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## ORMIAŃSKI WANDALIZM NA OKUPOWANYCH TERYTORIACH REJONU QUBADLI W REPUBLICIE AZERBEJDŻANU

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**Adnotacja.** Pod koniec lat 80.XX wieku powstał jeden z największych konfliktów naszych czasów – konflikt ormiańsko-azerbejdżański o Górski Karabach. W wyniku pomocy politycznej i wojskowej Federacji Rosyjskiej Siły Zbrojne Armenii zajęły Górski Karabach i 7 przyległych obszarów, które są integralną częścią Azerbejdżanu. Ofiarami tych ostrzałów i ataków padło 238 mieszkańców Qubadli. W wyniku okupacji około 1 miliona cywilów Republiki Azerbejdżanu zostało uchodźcami i przesiedleńcami wewnętrznymi na swojej ziemi, a ich zasoby materialne, kulturowe i naturalne zostały splądrowane i zniszczone. Miasta, wsie zamieniły się w ruiny, zabytki zostały zniszczone. W XX wieku Qubadli, wielokrotnie niszczone przez ormiańskiego wandalizmu w XX wieku, wciąż przeżywa gorzkie skutki.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Azerbejdżan, Qubadli, Karabach, konflikt, agresywna polityka, terroryzm ormiański, ludobójstwo, okupacja, popełnione masakry, Armenia, wandalizm.

## ARMENIAN VANDALISM IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF GUBADLY DISTRICT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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**Abstract.** At the end of the 80s of the 20th century, arose one of the gross conflicts of nowadays – the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As a result, of the political and military assistance of the Russian Federation, the Armenian armed forces occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 adjacent regions, which are an integral part of Azerbaijan. 238 residents of Gubadly became victims of these firings and attacks. As a result of the occupation, about 1 million civilians of the Republic of Azerbaijan became refugees and internally displaced persons on their own land, and their material, cultural and natural resources were robbed and destroyed. Towns, villages turned into ruins, historical monuments were destroyed. During the 20th century, Gubadly, repeatedly subjected to Armenian vandalism during the 20th century, is still experiencing its bitter consequences.

**Key words:** Azerbaijan, Gubadly, karabakh, conflict, aggressive policy, Armenian terrorism, genocide, occupation, the massacres committed, Armenia, vandalism.

## ВІРМЕНСЬКИЙ ВАНДАЛИЗМ НА ОКУПОВАНИХ ТЕРИТОРІЯХ ГУБАДЛИНСЬКОГО РАЙОНУ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСЬКОЇ РЕСПУБЛІКИ

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**Анотація.** Наприкінці 80-х років 20 століття виник один з найбільших конфліктів сучасності – вірмено-азербайджанський нагірно-карабахський конфлікт. В результаті політичної та військової допомоги Російської Федерації збройні сили Вірменії окупували Нагірний Карабах і 7 прилеглих районів, які є невід’ємною частиною Азербайджану. Жертвами цих обстрілів і нападів стали 238 жителів Губадлі. В результаті окупації близько 1 мільйона мирних жителів Азербайджанської Республіки стали біженцями та внутрішньо переміщеними особами на власній землі, а їхні матеріальні, культурні та природні ресурси були пограбовані та знищені. Міста, села перетворилися на руїни, історичні пам’ятки зруйновано. Протягом 20-го століття Губадлі, неодноразово підданий вірменському вандалізму протягом 20-го століття, досі переживає його гіркі наслідки.

**Ключові слова:** Азербайджан, Губадлі, Карабах, конфлікт, агресивна політика, вірменський тероризм, геноцид, окупація, вчинені масові вбивства, Вірменія, вандалізм.

**Introduction.** The main goal of this article is the facts of the destruction, obliteration and appropriation of material and cultural monuments belonging to Azerbaijanis in the occupied Gubadly district and border areas of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a comprehensive and concrete investigation of the damage caused to the nature, ecology, and economy of Gubadly district as a result of the military intervention of Armenia. Studying, analyzing and learning of the very rich, complex, contradictory, as well as important and glorious history of the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan is a special research object and is of great importance.

After the occupation of Azerbaijan by Tsarist Russia at the beginning of the 19th century, Armenians were moved to the occupied territories, especially to the territories of Iravan and Karabakh. After that, with the support of their predecessors, who were faithful to the will of Peter I, to grant lands to Armenians for settlement in the South Caucasus, Armenians claimed to establish a state in the ancient lands of Azerbaijan. Armenians who were placed in certain positions with the support of the tsarist ruling circles began to falsifications for their future plans. By destroying the documents of the Albanian churches and Armenianizing these churches, they had managed to subjugate a part of the Christian Albanian population to these churches, which was later included in statistical data as the Armenian population. Thereafter, they began to claim that Armenians lived in Karabakh and Iravan since ancient times. Their first attempt was realized in 1918: the Republic of Armenia was established on the territory of Iravan, the ancient land of Azerbaijan. Not satisfied with this, the Armenians started territorial claims to Karabakh. In 1920, with the support of the Soviet government, the western part of Zangezur, included in the territory of Karabakh, was annexed to Armenia. Although in the 20th century they repeatedly claimed other territories of Karabakh, the Armenians achieved this goal only at the end of the 20th century. With the support of Russia and their other patrons, most of the territory of Karabakh was occupied by Armenians. Gubadly, which is included in the economic zone of Karabakh called Eastern Zangezur, unfortunately became a victim of this occupation.

**Discussion.** It should be noted that Gubadly district shares a 120 km border with Armenia. The villages of Gubadly district on the border were directly attacked and set on fire from the territory of Armenia (ARPIİSSA: f. 62, p. 24). On August 31, 1993, Gubadly district was completely occupied. On September 10, 1993, in a special press conference held in relation to the situation in the country, that's the expansion of the military aggression of Armenia, regarding the occupation of Gubadly district Heydar Aliyev, the acting President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, made a statement: "Recently, the relevant authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan have had direct meetings with the ruling forces in Nagorno-Karabakh. On August 31, as a result of these meetings, a ceasefire agreement was reached. But following this, the Gubadly district of Azerbaijan was completely occupied by the armed forces of Armenia... Those lands were the address of honour, zeal and blessing of hardworking people. The people of Gubadly stood like a magnificent fortress on the road to Karabakh, Lachin, Kalbajar and Armenia. The occupation of Gubadly deeply shocked me" (Aliyev, 1997: p. 131). It should be noted with regret that after the occupation of Fuzuli, Jabrayil and Gubadly districts, on October 14, 1993, the next UN Security Council Resolution No. 874 demanding the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the territory of the occupied districts was adopted. But it was not implemented; and remained on paper until 2020. (ARPIİSSA: f. 62, p. 24) On September 27, 2020 – November 10, 2020, as a result of the efforts of Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev and our mighty army, as well as the help of our brotherly Turkey Karabakh was liberated from the invaders.

Prior to the occupation, Gubadly district had a population up to 30.000. In the first Karabakh war during the defense of Gubadly, 54 people died in battles, 12 employees of the local militia department were martyred, 7 people were injured and 3 disabled. In total, 238 Gubadly residents were martyred and 190 disabled in Karabakh war (ARPIİSSA: f. 62, p. 24). For their bravery our courageous fighters who continued the heroic traditions of Qachaq Nebi, Aliyar Aliyev, Kazimaga Kerimov, Agil Mammadov, Vasili Aliyev, Kerem Mirzayev, Beyler Agayev, Aslan Atakishiyev, Alekber Aliyev and Safa Akhundov reaching the peak of martyrdom were awarded the title of National Hero of the Republic of Azerbaijan. We take pride that our countryman, the National Hero of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Fakhraddin Jabrayilov, is one of the heroes who faithfully serve the Motherland (Cahangir:1998). During the invasion armed forces of Armenia burned and looted one town, 93 villages, 205 cultural and welfare facilities, 12 historical monuments in Gubadly district. During the occupation of Gubadly, the Gubadly Museum of Local Lore, which housed more than 5 thousand rare exhibits, was also robbed (ARPIİSSA: f. 62, p. 24).

Due to its natural resources, climate, soil conditions and economic potential, the occupied territories of Gubadly district was of great importance in the economy of Azerbaijan. 17 industrial enterprises operating in the territory of the district occupied an important place in the economy of the republic. Enterprises in the industries of food, light, construction materials were more developed here (ARPIİSSA: f. 62, p. 24).

In the mentioned period, only in one year 6.7 thousand tons of grain, 2.9 thousand tons of grapes, 55 tons of potatoes, 0.6 thousand tons of meat, 3.3 thousand tons of milk, and 14.4 thousand tons of cocoons were produced in Gubadly district alone (ARPIİSSA: f. 62, p. 24)

Armenian troops occupied and destroyed 84 libraries, 44 clubs, 12 recreation centres, 1 museum, 7 mosques, 2 children music schools and 40 historical monuments in Gubadly district (Mammadov:1998).

Armenians are openly looting the minerals of Gubadly, which has rich geographical conditions, mild climate and fertile soil. Thus, the rich species of fish in the Bargushad and Hekeri Rivers flowing through the territory of Gubadly district are looted by Armenians. In most cases, the fish were poisoned by chemicals. It should be noted that the water of Hekeri River is used for drinking and irrigation. Trout, omul and other fish spawn in this river (ARPIİSSA: f. 62, p. 24).

Gubadly district has more than 600 natural springs with cold, healing water rich in minerals. Besides, there were 46 km long drinking water pipelines, sub-artesian drinking water wells in the villages of Hal, Mahruzlu, Mamar and Khanlig.

There is Hajili tuff deposit with reserves of 6247 thousand cubic meters suitable for the production of cubic stones, Khanligkend clay deposit suitable for brick production (reserves 990 thousand cubic meters), Eyvazli decorative-coloured stone deposit with reserves of 1.1 thousand tons, Gubadly underground fresh water deposit with exploitation reserves of 84 thousand cubic meters /day in the territory of Gubadly district (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

Since 1965, a quarry for the production of cubic stones had been operating in the region on the base of the Hajili tuff deposit. These stones were widely used in construction and improvement works, and the demand of the district was met. A marble shop working with local materials had been operating in Gubadly since 1983. Facing tiles and monument stones were produced in the workshop. Colored marble stones from the open areas of Muradkhanly, Basharat and Armudlu villages were used in the workshop (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

During the 30 year occupation period, Armenians freely used these workshops and deposits as a source of income. These mineral deposits, being under Armenian occupation, were subjected to great destruction due to brutal exploitation.

Two 160 years old, 80 cm in diameter, 35 m high eastern plane trees, two 300 years old, 150 cm in diameter, 20 m high eastern plane trees in the territory of Gubadly settlement, one 150 years old, 80 cm in diameter, 8 m high gum tree in the village of Ghodaks, three 1600 years old, 800 cm in diameter, 40 m high eastern plane trees in Khanlig village, one 300 years old, 150 cm in diameter, 35 m high eastern plane tree in Zilanly village were registered, certificated and preserved as a natural monument (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

The “Galaly” cave in Muradkhanly village and the “Bulag” monument complex in Aligulu Ushaghi village were also among the oldest natural monuments. The natural rocks in the town of Gubadly, around the villages of Mahmudlu, Gayaly, Melik Ahmadli, Lepekheiranly, Avdalanly, Khidirly, Balahasanli, Armudlug and Qedili looked like sculpted knightly men.

“Kemer Qaya” in front of Poladly village of Gubadly district, “Alshagaya” and the wall made of limestone around them, “Pir-shirin” spring rock complex, “Damji bulag” in “Abdalanli” gorge were the most beautiful corners of nature. The “Topaghaj” nature landscape in Basharat village reminded a legendary paradise (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

The Gubadly district State Nature Reserve was established in July 1969 in the territories of Gubadly and Lachin districts, and was administratively and financially subordinated to the Bestichay State Nature Reserve. The reserve covers mountain-steppe areas in the northern part of Gubadly district and southern part of Lachin district. The purpose for creating this reserve was to protect the animal world of those areas. The area of the Gubadly reserve consisted of 20 thousand hectares. This reserve, which is currently under Armenian occupation, is being brutally exploited by them (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

In 1993, T.Aliyev, a dweller of Gubadly district, who stayed in the Seytas forest for 2 months and 23 days, was the eye witness of completely burnt villages of Seytas, Goyarchik, Mammadli, Mahmudlu, Hajily, Demirchiler, Dondarly, Mirlar, Hal, Mamar and Khojahan (Mammadov:1998).

In 1998, a certain Armenian citizen by name Ararat, who fed up with the hard lifestyle fled to the Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation, during a conversation with Cherkez Mammadov, head of the Gubadly district Ecology and Natural Resources Department said that after the occupation, he had visited Gubadly and Lachin districts for several times and carried cargo with heavy vehicles. According to him, houses were burnt; forests were cut down and used as firewood and construction materials. Two large markets of building materials have been organized in Gubadly area, where household, forest materials and other natural resources are sold to Iranian citizens (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

Alizamin Garashov, a resident of Hamzali village, Gubadly district, reported to the Ecology and Natural Resources Department of Gubadly district dated 05.10.2002 that he was in captivity of Armenians from August 31, 1993 to October 1994 and was kept in Khankendi. While working in Agdam and Fuzuli districts, he witnessed Armenians cutting down forests, wildly hunting game animals, and collecting facing and cubic stones in those areas (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

74-year-old Talat Aliyev, who was in captivity, stated that the Armenians robbed not only the wealth of the population, but all their natural resources, and cut down the walnut, red oak, hornbeam and lime trees in the forests of Gubadly district and took them away for fuel and furniture. He witnessed that they discharged the waste water into the Bargushad River, and constantly used electricity and dynamite, which caused mass death of river fish. He was an eye witness of cutting down the large-trunk fruit trees and mulberry groves in Seytas village and around it.

During the filming in Gubadly district, stumps of sawn perennial trees can be seen in the yards of Hal and Mamar villages, and the remains of fires caused in those areas are clearly visible. There are no signs of living and large-diameter perennial trees in the villages (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24)

Gubadly district, with an ancient historical past, has richly structured monuments. Archaeological monuments found in the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age settlement in the ancient part of Gubadly, 2 fortresses of the same period in the village of Aligulu Ushagy, another coeval fortress in the village of Muradkhanly, the 4th century shelters in the villages of Aligulu Ushagy, Balahasanli and Zor, another coeval shelter in the village of Mahmudlu, the 5th century Galali fortress in the village of Muradkhanly, a 4th century cave in “Gavur deresi” and the 14th century sepulcher of Javanshir on the Yazy plateau, the 10th century Ghoyhala fortress and the 19th century graves in the village

of Aligulu Ushagy, the 13th–14th centuries' graves in the village of Damjily, an 18th century tomb in the village of Gurjulu, the 19th century Majera chapel spring complex, the same century mosque in Dondarly village, Hajibedel bridge, etc. were examples of ancient cultural heritage of Gubadly (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24)

It should be noted that Gubadly was a part of Caucasian Albania, and there were Albanian chapels in the villages of Basharat, Mazra and Yukhari Jibihli. The archaeological monuments of Gubadly, especially the odd-looking octagonal tombs, dated to the 12th century.

The 13th–14th centuries' tombs in Demirchiler village were of the same design. The first tomb, belonging to one of the famous clerics, was built as a temple on a two-stepped foundation. The front section of the monument consisted of a more superficial and horizontal beam and arch. The corners of the front section were finished with a pyramid-shaped roof.

The 18th century tomb in the village of Gurjulu was an 8-cornered building and covered with a 16-cornered roof. The building was 7.84 meters high and consisted of a facade of uneven width and built of limestone. The rectangular entrance of the monument had a simple profile door of a different shape from the outer section. The tomb was surrounded by an ancient cemetery. Inside the tomb, in the southern section there was a decorated mihrab. The place of the tombstone and the position of the entrance door, the alignment of the grave in the direction of the Qibla (towards Mecca), indicated that the grave in the tomb and the surrounding cemetery belonged to Muslims (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

There were two tower-like tombs in the Demirchiler village of Gubadly district. First of them was located on the right bank of the mountain river Agachay. The tomb was octagonal in plan (one side is 1.9 m). Inside, a small mihrab niche was installed in front of the door.

The second tomb was near the right bank slope of Arpachay, between the villages of Demirchiler and Dondarly. Due to its convenient location, the shrine was well visible even from afar. It was octagonal. Both of these tombs were considered monuments of the 13th–14th centuries (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24)

The chapel in the “Gavur deresi” dating back to the 4th century, the “Qalali” and “Ghoygala” monuments dating back to the 5th century, the “Demirchiler” sepulchre built in the 14th century, Haji Bedel bridge, Lalezar bridge, as well as Eyin, Yusifbeyli, Seytas, Qaragajli, Khojamsakhly villages and other historical monuments, Mosques in Dondarly, Mamar, Mahruzlu, Dagtumas and other villages, religious complex of 15th–16th centuries in Khalaj village, tombs in Gayaly, Ashagi Khojamsakhly, Boyuneker, Dagtumas and Yusifbeyli villages, cave chapel (4th century) in Gavur deresi, Ghoygala fortress monuments in Aligulu Ushagy village (5th century), two tombs in the village of Demirchiler (14th century), a tomb in the village of Gurjulu (17th century), a tomb in the village of Khojamsakhly (18th century), a cave chapel in the village of Aligulushagi, a fortress in the village of Khojamsakhly, Anabat and many legendary monuments in the village of Seytas (Oglan-Gyz (Boy and Girl) Rock, Sinig korpu (bridge), etc. are the material evidences of the ancient history of Gubadly (ARPISSA: f. 62, p. 24).

Along with other monuments, Gubadly district is distinguished by the number of fortresses. One of them was the Galaly Fortress in the village of Aligulu Ushagy. Galaly Fortress was surrounded by rocks on all sides and there was a path to the Fortress from the north side, which was protected by huge stones. Cyclopien masonry was built of rock stones. Traces of many buildings remained, and the view of the rear part of the fortress proved that the fortresses were not only used for defensive purposes, i.e. for defense against the enemy, but also as a permanent settlement of local residents.

Another fortress was in the village of Ashaghi Khojamsakhly. According to its structure, it was attributed to the 9th–12th centuries, but the discovery of a large number of the Bronze and the Middle Ages pottery vessels proved that from ancient times up to the Middle Ages this area was inhabited. The fortress, which looked like a natural fortification built on the hills, was defended by rocks from the north, south and west. The southern part, which was somewhat weaker, was defended by 3 fortresses with semicircular towers. The fortress was built of local stones. Along with the fortress walls, there were also the remains of a shelter-like structure.

The occupation of Gubadly district caused a great moral blow to the population living here. The destroyed ancestral hearth could not break the will of brave people of Gubadly. Because behind them stood a sagacious and wise leader - Heydar Aliyev. On September 7, 1996, during a meeting with the people of Gubadly district, national leader remembered the occupation of the district with heavy heart: “Gubadly district was generally a cattle-breeding district, but at the same time we developed tobacco farming there and planted vineyards. The economy of the region changed very much. All this created favourable conditions for people to build new houses, new estates and improve their living conditions, develop culture... All these have now been lost, and the owners of this property, this wealth, live as refugees in tents in various regions of the republic. It certainly hurts you too, but it hurts me too much” (Aliyev: 1998: p. 280).

The forcibly displaced population from Gubadly district having settled in 42 cities and districts of our republic are provided with all conditions by our state. In one of his speeches the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev stated: “All the residents of Zangezur mahal were Azerbaijanis. Therefore, also from the historical viewpoint, this is our land... The present day state of Armenia was created in the historical lands of Azerbaijan. This is a historical fact. We know this history well. Most of the people living in the Iravan Khanate were Azerbaijanis. The Zangezur mahal was forcibly torn from Azerbaijan in order to divide the great Turkic world, and that happened. But time will come, these injustices will be eliminated. I believe we will restore our territorial integrity” (Gubadly - the gate of Zangezur, the ancient land of Azerbaijan: 2016: p. 288).

**Conclusion.** Our lands, occupied by Armenian separatists with the support of their patrons at the end of the 20th century, were liberated from the invaders in 2020 as a result of the efforts of Supreme Commander-in-Chief İlham Aliyev and our mighty army, as well as the help of brotherly Turkey.

About 300 residents of the region voluntarily participated in the second Karabakh war. During the 44-day Patriotic War, 11 martyrs and more than 40 qazies (veterans) from Gubadly district wrote their names in history (11 martyrs and more than 40 veterans from Gubadli region wrote their names in the history of the Patriotic War: 2023).

15.189 military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan, who participated in military operations for the liberation of Gubadly district of the Republic of Azerbaijan from occupation, and showed personal courage and valor, who by the order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan were awarded the medal “For the liberation of Gubadly” (Gubadli – the gate of Zangezur, the ancient land of Azerbaijan: 2016)

Reconstruction of the territories and restoration of the monuments, which the Armenians tried to falsify for 30 years and were destroyed by them not being able to erase the traces of the Azerbaijani Turks, have been started.

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