-melli (national general) and other facts prove that people of Garadagh are historically heroes and braves. (7) Furthermore, massive information even in the books of foreign historians (8) about heroism performed by the Khojavand horsemen against Russian occupants during I and II Russian-Iranian wars indicated that people residing in these lands are brave men who are ready to die for their motherland.

If to have in view that there are also Garadagly villages of Shusha, Aghdam, Fuzuly, Jebail, Kalbajar under occupation and have been exposed to tragedies, it is necessary not to confuse the problem which is being researched with others.

Even there are many villages by name of Garadagly in the Southern Caucasus and Southern Azerbaijan, tragedies and horrors of Garadagly village of Khojavand differ with their scale from others.

Joint investigation group of Ministries of Internal Affairs and National Security and Prosecutor Office of the Republic adopted a decision on responsibility of 286 people connected with their

crimes committed against humanity in Khojaly, Garadagly, Meshali, Baganis Ayrim and other Azerbaijani villages. 6 people have been found responsible by the joint investigation group connected with the Garadagly genocide. Activities are underway to bring them under investigation as accused persons. (9)

The above mentioned facts on Gardagly tragedy cover very few parts of the Armenian atrocities. Many are unaware of terrible eyewitness accounts on live burial of the residents of the village in silos by Armenians.

Publication of some books and articles on the tragedy of Garadagly village of Khojavand region in recent years is a positive case. (10) But there is an urgent need to boost these activities, uncover new facts hidden from public and publish and spread obtained materials in foreign languages along with Azerbaijani.

I Situation of Garadagly before the tragedy

Garadagly was a big Azeri village of 800 houses situated on the highway linking Khankandi and Khojavand (Martuni), in entourage of 14 Armenian villages. During the soviet authority the Azeri population of neighboring Varandapi, Bahramli and Khanliq villages were forcibly deported and their lands annexed to the Armenian villages.

Various provocations had been committed by Armenians against Azeri population of Nagorno-Karabakh, including Garadagly, in the periods of tsar`s Russia and soviets. One of them took place in 1967. In this year, Armenians slandered and made arrested three Azeris from Garadagly on purpose to instigate a conflict on national basis. Despite their acquittal, Armenian bandits burned those innocent people pouring gasoline on them in a plain day in Khankandi in front of watching eyes of soviet soldiers.

In the soviet period Garadagly had been united in one kolkhoz with Gagarza and Baravat villages resided by Armenians for sometimes. Only Armenians were being appointed to leading positions in the kolkhoz. Armenians were permanently violating the rights of people of Garadagly, keeping them aside from the leadership of the village and appropriating their salaries. In 1971, people of Garadagli appealed to government to be separated from the Armenian villages and to be an independent kolkhoz and achieved this goal. From that year people of Garadagly seceded and united in a kolkhoz named after Narimanov. During the secession the Armenian leadership of Khojavand region left no part from the estate of the previous kolkhoz for Garadagly. Garadagly people even were not allowed to use their ancestral lands. Finally, after hard struggle, they succeeded in getting some part of estate and 100 hectares of land in a place called as Bargiz Tapa. Although 30 km distant from the village, this field played an important role in development of the village.

In the 5th year of its independent activity the kolkhoz named after Narimanov became one of the leading economies of Khojavand (Martuni) region.

A meeting unusually held only in Armenian language in Khojavand on February 12, 1988, banned Azeri language there, offensive remarks by Armenians on Azeris after the meeting, holding of antiazeri slogans and the same activities of Armenians at the meeting of the activists held in Khankandi the next day got concerned all Azeri population of Nagorno-Karabakh, including Garadagly. After this, nationalist meetings and demonstrations started in Khankandi and all Armenian populated towns and villages of Karabakh.

At the wake of these events, a group of habitants from Garadagly village went to Agdam and demanded the region authority to inform Baku about the Armenian provocations and take serious steps. They also sent written appeals to the leadership of the Republic and USSR on Armenian

provocations. Instead of taking measures, the authority sent complaint letters to the Armenian authorities of the region, thus making the condition of the people harder. Left on their fate by the leadership of the Republic as all Azeri population of Karabakh, the people of Garadaghli had to find a way out of their deplorable situation. Popular people of the village, Mazahir Agalarov, head of the Reserve Agency of the region, Nusrat Azizov, the only Azeri, working in the executive body of the region, Nabil Zeynalov, the principal of the school of the village, Jahid Mammadov, Soltan Bayramov proceeded to take some actions to protect Garadagly from Armenian provocations.

In such a hard situation of the village, Adalat Mammadov, a chief lieutenant serving in the soviet army, returned to his native village in response to the appeals of his compatriots in March 1988. Telman Tagiyev, a teacher of military at the school of the village, a reserve officer, Mammad Mammadov, Mohammadali Bayramov and other patriot sons closely assisted to Adalat Mammadov in organization of the defence of the village. Agalar Mammadov, a head of the cell of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan in Garadagly, played an important role in establishing of a voluntary defense unit. Passing of his defense unit under command of Adalat Mammadov closely assisted in founding defense battalion of the village. Although the volunteers of the village started to military trainings, lack of arms to defend the village created serious hardships. After beginning of Armenian provocations in Nagorno-Karabakh in 1988-1989, official authorities three times conducted arms confiscation operations in Garadagly, taking simple hunting weapons from the people. To get out of the situation, the population of Garadagly appealed to their friends and acquaintances from the surrounding regions and they obtained some hunting weapons and sent them to the defenders of Garadagly. Although late, the Azerbaijani leadership got interested in the Nagorno-Karabakh problem after some months of its beginning. At that time, communication of Garadagly with the region center and surrounding buildings was cut off and people from Garadagly were fired from their jobs. To resolve the problem, bake houses, shops and canteens started to function in the village. Affiliation of the sewing factory N 1 of Baku, sections of carpet sewing factory of Ganja and affiliation of Baku refrigerator factory opened in the village. Besides, construction of buildings for school, kindergarten, library, house of culture and hospital started. More than 60 new houses were built in sites allocated for young families. Some works were done for defense of Garadagly. Recruitment of 30 residents of the village by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan SSR as militias for defense of the village, assignment of some staff from Agdam police to Garadagly by rotation increased defense capacity of the village.

From middle of 1989, Armenian provocations against the village intensified. On October 12 of that year, a group of Armenian bandits raided a cattle farm near the village, seizing the cattle and burning out the building of the farm and hays. Adalat Mammadov, Faig Tagiyev, Garib Mustafayev, Nazim Valiyev, defenders of the village reached the site and gave a hard repulse to the bandits.

In December 1989, Armenians began to let down burning barrels full of gasoline from the surrounding mountains every night in order to intimidate and force to flee the population of the village. As a result of steps taken by defenders, this savage act of Armenians was rebuffed too.

On January 15, 1990, nearly 15 Armenians came close to Garadagly and fired on nearby houses. Reaching the incident site and engaging first open combat with the Armenians, defenders repulsed them back. On April 10, 1990, Armenian bandits again attacked the village. Ilgar Aliyev, a resident of the village was badly wounded during the shooting.

On November 24, 1990, at 17.00 p.m., an escort of cars carrying a bride, was attacked by the Armenian bandits disguised in Russian military uniforms, killing 3 people from Garadagly. Surrounding the site of the incident, the bandits were not letting to take the corps, demanding coming of President Ayaz Mutallibov. After two hours, the people succeeded in taking the corps from Armenians with difficulties.

After this incident, the defenders of Garadagly decided to build fortified defense posts, pillboxes and digging trenches around the village. 5 block posts were established and provided with reliable defense devices around the village.

Three block posts were established on the road coming from Khankandi. The post established at the direction of Khojavand region, entrance of the village was being considered as the first post for its importance. Nabil Zeynalov, director of the school undertook to provide this post with guards. Young people who had been pupils of his school and schoolchildren were guarding that post.

A block post established a little distant from asphalt road, not far from the kolkhoz agency was being considered as the second. Mirzali and Mazahir were responsible for this post.

Nazi, Garib, Telman, Vidadi and others were guarding the 3rd post established on the asphalt road at the exit of the village.

The 4th post established at the direction of Kandkhura was also one of important ones. Most of raids against the village were being conducted from this direction. Faig, Rabil, Khudayat and their friends were on guard here. Finally, the 5th post was established on the river of Khonashen, dividing the village into two, in front of the gorge of Zinki. Brave sons as Mammad, Shamil, Algama and Aladdin were charged to defend the Zinki block post. From November 1990, armed guards were in charge of posts throughout the day.

A tragedy that took place in the beginning of 1991 worsened the situation. In January 10, Sultan Bayramov, one of well-known people of the village had left the village for neighboring Amrallar village to discuss the issue of common fight against Armenian bandits. While on his way back to the village, his "UAZ-469" with plate number of 53-55 AQT was suddenly fired on by Armenians at 4 km from the first block post. Although Karam Tagiyev, a driver of the car could drive away the car into the village, to save the life of Karam Tagiyev was impossible. He passed away because of the bullet wounds after 2 hours.

On Sultan's burial day, news of murder of Salatin Askerova, a reporter, on the road of Lachin-Shusha reached the village. Becoming furious as soon as they heard the news, the population of the village set on to March to the villages of the Armenian bandits to protest them. But a group of defenders of the village succeeded to stop them telling that there was no use to go against Armenian bandits unarmed.

After these tragic events, the people of Garadagli made a plan of operation to prevent the Armenian provocations. The operation was being led by Adalat Mammadov. The operation group was made up by Ilgar Huseynov, Elmidar Bayramov, Telman Tagiyev, Eldar Dadashov, Rafiq Guliyev, Garib Mustafayev, Mammad Mammadov and Mammad Mustafayev. Being divided into two groups, they gained control on road linking Khankandi and Khojavand from both exit and entrance. A car "UAZ" that was driving hastily from Khankandi to Khojavand, carrying 6 Armenian bandits was seized and destroyed by the defenders of the village. Thus, vengeance of Sultan Bayramov, Salatin Askerova and other martyrs was taken on the bandits. Armenians accompanied by the Russian militaries, took their corps from the forest only after 3 days. After this, Armenians stopped to use the Khankandi-Khojavand road. In this revenge operation, defenders of Garadagli seized 6 foreign made automatic guns, one hunting rifle and many bullets.

On March 9, 1991, Armenian bandits suddenly attacked a cattle farm near the village and murdered two people. On June 28 of the same year, the village of Garadagly was fired on by Armenians with canons, machine guns and automatic guns at 1 a.m. Some houses of the village were set on fire, some were destroyed. Women, olders and children were forced to shelter in basements to get protected from the fire.

At that night, the greatest tragedy took place at the farm situated in Varandali site, 5 km distant from the village. Along with firing on the village, the bandits rushed into the houses at the farm and shot dead six innocent workers of the farm and threw them into one of the burning houses

in order to dissimulate the crime. After this, they moved aside and kept firing on until complete burning out of the farm.

The people of the village led by Bayverdi Novruzov, came to the site of the incident and succeeded in pulling out corpses of the three people burned out and holed with bullets. After putting off the fire of another room, wholly burned corpses of three people were found out.

After three days of the burial of the martyrs, Ruzigars Mammadov made an operation plan together with 2 officers of the police of Agdam. They get armed, moved towards Armenian village of Kandkhurda and kept a position near to one of control block posts. They took revenge on a commander of Armenian armed men when they appeared for check-up of the block posts at night.

Here are the accounts of Chingiz Mammadov, Karam Agalarov and Shafgat Mammadova, residents of Garadagly, on hard days of the village:

“September 8, 1991, was the election day of Ayaz Mutallibov as a president. The people of Garadagli were voting at polling station in the morning. After the voting, the residents of the village got in a bus in front of the polling station and left for Agdam for shopping. When returning back, the bus was fired on with automatic guns from all sides at 3 km from Khojavand and 2 men, 6 women were killed, 23 wounded from 40 passengers. Wounded people urgently were taken to the hospital of Aghdam”.

After the bus tragedy, on September 25, at night, Elnur Suleymanov, Khanali Huseynov and Rayet Quliyev, 3 of brave youngs of Garadagly got armed and got rear side of the village of Ashan seized by Armenians. They moved close to the village, firing on and killing three armed Armenian militaries who were taking a walk at the outskirt. Although Rayat received a hard bullet wound during this operation, his comrades saved his life taking him to the village through the forest, then to the hospital of Beylagan.

After the incident of September 8, 1991, Mazahir Agalarov, Nabil Zeynalov, representatives of the people of Garadagly together with 20 people from there went to Baku and met with president Ayaz Mutallimov informing him of the hard situation of the village.

A. Mutallibov promised them to be personally busy with the defense of Garadagly and after 3-4 days a group of 11 militaries were sent to Garadagly. They were located in the house of Abbasov, situated in the upper part of the village. The defenders of the village succeeded in preparing and carrying a revenge operation together with that group. A band of 21 men attacked a farm of strategic importance and guarded by many armed Armenian bandits, rendering harmless three of them and forcing the rest to retreat to the neighboring Armenian villages.

But after nearly one month, a mysterious call back of the militaries sent for assistance to the defense of the village worsened hard situation of Garadagli more.

II Occupation of Garadagly

Date of occupation of the villages of Khojavand region resided by Azeris and other facts prove that civil population struggled and fought to the end for their lands. Although they were alone and helpless, performing heroism and bravery in unequal combats with military units of the enemy, the local population resisted heroically against the enemy more than 5 years for their motherland. Beginning of provocations from February 1988, occupation of the villages of Tug and Salatakin on October 30, 1991, Khojavand region November 19, 1991, village of Nakhullu on January 10, 1992, Garadagly on February 17, 1992, Muganli, Amirallar, Kuropatkin on October 2, 1992, Khatai on August 20, 1993, Gunashli on August 23, 1993 are evidences for that.

Situated between Khankandi and Khojavand region center, Garadagly had been continuously attacked by bands of Armenian bandits from the very beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because of its being encircled by Armenian villages. Garadagly had been attacked 305 times from February 1988 until February 1992 excluding some gunfire from surrounding heights. In all these combats the village had suffered from casualties. One of favorable conditions for Armenians to commit inhuman atrocities in Garadagly was that the village had been cut off from land communications with other Azerbaijani settlements and it had no air communications because of intense fire on Azeri helicopters over the village surrounded from all sides.

From summer of 1991, an operation for evacuation of civil population from Garadagly had almost been completed. Garadagly was being defended by 125 men on the eve of occupation. Only 14 of them were from the National Army arrived from Agdam and 70 were combatants of the local self-defense unit. Along with them, 17 men aged more than 60 and 13 schoolchildren had stood ready for fighting arms in their hands. 11 women aged more than 50 had stayed voluntarily in the village assisting their husbands, sons and brothers. Hero Azerbaijani women, Zivar, Sitara, Tavar, Garakmaz, Mina, Minara, Seadet, Mirvari, Minaya, Gular and Haqiqat were closely assisting to those 125 from December.

Hit of an helicopter carrying also state officials of Azerbaijan over Garakand on November 20, 1991, increased concerns of the local population more. Communication with the encircled village was possible only by helicopters. After this, helicopters landing in the village began to carry a part of the population of the village to safe places. Armenian armed units were attacking the village almost every day and defenders had to answer them with fire from every direction.

On January 8, 1992, Armenians conducted a massive attack on the village. Fighters of the National Army and voluntary defense unit rebuffed the attack and forced the bandits to retreat. In this combat, Aligismat Karimov, Alov Azizov, Namig Huseynov, Arastun Mammadov, Ilgar Huseynov performed heroism, rendering harmless numerous Armenian armed men. Although wounded in the combat, Mazahir and Hidayat were taken to the hospital of Agdam by helicopter landed in the village on January 8, to save Mazahir's life was impossible.

On January 12, the bandits did not let a helicopter to land in the village that is why it was obliged to drop food and ammunition on the village and return back. But a little later, another helicopter landed in the village with difficulties, with the martyr Mazahir's friends who took an oath to take revenge for him. A fighter of the National Army Eldar Arazov was also among them.

But forces were not equal. There was a lack of fighters, armours and ammunition. The enemy, armed with a canon, "Qrad" rocket launcher, BMP, automatic, machine guns etc., had big advantages in human forces and arms.

Alarming voices of the people of Garadagli was being heard throughout the country by a portable radio transmitter. Radio operators Zahid Khalilov, Imran Huseynov and Haqiqat Huseynova had served great for this. But the leadership of the republic at that time depending on Moscow, was turning a deaf ear to the alarm of Garadagli, taking no practical steps.

On January 15, 1992, the people of Garadagli made a last appeal to the people of Azerbaijan and this appeal was announced by radio transmitter for several days. Here is the text of the appeal:

"Atrocities of the history cannot shake even a little, the heroic sons guarding the land of Karabakh, struggling bravely survive the hardest tasks of the time. There are four years that Garadagli, a pearl part of Karabakh is being guarded by fearless sons, despite becoming a target of the enemy. The people of this forgotten village, which is not kept in our memory for years, live the hardest days of their lives. Houses and various administrative buildings are being set on fire, innocent people murdered and their properties looted. In brief, the village is under intensive attacks by the Armenian bandits. The enemy wants to seize this fine, strategically important position. Because Garadagly had cut the road between Khojavand and Khankandi and hindered their movement by this road forever! After occupation of Khojavand by the units of the bandits, situation in Garadagly aggravated more.

My dear nation! If you have even a glimpse of honor and dignity in your blood, please, don't stop struggle for freedom of Karabakh! Otherwise it could become a den of bandits with your own hands".

In the early morning of February 15, Armenian armed units attacked the village of Garadagly from all directions. Fighters from the neighboring Armenian villages, mercenaries, Russian officers and soldiers of the 366th Russian regiment also took part in the attack. But they could not get close to the village easily. Nabil Zeynalov, principal of the local school, Khanali Huseynov, a military official and Altay Hasanov, a fighter of the voluntary defense unit, were guarding the first block post. The fighting was very heavy. The hero women of the village were carrying ammunition and food to the fighters under intense fire, giving first aid to the wounded and achieving in their returning back to the battle. Falling of mother Zivar, 74, in this battle, increased the hatred of defenders to the enemy more. Suffering a lot of casualties that day, Armenians retreated. But the next day the enemy again attacked the first post. Teacher Nabil and his friends of arm killed 11 Armenian bandits in bloody fighting. Not succeeding in seize of the pillbox heroically defended by the defenders of the village, Armenians began to shell the position of the defenders with incensing shells. Continuing to resist heroically within fire, the fighters of the first block post did not give up their positions until the very end. They fell martyrs fighting for their native village. At night of February 16, defenders of other posts, Gara, Novruz, Damir and Aligismat sneaked close to the first post and took the corpses of the heroes to the headquarters. Although it was hard, they were buried under direction of Mohammed, a father of martyr, as heroes.

Eldar Arazov was one of our sons who fought heroically and fell in martyr on the same day. He hit two pieces of enemy's military hardware and silenced fire positions with a rocket propelled grenade. Eldar Arazov fell martyr for the motherland taking revenge on enemy for his friend Mazahir. Arig Bayramov was also one of our sons falling martyr on that day.

The fierce battle had continued for five days. The last day, ammunition of the defenders of Garadagly was due to running out. In spite of their appeal for aid at the last moment, no aid came. Running out of bullets, the fighters gathered in the administrative building of the kolkhoz.

Wounded and corpses of the fallen fighters were also brought to the headquarters. A battle for the headquarters continued until the morning of February 17. In the morning, the fire against the enemy from the headquarters weakened. The hero fighters kept the enemy in distance by individual fires. The last bullets were already being shot. Feeling this, the Armenian bandits moved close to the headquarters and started to shout in Russian with megaphones: "Get out, drop your weapons, valuable things, documents and stand in one rank" uninterruptedly. Thus, left in his own fate by the leadership of the Republic, the village of Garadagly was occupied despite heroic resistance of its residents.

III Eyewitnesses of the tragedy

Vidadi Huseynov, a Garadagly resident, an eyewitness of this event, taken hostage along with 118 residents of the village by Armenians and later rescued from grip of the enemy thanks to heroism by Telman Tagiyev, remembers:

"When Armenians took us as hostages, there were a group of doctors in smocks. Armenian soldiers demanded our watches, money and valuable things. They searched 15 people. They did not continue searching. Two trucks, "Ural" and "Kamaz" were there in the yard of the building of the administration of the kolkhoz. We were ordered to move towards the trucks. One Armenian officer ordered olders and women to "KAMAZ", youngs to "Ural" covered with a tent. I helped Avtandil Nagiyev, 14, a schoolboy to get in the truck and myself got in after everybody. There was no seat to

sit, so Faig pulled me to himself and I sat on his knees. Suddenly one middle aged Armenian wearing in civil came close to the truck and said: "I have to kill three turks here". Then called Eldar with his name. As soon as Eldar Dadashov got down, he shot him from his head from pistol. They made one person to get down from another truck and also shot him dead. After this, none answered when they called. The trucks started to move. We passed by Baylik garden, after this mulberry garden. The trucks stopped next to silos. Armenian officer approached to "Ural" which was being driven behind and ordered 10 people to get down and opened the cab. I was first to get down because I had sat in the rear. Following me, they made 10-15 young fighters get down. We knew why they made us get down. So, we opened our chest and shouted: "Shoot, you, bastards, all the same you will be revenged on! You will be expelled like dogs"! Hearing this, 10-15 Armenian soldiers and officers took their arms on their chest and got ready to fire on. I was standing at the wayside. Armenians had gathered at the left, close to the back of the truck. Brave sons, facing death, were standing right to me. The last one coming to us was Telman Tagiyev. As soon as reaching me, he suddenly turned towards Armenian and walking 3-5 m threw a grenade which he had in his hand to the midst of them. Armenians not succeeding to escape, the grenade exploded. The explosion threw me into a brook covered with bushes near to the wayside. I lost my consciousness because of the debris wounds and blast. It happened nearly 14.00-15.00 p.m. When I regained consciousness I saw that it was dark and I was in blood. By recovering consciousness I could define where I am and all what happened. In the middle of the night, I stood up and could reach the village of Abdal Gulabli of Agdam through the forests. Later I knew that surviving Armenians fired on armless people in the truck, murdering 33".

Another eyewitness of the incident, Aslan Tagiyev, father of Telman Tagiyev, witnessed heroism of his son Telman while being taken to Khankandi, on the road and was returned after 2 months of Armenian captivity. Aslan Tagiyev remembers the incident as following:

"On February 14, Armenians surrounded and shelled our village. There were more defenders in the village at that time. Nearly 90 brave and young guys in trenches were repelling the attacks of Armenians day and night. Telman, my son, along with 15 people was fighting at the block post number 3 in direction of Gagarza. I know of their heroic fighting, because an Armenian fighter who was taking us as prisoners said: "The guys from the block post your son was from killed 64 of us". Telman was a military. He was very good at shooting. He was very rarely missing the target. On the 3rd day of the battle, February 16, bullets were due to run out. There were no reserve ammunition in the headquarters. Nearly at 20.00 p.m. Adalat Mammadov, commander of the battle ordered the fighters of the all block posts to be gathered in the headquarters. The defenders one by one retreated and gathered in the headquarters. Telman also came there. After this, a fierce fighting followed with Armenians got to the yard of the headquarters. The fighting lasted until morning. The defenders were shooting their last bullets. Sensing this, Armenians rushed into the yard of the headquarters. The fighting continued until 10.00 p.m. morning. There were no bullets to be shot from our side. Armenian commanders ordered from the yard in Russian and Azeri: "Get out and surrender". I came to the spot where Telman was. He was standing in uniform with pride, his head up. I thought his being in uniform could stir-up Armenians. So, I quickly took off my leather jacket and old pants, handed them to Telman demanding to disguise. He obeyed, giving me his uniform and put on the dresses which I gave. At this moment, I saw him hiding a hand grenade in the clothes. I said, my son, if they find this on you when searching us, it will be your end. Put it aside. Telman said in a fragile voice: "No! Father, I will need this. The battle is not over yet. It is all the same, Armenians know who I am".

Armenians from outside were repeating their demand uninterruptedly in an angry voice. Our commander Adalat Mammadov came back from negotiations with Armenians. After 5 minutes of consultations it was decided to get out. We were getting out one by one, dropping our weapons next to the door and standing in a row. It was again ordered to put down weapons, documents, money or

valuable things. There was a big pile from money and documents. They started to search us, beginning from those standing behind. Nearly 15 people were searched but nothing was found. They stopped searching before Telman's turn came. I was a bit quiet.

There were two trucks, "Ural" and "KAMAZ" in the yard of the headquarters. They ordered youngs to "Ural", olders and women to sit on "KAMAZ". I wanted Telman to get in "KAMAZ", but Armenian officers objected. Another Turkish speaking Armenian officer approached to me, telling to handle him my jacket. I gave it to him and put on his old one. After this, he again ordered Telman to get in another truck. I again wanted to approach him to beg. But Telman said, "No, father, don't beg him" and got in "Ural". Everybody got in trucks. Our wounded were sprawling on the ground. None cared them.

The trucks were ordered to move. They did not drive even 100 m and were stopped by demand of the people from neighboring villages. Then one person from every truck was got down and shot dead in front of us.

The trucks started to move again. Many Armenian men and women had gathered in a place ahead called a mulberry garden. The trucks again stopped when reached them, near the silos. We were 20 m of ahead from the truck carrying youngs. We heard voices of Armenian commanders: "Get out of the trucks those, who want to die in his motherland". At the same time, two Armenians fired on from automatic guns to the truck carrying youngs. Then some of them got out of the car. I saw Telman also got out. When down from the car, he looked at me. I did not know what he meant. Looked through the people. Suddenly ran to the place where Armenians had stood in a mob. In a glimpse of an eye, he smashed himself into the Armenians. 10 Armenians were blasted into pieces in front of our eyes. Some of them fell wounded. Telman himself died of debris wounds on the ground. Surviving Armenians shot dead 33 people as soon as regained situation. I still remember shouting of our men of courage "Long Live Azerbaijan", "Allahu Akbar" (Allah the Great).

Finally, the trucks started to move towards Khankandi. I stayed in Khankandi as a hostage for two months. Armenians killed our sons of courage in custody with tortures. 48 women, older and children were released from captivity in two months. The corpses were buried in silos at the place of killings. Later we could get out 14 corpses from there and buried them. I know their place of burial. As soon as Karabakh gets liberated, I will dig out their bones and bury them decently. Long live life. Long live our men of courage. We shall be victorious".

Hagigat Huseynova, another witness of the events was serving as a signal officer before. But communication had been cut off in the last two days and there were no hope for aid. After this, H.Huseynova taking up an automatic rifle, participated in the battles against enemy, nip and tuck with her husband. Here is Hagigat Huseynova's story on the events:

"We assisted more than 100 men for nearly two months. We had to do much more than men. There was a day that I used tandoor 12 times to bake. It is not easy to wash so many clothes with hands. Yet, it was needed to sew their tearing and repair them. My main job was communication. Walking under fire, I was providing communication between the block posts by a portable radio transmitter and reporting out. I was begging the whole Turkish world to help us. I never gave up hoping. In the end, after five days of bloody skirmishes, the fighters' bullets were due to run out. Every fighter had 5-6 bullets. Adalat Mammadov, a commander ordered gradually to gather in the headquarters. On evening of February 16, everybody gathered in the headquarters. Fighting until morning, we kept Armenians in distance. On February 17, in the morning, Armenians rushed in the yard of the headquarters. They demanded a delegate to negotiate. I said not to reply, there is no hope for truce. Despite this, Adalat and Alik left out for negotiations. After 10-15 minutes, Adalat came back upset and said that they promise to accompany us from Khojavand and see off to Agdam. I said that it was a lie, you could not believe Armenian promise. Every fighter had kept one bullet for themselves. Everybody was ready to shoot himself dead. Then Alik came. He said that Armenians gave a word of man to see us off to Agdam. I saw that everybody agreed. Then I protested them not

to believe Armenians words. I seized arms of a commander of policemen from Agdam, begged him to shoot me dead if we surrender, because I didn't want to stay in Armenian captivity. He hesitated. I said to him "if you don't want your mother stay in captivity as a son of honor, don't hesitate, kill me". I seized his hand, raised his automatic gun and pointed its barrel to my chest. His finger was at the trigger. When he wanted to pull, Imran, my husband came close and said: "My son, don't shoot Hagigat in front of my eyes". I cursed and insulted all of them. Took up my rifle and stood up. Getting ready to fight said that "we shall fight until the end".

Finally, we had to get out one by one. When we got out, Armenian commanders ordered to drop the weapons down. Then I became sure that Armenians wouldn't see us off to Agdam. I had got out with a rifle in my shoulder and a cartridge belt on my waist. I ignored angry glares of Armenians. Arastun, one of the fighters did not give up his weapon. He beat his weapon against a wall, broke and threw it away. He said he wouldn't give an arm to an Armenian. Some of other youngs also did the same. Thus, 118 defenders of Garadagly were captured. Armenians made older, women and youngs get in different trucks. The cars started to move. Along the way, the militaries taking us were stopping the cars and shooting our young guys in front of eyes of Armenian people gathered to waysides. Arastun, Nabi, Nahid and Ibish accepted death with dignity. They were opening their chests, shouting "shoot scoundrels, let our blood be shed on the soil of Karabakh", "You will be expelled like dogs from here", and giving their lives.

Ilgar Aliyev, another witness, resident of Garadagly recounts: "Ilgar Huseynov, father's name Gardashkhan, was born in 1958, in the village of Garadagly of Khojavand region. He was captured by Armenians during the defense of his village within the defense battalion of the village. He remembers the events as following:

"There were only 5 Azeri villages in Khojavand. One of them was Garadagly, among 41 Armenian villages, situated 13 km far from near Azeri village. All these villages had been occupied by November of 1991 and Garadagly had been blockaded. After Armenian occupation of Garadagly, they killed 33 residents of the village. After killings, they threw the corpses into the silos near a site called Baylik garden and buried there. Armenians were shooting the residents of the village dead, throwing still alive bodies into the silos. I and more than 100 people of Garadagly had been taken as hostages. We faced horrible tortures on the road. Armenians killed two residents of the village by crushing their heads with a sledge hammer. First, we were taken to the village of Lingin. Three of us were shot dead there, 12 in the village of Malibayli. In Malibayli they made everybody get out of the trucks and walk until Khankandi. We were facing insults of Armenians throughout the way. 8 residents of Garadagly died of hunger in the prison of Khankandi. I was in prison of Khankandi when Armenians occupied Khojali on February 26. On the same day, Armenians took more than one hundred people to the prison. Then I knew that they were residents of Khojali and this town had been occupied. Next day, they beheaded more than 60 people from Khojali in front of my eyes. There were women and children among them". (11)

Oruj Aliyev, a resident of Garadagly, remembers the events that he witnessed as following" "I was taken a prisoner on February 17. Half of my relatives were killed on the way. They forcefully pulled out my teeth in prison. I was being beaten and tortured by Armenians almost every day. On March 17, of the same year, I was exchanged by Allahverdi Bagirov's assistance. The representatives of the International Red Cross Committee did not visit the hospital even once, until that day. Armenians were selling out internal organs of healthy Azeri hostages and prisoners. I was told of this by an Armenian whom I knew before".

According to O. Aliyev, Robert Kocharyan, President of Armenia, led the operation of seizing Garadagly and murders which took place there. He said that he heard this when a patient of the hospital in Asgaran. [1]

Information varies on casualties, wounded and captured people in the tragedy of Garadagly. One of them reports brutal killings of 54, taking hostage of 50, loss of head of 42 families, orphaned

children 140, in general, fall in martyrs every resident from 10 of the village (12). Another one says martyrs 90, lost 6 and captured 9 (13).

In our opinion, the difference is due to large scale of the tragedy, facts coming from verbal sources and absence of official investigation. Hence, there is an urgent need to an official investigation in this field.

Following are the names and surnames of those who fell in martyrs, taken hostage, then brutally murdered with tortures and whose fate are unknown so far:

Martyrs of Garadagly – Tagiyev Bakir, Mammadov Tohid, Shirinov Iltifat, Shirinova Garagoz, Huseynova Sabiga, Huseynova Makhmar, Quliyev Aloglan, Quliyev Gunduz, Quliyeva Nazenim, Huseynova Rahila, Huseynova Rakhshanda, Huseynova Qanira, Huseynova Gulzanda, Babayeva Valida, Zeynalov Nobil, Huseynov Khanali, Hasanov Altay, Dadashov Manaf, Huseynov Asgar, Bayramov Rashid, Rustamova Zivar, Bayramov Arif, Dadashov Eldar, Huseynov Shahmurad, Huseynov Damir, Huseynov Fadail, Karimov Aligismat, Dolukhanov Rahim, Tagiyev Telman, Abbasov Salvar, Bayramov Elmidar, Kazimov Salim, Tagiyev Elsevar, Suleymanov Elchin, Azizov Iltifat

Brutally killed with tortures by Armenians while being kept as hostages – Huseynov Imran, Shirinov Boyukkishi, Tagiyev Kamil, Valdiyev Fazil, Quliyev Alaslan, Huseynov Shura, Nazarov Shura, Quliyev Kamal

Passed away in different dates after being released from custody, because of being tortured – Shirinov Familiat, Huseynov Zulumkhan, Quliyev Yusif, Amirkhanova Minaya, Huseynova Sitara, Hasanov Mahammad, Khalilov Vagif, Mammadov Shamil, Tagiyev Sardar, Tagiyev Avaz, Huseynova Mirvari, Tagiyeva Gullar, Babayev Gavanshir, Babayev Isa, Sadigova Mina

Whose fates are unknown – Aliyev Vatan, Akhundov Hafiz, Dadashov Mikayil, Huseynov Abulfat, Valiyev Fuzuli (14).

The people of Garadagli, residing in different places of Azerbaijan as internally displaced people, wait with impatience for a day of returning back to the holy lands where the souls of their ancestors rove. Economic growth of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the National Army increase their belief for victory.

The confidence of the people of Garadagly for victory is once more confirmed by Sevil Azizova, a mother of two martyrs: “Soon Garadagly, as well as other occupied lands will be cleared out from the enemy. Because, there is an Azerbaijani army, capable to do this. I know that this army fill the heart of the enemy with fear as follows” (15).

It is needed to enlarge researches and publish new books on the tragedy of Garadagli, one of the crimes perpetuated against local Azeris at the end of the 20th century, in Nagorno-Karabakh, an unseparable part of Azerbaijan. In our view, it will let reveal many facts and truths unknown to the public yet. These researches could help heroes, who fought the enemy with bravery, as Telman Tagiyev, to become known. In our opinion, heroism displayed by Telman Tagiyev, as well as others, must be considered by the state, although it is late. It could play an important role in patriotism education of the young generation and restoration of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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