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## Azerbaijan Remembers Victims of Khojaly Massacre

### *Armenian Troops Slaughtered Innocent Townspeople 16 Years Ago*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Azerbaijanis around the world will commemorate one of the most tragic days in their history next week, marking the 16<sup>th</sup> year that has passed since hundreds of innocent men, women and children from the town of Khojaly in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan were slaughtered by Armenian troops.

The Khojaly massacre at the hands of Armenian troops stands as one of history's most chillingly brutal military acts against unarmed civilians.

On February 25, 1992, Armenian forces surrounded the town of Khojaly, telling civilians they would be allowed safe passage if they evacuated. As thousands left the town, Armenian troops opened fire. By the next morning, 613 innocent civilians had been murdered, including 63 children. Another 1,000 people were wounded and 1,275 taken hostage. To this day, 150 people from Khojaly remain missing.

Major media outlets covering the story in the following days described the massacre with horror:

- *The Sunday Times* reported the atrocity with the headline, “Armenian Soldiers Massacre Hundreds of Fleeing Families” (March 1, 1992).
- Newsweek magazine reported: “Many were killed at close range while trying to flee; some had their faces mutilated, others were scalped” (March 16, 1992).
- *The New York Times* also described beheadings and acts of scalping (March 3, 1992).
- Time magazine called the actions against Khojaly “grim and unconscionable,” reporting that many of those killed had been mutilated (March 16, 1992).
- *The Washington Times* wrote that video footage “backed accounts of the slaughter of women and children” (March 3, 1992).

In the most shocking admission of culpability, Armenia's then-defense minister Serge Sarkisian was quoted in the book “Black Garden” (by Tomas de Waal, NYU Press, 2003, page 85), as saying, “Before Khojaly the Azerbaijanis thought that...the Armenians were people who could not raise their hands against the civilian population. We were able to break that [stereotype].”

Sarkisian became the new president of Armenia just this week.

To mark this act of genocide, February 26 is designated as a National Day of Mourning in Azerbaijan.