

FIRST TERRORIST WAR: A LOOK FROM RUSSIA (TRANSNATIONAL ARMENIAN TERRORISM AND NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT OF 1988-1994)

End. For the beginning, see IRS-Heritage 2 (21), 3 (22) 2015



In addition to numerous acts of terrorism and widespread terrorist crimes related to the organization by foreign nationals of illegal armed groups in the territory of Armenia and their participation in the activities of such groups, representatives of the Armenian side to the conflict committed other crimes of a similar nature during the Karabakh war, facts that were recorded on the Azerbaijani side. First of all, we are talking about a

Car in which journalist S. Asgarova, Lt-Col Larionov, Maj Ivanov and Sgt Goyek were shot dead by Armenian terrorists on 9 January 1991

very specific terrorist crime like an armed insurgency, criminal liability for which is stipulated by Article 279 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. **The main qualifying feature of this criminal act is the motivation and goal-setting of participation in the crime: those guilty of committing it take action to change the constitutional system or the territorial integrity of the country.** Actions of this kind were committed by soldiers of Armenian origin under the commander of the 2nd Battalion of the 336th Motorized Rifle Regiment of the 23rd Motorized Infantry Division of the 4th Army of the CIS Joint Armed Forces under the command of Major Seyran Ohanyan, who not only seized fighting equipment - infantry fighting vehicles (BMP-2) - without a military order, but also used them against Azerbaijani territorial defense units in the battle of 25 February 1992 for the town of Khojali, which subsequently led to mass deaths of civilians in this town.

Qualifying elements of a crime in the form of an armed rebellion are clear in this case: soldiers seized assault weapons without orders from higher commanders, acted willfully on the Armenian side of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and took action to change the constitutional system and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, providing aid to international Armenian terrorists in seizing part of the sovereign territory of that country. In this case, we are surprised by the fact that the mass murder of civilians in the town of Khojali, which occurred after the armed rebellion of the 2nd Battalion of the 336th infantry regiment, was qualified by the law enforcement agencies of Azerbaijan as a crime of genocide, after which the authorities and public of this country have been actively using this criminal event for propaganda purposes, while the armed rebellion that preceded it has yet to receive its criminal legal classification.

The actions of the High Command of the Joint Armed Forces of the CIS, which followed this event, confirm this crime: on 3 March, the 336th Motorized Rifle Regiment was withdrawn from the place of its permanent deployment in Stepanakert (Nagorno-Karabakh) to a military base in Gardabani (Georgia) and disbanded as a rebellious military unit. All officers and non-commissioned officers of the regiment were dismissed from military service and conscripts were transferred to other units [1, p. 189].

The commander of the 2nd Battalion, Seyran Ohanyan, who led the rebellion, took refuge among the Armenian separatists of Nagorno-Karabakh and became



The body of Sgt Goyek in the car fired at by Armenian terrorists on the road from Lachin to Shusha on 9 January 1991. In a special operation on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, the killers of the journalist and servicemen, A. Mkrtchyan, G. Petrosyan, A. Mangasaryan and G. Arustamyan, were arrested and sentenced to death. However, the Soviet authorities treated them just like Eduard Grigoryan, one of the killers of Armenians in Sumgayit. The terrorists were transferred to Armenia. Who in the leadership of the Soviet Union was interested in the impunity of terrorists?

one of the field commanders of illegal armed groups, and then he served as commander of the "army of defense" of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh republic and is now minister of defense of the Republic of Armenia in the rank of colonel-general. The very fact that this man heads the Armenian armed forces suggests that **the illegal armed groups of Armenian separatists of Nagorno-Karabakh, organizationally united in the structure of the "Karabakh defense army", are now integrated into the organizational and personnel structure of the armed forces of Armenia and are essentially their occupying corps in the**



Three-year-old Azerbaijani kid was wounded when a bus traveling from Tbilisi to Baku was blown up by Armenian terrorists on 16 September 1989

occupied territories of the Azerbaijan Republic. In addition, this fact shows that people who perpetrated terrorist crimes during the 1988-1994 Karabakh war are national heroes in modern Armenia and are among the top officials of this state.

Seyran Ohanyan is not the only military leader of the regular armed forces of Armenia, whose military career was closely linked to membership of illegal armed formations of Nagorno-Karabakh separatists and international Armenian terrorists. Apart from him, several other former field commanders of such formations serve in the leadership of the central apparatus of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, and from the point of view of Russian criminal law, they are criminals guilty of terrorist crimes under Article 208 of the Criminal Code.

The most famous among them is Lieutenant General Manvel Grigoryan, who held the post of deputy defense minister in 2000-2008 and headed the veter-

ans organization of the Yerkrpah union of volunteers, which united former members of illegal armed groups of Armenian separatists of Nagorno-Karabakh directly involved in fighting against units of the Interior Ministry troops of the USSR and the National Army of Azerbaijan. Manvel Grigoryan first was a militant and warlord of the so-called "Echmiadzin squad" in 1988-1992, in 1992 he was enlisted in the armed forces of Armenia and was appointed commander of a separate motorized infantry battalion, and in 1996, by the decree of the Armenian president, he was awarded the rank of major general and in 2000 - lieutenant-general [2, p. 82-83].

Among the current Armenian commanders, there are those who have a track record of not only terrorist crimes, but also crimes against military service. One of these people is the deputy chief of the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces, Lieutenant-General Haykaz Bagramyan, who, as a battery commander stationed in the city of Sardarabad in 1988, handed over weapons and military equipment of the Soviet Army under his jurisdiction to militants of illegal armed groups of Armenian separatists of Nagorno-Karabakh and then joined them. In 1991, he was chief of staff of the so-called "Martuni detachment", the commander of which was the international Armenian terrorist, US citizen Monte Melkonian. In 2003, he was enlisted in military service in the armed forces of Armenia as commander of the 2nd Army Corps, and in 2003, he was transferred to the central office of the Ministry of Defense [2, p. 65]. Currently, he is engaged in the organization and military coordination of interaction between the armed forces of Armenia and the "Karabakh defense army" illegal armed formation.

The generals, who earlier committed terrorist crimes in the form of membership of illegal armed groups during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, are present not only in the leadership of the armed forces of Armenia, but also in other departments, which provide for military service. One such commander is the commander of police forces, first deputy chief of police of the Interior Ministry of Armenia, Lieutenant-General Levon Yerosyan. He began his career in the ranks of militants of the so-called "Echmiadzin detachment" (together with M. Grigoryan). In 1992, he was enlisted in the armed forces of Armenia and passed all stages of the career ladder from the deputy battalion commander to the commander of an army corps. In 2001, he was awarded the rank of major-general and lieutenant-general, and in 2013, he was appointed to his current position [2, p. 102-103]. **It is para-**

doxical that in modern Armenia, a former terrorist serves as the main fighter against terrorism.

The list of Armenian generals, who were field commanders of illegal armed groups of Armenian separatists in the years of the Karabakh conflict, if desired, can be continued for as long as they are all listed by name. In modern Armenia no man can achieve success in life, if he has not previously participated in the 1988-1994 Karabakh war as a Yerkrpah volunteer or has not served in more recent years as a member of the occupying corps of the Armenian armed forces entitled the "Karabakh defense army" and has not become a member of the Yerkrpah Union of Volunteers after that. We do not consider it necessary to continue this list, as only names will change in it while the content of the acts will remain unchanged. **The available information is sufficient to unequivocally conclude that at the level of the higher military leadership of Armenia, the illegal armed formations of Nagorno-Karabakh separatists are being integrated into the organizational and personnel structure of the armed forces of the country, which, in fact, rehabilitates the criminal acts of militants from among local residents and international Armenian terrorists from other countries, who participated in the commission of terrorist crimes and who fought in their ranks, thus enabling them to avoid criminal liability.**

Speaking on the example of Seyran Ohanyan, Haykaz Bagramyan, Manvel Grigoryan and Levon Yeranosyan about the presence in the top echelon of the command of the armed forces and other "law enforcement" agencies of Armenia of persons involved in the commission of terrorist crimes during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, we cannot ignore with delicate silence the fact that almost all currently existing senior officials of the political leadership of this country were directly involved in the commission of such crimes in 1988-1994. The incumbent president Serzh Sargsyan, and Robert Kocharyan, who previously held the post of head of state, personally directed the actions of illegal armed groups of Armenian separatists of Nagorno-Karabakh during the 1988-1994 Karabakh war, and not only those formed from natives of the region, but also those that were fully or partially staffed with international terrorists of Armenian nationality who had arrived from abroad. As follows from the official biography of Robert Kocharyan, after being dismissed from the post of secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan at the Karabakh silk plant in 1988, he took



Journalist from "Molodezh Azerbaydzhana" newspaper Salatyn Asgarova was known for her reports from various "hot spots". A bounty was put on her head. On 9 January 1991, she was killed together with three Soviet servicemen in a car traveling from Lachin to Shusha. The USSR leaders never managed to answer the questions of who supplied terrorists with professional weapons and paid the "bonus"

charge of the Miatsum (Unification) social movement, which stood for the separation of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan and its merger with Armenia, i.e. he became the ideologist and leader of Armenian separatism in the region, and in August 1992, when the Armenian armed forces invaded districts of lower Karabakh, he was appointed chairman of the State Defense Committee and prime minister of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh republic and, in fact, he led Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan, the backbone of which was made up of ethnic Armenian militants of illegal armed groups who had come to the Caucasus from the Middle East, Europe and North America.

His successor as president of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, in 1989 exchanged the position of head of the

Propaganda Department of the Stepanakert City Committee and assistant of the first secretary of the regional committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of the Azerbaijan SSR for the post of chairman of the committee of self-defense forces of the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh republic, concentrating in his hands operational control over all the military operations of Armenian separatists and international terrorists in Nagorno-Karabakh. It is he who is personally responsible for the organization of such a terrorist crime as the armed rebellion of the 2nd Battalion of the 336th motorized rifle regiment on 25 February 1992, which resulted in mass deaths of civilians in the town of Khojali a day later.

The common fates and milestones in the biographies of the second and third presidents of Armenia - Robert Kocharyan and Serzh Sargsyan – are bright and visible evidence of our earlier thesis that in Soviet times the party and communist leadership of the Armenian SSR and other areas with a predominantly Armenian population did not really stick to and respected the canons of the official ideology of “proletarian internationalism” and in opposition to it, actively and secretly contributed to the development of nationalist and extremist mentalities in society, which later served as the breeding ground for the perception of and support for ideas of transnational Armenian terrorism.

Therefore, it should not be particularly surprising that after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Armenia's independence and national sovereignty, and particularly after the end of the active phase of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the techniques and methods of transnational Armenian terrorism, which proved ineffective during the war, were transferred to the internal political life of this state where they took root and were most actively used in the power struggle between different factions of the Armenian political elite. But unfortunately, we do not have sufficient information about all the crimes related to the attempt on the lives of politicians and public figures of this country in connection with their activities, but we managed to indicate some of them:

- August 8, 1998 - Armenian Prosecutor General Henrik Khachatryan was killed by unknown people in Yerevan;
- December 10, 1998 – Deputy Defense Minister of Armenia Vahram Khorkhoruni was killed by mysterious assassins;

- February 9, 1999 - Deputy Interior Minister and Commander of the Interior Troops Artsrun Margaryan was shot at close range on the street.

All these terrorist crimes, qualified in accordance with Article 277 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation as an “Attempt on the life of a statesman or public figure committed to end his state or other political activity or out of revenge for such activity”, were a prelude or a kind of dress rehearsal for the most sensational act of terrorism in the modern history of the Republic of Armenia - the mass killing of the leaders and several members of the National Assembly (parliament) and several ministers of the government of the Republic of Armenia accompanied by hostage-taking on 27 October 1999.

On that day, at 1715, five armed men - the leader of the group Nairi Hunanyan, his younger brother Karen, Eduard Grigoryan, Vram Galstyan and Derenik Bejanyan - burst into the conference room of the National Assembly of Armenia and opened fire at deputies and government members sitting on the podium and in the hall. The attack killed the chairman of the National Assembly, Karen Demirchyan, Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan, Deputy Speakers Yuri Bakhshyan and Ruben Miroyan, Minister of Operational Issues Leonard Petrosyan, MPs Armenak Armenakyan, Mikael Kotanyan and Henrik Abrahamyan. MPs Hermine Nagdalyan, Andranik Manukyan, Armen Khachatryan, Edmond Tsaturyan, Zhirayr Gevorgyan and Emma Khudabashyan and Minister of Privatization Pavel Galtakhchyan were wounded. Justice Minister David Harutyunyan, Minister of Agriculture Gagik Shahbazyan, Minister and Head of Government Staff Shahen Karamanukyan, Education Minister Eduard Kazaryan, Minister of Culture Roland Sharoyan, Minister of State Revenues Smbat Ayvazyan, Minister of Transport Yervand Zakharyan, Minister of Communications Ruben Tonoyan, Urban Development Minister Hrayr Hovhannisyan, Finance Minister Levon Barkhudaryan, Ecology Minister Gevorg Vardanyan and several members of the National Assembly were taken hostage. The terrorists freed some of the hostages in the evening, but 40 were still kept hostage.

According to one of the hostages, Armenian Justice Minister David Harutyunyan, the terrorists themselves regarded their actions as a “small revolution”. They said that their main goal was to eliminate the deputy speaker of parliament, Vazgen Sarkisyan, the head of the Yerkrapah Union of Volunteers and leader of international Armenian terrorists who participated in the Nagorno-

Karabakh conflict, who, according to the new generation of Armenian terrorists, "prevented the people from living in dignity, and now, after his elimination, they will form a provisional government, and from tomorrow life in the country will be very different and everyone will live a better life."

The trial of the terrorists began on 15 February 2001, and on 2 December 2003, the Court of First Instance of Yerevan's Centre and Nork-Marash communities announced the verdict in the case of the terrorist act in the Armenian parliament. Six of the defendants - former journalist and leader of the gang Nairi Hunanyan and his brother Karen Hunanyan, Edik Grigoryan, Vram Galstyan, Derenik Bejanyan and Ashot Knyazyan were sentenced to life imprisonment, while Hamlet Stepanyan was sentenced to 14 years in prison. All seven were found guilty on a number of articles of the Criminal Code of Armenia, including treason and terrorism. Three of them died in prison: according to the official version, Norayr Galstyan died of electrocution, the uncle of the Hunanyan brothers - Vram Galstyan - committed suicide and Hamlet Stepanyan died of acute heart failure.

Despite the fact that Nairi Hunanyan indicated in his testimony that he was the sole organizer and leader of the crime, the criminal case against the organizers was separated from the general criminal case on 11 July 2000 and was investigated separately. The investigation of this case lasted until November 2004, and then it was dropped because the organizers were never found. At the same time, the former member of the National Assembly of Armenia, Musheg Movsisyan, who was accused of involvement in the terrorist attack, but released later due to lack of evidence, was killed in a car accident, while some of the witnesses of the incident quickly turned out to be outside Armenia or died under suspicious circumstances. On 28 January 2002, the chairman of the board of the Public Television of Armenia, Tigran Nagdalyan, was killed in Yerevan. According to the lawyer O. Yunoshev, he was related to the possible rigging of videos related to the events of 27 October 1999 [3].

Concluding the consideration of the issue about the place and role of transnational Armenian terrorism in the events of the 1988-1994 Karabakh war, I should say that by the standards of historical science, not much time has passed since the end of the active phase of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and **people who personally committed terrorist crimes in those years and**



Fragments of Mi-8 helicopter downed by Armenian terrorists near the village of Garakand in Karabakh. Armenian authorities said the helicopter fell to the ground as a result of an accident. On 21 November, a commission comprised of representatives of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office and experts in aircraft equipment arrived in Karabakh. The investigation detected holes in the fuselage, bullet holes on helicopter blades and the bodies. However, the crash site was surrounded by Armenian terrorist groups and the investigation was suspended

have an immediate interest in concealing the truth and objective reality are now in power in Armenia.

Therefore, the full and complete investigation of this matter will be the subject of scientific research for historians of generations to come. ✨

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