
# FOUR DAY WAR IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH AND THE DISCRIMINATORY DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA IN AZERBAIJAN, ARMENIA AND TURKEY

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This report is the product of the collaboration between the Hrant Dink Foundation and the Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation.

April 2017, İstanbul

Media Watch on Hate Speech Project is funded by Friedrich Naumann Foundation and MyMedia/Niras. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders.

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IMAGINE
Center for Conflict Transformation

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HRANT DİNK VAKFI
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ՀՐԱՆԴ ՏԻՆՔ ՀԻՄՆԱՐԿ

**HRANT DINK FOUNDATION**

HRANT DINK FOUNDATION WAS ESTABLISHED AFTER THE ASSASINATION OF HRANT DINK IN FRONT OF HIS NEWSPAPER AGOS ON JANUARY 19, 2007, IN ORDER TO AVOID SIMILAR PAINS AND TO CONTINUE HRANT DINK'S LEGACY, HIS LANGUAGE AND HEART AND HIS DREAM OF A WORLD THAT IS MORE FREE AND JUST.
DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE REGARDLESS OF THEIR ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL ORIGIN OR GENDER IS THE FOUNDATION'S MAIN PRINCIPLE.
THE FOUNDATION WORKS FOR A TURKEY AND A WORLD WHERE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS LIMITLESS AND ALL DIFFERENCES ARE ALLOWED, LIVED, APPRECIATED, MULTIPLIED AND CONSCIENCE OUTWEIGHS THE WAY WE LOOK AT TODAY AND THE PAST. AS THE HRANT DINK FOUNDATION 'OUR CAUSE WORTH LIVING' IS A FUTURE WHERE A CULTURE OF DIALOGUE, PEACE AND EMPATHY PREVAILS.

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# PRESENTATION

"Media Watch on Hate Speech" study, which has been conducted by Hrant Dink Foundation since 2009, aims to contribute to efforts of combating racism and discrimination in Turkey. Considering the civilian oversight on the media, which is one of the most important means for producing and reproducing racism, discrimination and othering, the specific goal of this study is to strengthen media's respect for human rights and differences, draw attention to discriminatory language and hate speech against people and groups who are targeted on the basis of the certain characteristics of their identity, and thereby raise awareness.

As part of the project carried out by the Foundation in order to achieve these goals, the national and local press are scanned, news reports and columns that feature discriminatory, alienating and targeting discourse are identified and analyzed. All data are brought to public attention through www.nefretsoylemi.org, social media accounts and periodic reports issued every four months.

Discriminatory discourse thematic reports were added to this systematic watch on hate speech project as of 2013. Focusing on a specific theme within the respective four-month period, an appropriate research method is determined and a discriminatory discourse analysis is performed for each subject. The aim of these analyses is to analyse discourse that was formulated more subtly, which covertly convey discriminatory or alienating messages. Themes of the reports focusing on discriminatory discourse published so far are as follows: Black Sea visit of the representatives of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and People's Democratic Congress (HDK), first week of the Gezi Park events, Discriminatory discourse against Alevis, April 24 Armenian Genocide Remembrance day in media one year before the 100th year, Discriminatory discourse against Jews following Israel's Gaza operation and Discriminatory discourse against Syrian immigrants in print media and April 24 Armenian Genocide remembrance day in press between 1995 and 2015.[1]

Media's coverage of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia that started towards morning on April 2 along Karabakh border is covered in this report, which focuses on discriminatory discourse in the first four-month period of 2016. The report was issued by Hrant Dink Foundation and Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation with the financial support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation and MyMedia/Niras.

[1] All published reports are available on: nefretsoylemi.org/en/rapor_aciklamalar.asp

# INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh has been going on for many years. Conflicts that erupted again on April 2, 2016 have been considered as one of the most violent since the ceasefire in 1994. The conflict period that continued until the bilateral ceasefire on April 5, 2016 is named as the Four-Day War.

Thomas de Waal, the author of the book titled 'Karabakh: Armenia and Azerbaijan in Peace and War Periods', emphasizes in the foreword of the book's Turkish edition that agreeing on a peace treaty at the end of this 20-year conflict would mean doing something contrary to the national narratives which have been circulated by both parties for 20 years.[2] Based on the research he conducted, Waal concludes that the Karabakh issue is mostly in the 'minds' and is built on national narratives regarding the other party –which may often be proved to be incorrect. All of these national narratives and common beliefs that do not reflect reality fuel the opinion that the parties themselves are always the victims whereas the other party is always the aggressor.

Although international politics and macroeconomic conditions are certainly significant for resolving this conflict, the enmity that is incited between societies constitutes one of the most important barriers on the way to building peace. The fact that media, like education and politics, is one of the most effective tools in the generation and popularization of these national narratives and beliefs cannot be ignored.

This report, which is issued based on this fact and focused on discriminatory discourse, addresses how the issue was covered in Armenian, Azerbaijani and Turkish media on April 2016, when the clashes escalated again and left many civilians and soldiers dead from both parties, and how this conflict has been instrumentalized in generating discriminatory discourse against 'other' identities.

It is also necessary to consider Turkey's attitude in this war between the neighboring countries and the effects of this conflict on Turkey. Turkish-Armenian border is the only closed border of Turkey as of 2016. The border was closed by Turkey two years after the independence of Armenia, on 3 April 1993, as a reaction against Nagorno-Karabakh War. For this reason, Kars-Ardahan-Iğdır region bordering Armenia is in a peculiar position compared to other border regions of Turkey. Enclosed by the closed border on the east, the regions is also separated from the west of Turkey and isolated due to its geographical position. The impacts of the closed border are reflected in almost all areas such as social structure, economics, social life, education and development.[3] Thomas de Waal points out that Turkey acts with contradictory motives regarding this issue: "On the one hand, the feeling of solidarity with their cognates in Azerbaijan, and on the other hand, the desire to institute peace and security at their

[2] Thomas de Waal, *Karabağ: Barış ve Savaş Süreçlerinde Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan*, İstanbul: Hrant Dink Vakfı Yayınları, 2014, p. 7.

[3] *Research on the Socio-Economic Impact of the Turkey-Armenia Border*, Hrant Dink Vakfı Yayınları, 2014, http://hrantdink.org/attachments/article/333/Research-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-the-Turkey-Armenia-Border.pdf, last access: 9 November 2016.

borders."[4] Furthermore, Waal notes that the Turkish society needs more information about this conflict between their neighbors.

Media Watch on Hate Speech Project, which has been carried out by Hrant Dink Foundation since 2009, shows that Armenians are one of the groups that are most frequently subjected to hate speech in Turkish media.[5] On the other hand, the existing prejudices, racism and marginalization against Armenian community, which is one of the never-changing others in Turkey, tends to rise with such conflictual issues and this tendency renders Turkish media's attitude concerning Karabakh conflict during the days of conflict worth analyzing. The study aims to examine the media of three countries comparatively and to analyze what is highlighted and what is ignored while producing the news items concerning the issue and how the conflicting parties are named. In sum, the purpose is to analyze how media produces discriminatory discourse in times of conflict and war, and to what extent they contribute to the peace discourse.

## METHODOLOGY

The report includes data and analyses obtained by examining the contents published in the media of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey concerning the conflict that restarted along Azerbaijani-Karabakh border on April 2, 2016.

For this purpose, media outlets to be examined in the three countries were selected first considering various criteria of representation. Here, it should be underlined that the selection of media outlets in each country is one of the most challenging aspect for this kind of comparative researches even when certain concrete criteria are followed in order to acquire relevant and comparable data. In this research, circulation numbers, media ownership, political positions and ideologies were used as the selection criteria for the outlets. While investigating print media in Turkey, considering the specific features of each country and the weight of print and online media, online newspapers were taken into account in Azerbaijan and Armenia. Accordingly; the online newspapers Report.az, azadliq.org, Trend.az and Meydan.tv in Azerbaijan; Armenpress, Razm.info, Hetq and Azatutyun in Armenia; and newspapers Hürriyet, Sabah and Sözcü in Turkey had been examined. Detailed explanations about each media outlets can be found in country reports. However, it should be emphasized that since we limit our research with a small number of news outlets which is inevitable, subjective choices became necessarily a part of the research. Different authors could choose different media outlets. Nevertheless, this sample gives us qualified data to analyze how media in general produces discriminatory discourse in times of conflict and war, and to what extent they contribute to the peace discourse.

Considering that media may not be covering the events on the same dates in every country, the periods to be examined were determined in accordance with the peculiar situation of each country. Thus, the coverage of the above-mentioned media outlets on April 2-5 in Azerbaijan, April 2-6 in Armenia and April 3-7 in Turkey were included in the analysis. Each item found in these newspapers within the

[4] Thomas de Waal, op.cit., p. 6.

[5] *www.nefretsoylemi.org*, last access: 9 November 2016.

periods in question was examined in terms of the following questions. In this way, the answers to the same questions were covered in the reports of all three countries and comparable data was obtained.

1. Are news items signed by the reporters?
2. Does news item provide background information about the history of the conflict?
3. Who/what are the primary sources of information of the news item?
4. What are the most commonly used words?
5. What is the discourse used in describing casualties on both sides?
6. How are the lives of civilians described during the clashes?
7. What is the discourse used in describing the other side (country or actor)?

In addition to these questions, other findings that are obtained during examination and considered to be relevant in the context of each country have also been included in the country reports.

## OVERVIEW

Journalism during the times of war and conflict requires more than abiding by the existing codes of ethics. Peace journalism aims to promote a new language that enables the transition from conflict to peace. Therefore, giving voice to all parties in media during the times of war and conflict is highly important. "A peace journalist tries to ascertain and make transparent the position of all parties (which is always more than two) and to highlight the cooperation among parties without concealing the difference of opinions and positions among the parties."[6]

The data obtained from the analysis that was made in accordance with the aforementioned criteria in the media of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey reveal that the way the 'other' is defined or the way the discriminatory discourse is generated is similar, even when the contexts are different.

Comparing the country reports, the most notable finding is that the psychological war carried out by the number of casualties (soldier or civilian) is regenerated in the media of all three countries. Both in Turkish and Azerbaijani media, killed Azerbaijani soldiers had been referred as "martyrs", whereas killed Armenian soldiers had been referred as "dead". With such choices of word, some losses in the war are trivialized, whereas some others are glorified.

Featuring the figures concerning the loss of ammunition during the conflict right next to the number of casualties leads to the impression that the number of casualties is just quantitative data expressing the damage done to the other party. While the humane aspect of war is ignored, the media becomes an agent in the political conflict that takes place through these quantitative data. Such discourses support the militarist language and reinforce the war discourse.

It was observed that most of the news items in Azerbaijani and Turkish media had been published without specifying the reporter or editor. On the other hand, most news items in Armenian media were published with the reference to the source. It might be suggested that these media outlets published the reports without any signature, because they did not have any correspondents in

[6] Sevda Alankuş, *Barış Gazeteciliği El Kitabı*, İstanbul: Bianet, 2016, p. 82.

Karabakh or the regions near the clashes. Nevertheless, this problem might make it difficult to access direct information and cause the readers to have doubts on the accuracy of the information.

The result of the analysis that was carried out based on this information shows the media of all three countries regarded the representatives of their own state or government as the primary source of information and presented the statements made by spokespersons of other countries as worthless, speculative or deceptive. This situation was reflected in Turkish media by presenting the statements of Azerbaijani government and representatives of Turkish government as primary sources and covering the statements of the representatives of Armenia in a more questioning manner.

It is very important to include an informative note on the history of the issue in the news items covering the transformation of this dispute that has been going on between Azerbaijan and Armenia for more than 20 years into an armed conflict again in order to understand the current process. However, media of all three countries included such informative notes in a few news items. Given the fact that the Turkish society has less information about a conflict in which it is not directly involved and that objective and qualified information sources in Turkish are limited, it is clear that providing background information in the coverage in Turkish media is important.

Finally, it was seen that Azerbaijani, Armenian or Turkish identities were directly targeted and some statements that clearly portrays other parties as enemies amounting to hate speech were found in the newspapers of all three countries within the related period. In fact, the Media Watch on Hate Speech project, which has been conducted by Hrant Dink Foundation since 2009, revealed that instances of hate speech against Armenians increased during the periods of conflict in Karabakh. Although no such systematic and comprehensive media watch project is carried out in other countries, it is reasonable to think that the situation is the same. However, it is seen that hate speech in the analyzed items had been commonly generated by specifying the identities of the parties like "Armenian", "Azerbaijani" and "Turk", while criticizing the actions taken by states, governments and military forces.

You can find the detailed analyses and examples of these observations in the country reports.

# ARMENIA

In the Armenian media, the Azerbaijani society is typically pictured as a neighbor-aggressor that has an "eye on Armenian lands." Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani society are usually represented as a monolithic group. The Azerbaijani society as such or civilians are rarely discussed and the generic term "Azerbaijani side" is often used. Further, in public discourse that often spills over into media or in some cases under the influence of media, Azerbaijanis are routinely referred to as "Turks", which can create confusion for an interlocutor or a reader whether this means an Azerbaijani or a Turk from Turkey. Moreover, the word "Turk" in public discourse is synonymous not only with the word "Azerbaijani", but also often used with the underlying meaning of "enemy."

One of the prejudices evident in media discourse in Armenia about Azerbaijan is that the latter's only privilege is its oil industry. Otherwise the country presumably lacks culture, moral values or other aspects of social life. The problems with human rights in Azerbaijan are always highlighted, juxtaposing it to the comparatively less repressive political environment in Armenia and using the comparison as a justification to overlook internal problems in Armenia. To give an example of how people perceive Azerbaijan there is a Soviet-Armenian joke that is often repeated: an Azerbaijani asks "Why do you need a Ministry of Sea in Armenia when there is no sea there?" An Armenian reply: "Think instead why do you have a Ministry of Culture in Azerbaijan?"

When covering the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the media outlets act on an assumption that there is a consensus within the society in regard to the conflict. The consensus is presumed to be that Karabakh "is a historical Armenian land" and it was "arbitrarily given" to Azerbaijan by the Soviet authorities, and specifically Stalin, and that Armenians re-established historical justice through victory in the 1991-1994 war. This presumed consensus is the main reason why rarely the media outlets find it necessary to post a short historical background in the end of each article on the topic, and not the desire to avoid imposing own views on the readers.

The image of an "Azerbaijani," or a "Turk," as the enemy was further reinforced during the April 2016 escalation in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In the early morning of April 2, the Armenian media representatives were caught by the press statement released by the Press Office of Nagorno-Karabakh's Ministry of Defence Army informing that "in the southern, south-eastern and north-eastern directions of the contact line, on April 1 and early morning of April 2, the adversary carried out attack operations, using artillery, armored vehicles, and air force."[7]

Most of the news outlets immediately re-published the press statement. On April 3, the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan announced unilateral ceasefire. The Nagorno-Karabakh's Defence Army released a press statement saying that the ceasefire announcement was a misinformation and the Azerbaijani forces continue shelling the Armenian positions. The latter statement was re-posted by

[7] *Heated clashes take place along Nagorno-Karabakh-Azerbaijani contact line*, April 2, 2016, https://armenpress.am/eng/news/841768/lernayin-xarabaxi-ev-adrbejani-shpman-gtsi-oxj-erkarutyamb.html, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

most of the Armenian news outlets.[8] That weekend and until the de-escalation on April 5, the media continued covering the clashes in the line of contact. The news environment had dramatically changed during these days and the clashes were the main topic covered by the Armenian media.

This section of the study presents the results of monitoring of the selected Armenian news media outlets from April 2 to 6 on the topic of covering the news from the frontline. Four outlets are selected for monitoring: two governmental or relying on government as primary source of information and two independent in regard to their information sources. The secondary selection criterion was the popularity and therefore the influential position in creation of public discourse held by the outlets. The chosen outlets are the following:

**Armenpress** is a state news agency and is financed mainly from the state budget. The outlet produces its own news and is a primary source for citation for many other media outlets. When it comes to foreign relations and especially the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenpress reflects the views of the official Yerevan.

**Razm.info** (trans. - military info) is mostly covering military related news and was very active during the escalation of the conflict, becoming one of the primary sources followed and cited by the public and other outlets. Judging from the coverage of the escalation and implied or explicit references, its primary source of information is the Ministry of Defence of Armenia.

**Hetq** is an independent investigative news website focusing mostly on investigations of corruption cases related to high-level officials. In this case, Hetq was selected because of producing original content from the front-line and sending a group of journalists to the Nagorno-Karabakh, among them their chief editor.

**Azatutyun**[9] or Yerevan bureau of RFE/RL is an independent news media outlet and follows the regulations and code of ethics of RFE/RL Central Bureau.

On the first day of escalation, all of the monitored media outlets shared only limited information based primarily on the press releases of the Ministries of Defence of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. During the following days, many journalists travelled to Nagorno-Karabakh to cover the news from the ground. In the areas located further from the zone of active fighting there were no restrictions on the coverage. However, close to the contact line the journalists were escorted by military personnel. The explanation given were "security reasons." As a result, the information transmitted from the zone of active fighting was censored, as the journalists needed permission of the military for taking photos or videos.

[8] *Azerbaijan claims that it "unilaterely" stopped military actions*, April 3, 2016, http://www.azatutyun.am/a/27651522.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[9] In addition to textual articles analyzed in this report, Azatutyun also has radio coverage and video reports.

## FINDINGS

Between April 2 and 6 the overwhelming majority of the news items by Hetq, Azatutyun and Razm.info covered the conflict. Only Armenpress in addition to conflict coverage also had extensive coverage of other local and international news.

In case of Hetq and Armenpress the journalists for the most part did not sign the news items. Exceptions were made by Hetq when the reporting directly from the front-line was signed by the editor-in-chief Edik Bagdasaryan. Azatutyun always published the name of the journalist unless the news item was a reproduction or an official press release. Razm.info always had the name under the title. All the news items during this period were signed by two Razm.info journalists.

As mentioned above, none of the monitored news outlets provided background historical information about the conflict in general. However, almost in all news items published by Armenpress had a short text in italics at the end of each article outlining the official position about the current escalation, and developments in it.

For all of the monitored news websites the primary source of information initially was the Ministry of Defence of Armenia and the Defence Army of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azatutyun and Hetq later started providing also original information from primary sources. Azatutyun was the only news outlet among selected that published news items citing Azerbaijani official sources, including President Ilham Aliyev.[10] Hetq often cited its own editor-in-chief covering the news from Nagorno-Karabakh.

The surveyed Armenian news outlets, while reporting about the escalation, did not refer to Azerbaijani civilians or society, including the civilians living in the conflict zone. Instead the outlets were referring either to generic "Azerbaijani side" or to the Azerbaijani army and the Azerbaijani state. While writing about Azerbaijan, the most common word used was **"adversary"** (հակառակորդ). Using the term "adversary", though still might be considered to be quite a militarist concept, instead of the terms such as "enemy"/ "enemy forces" has been advocated by many organizations in the past years in order to shift to a more neutral language. Some, particularly the independent Azatutyun, refrained from passing own judgment or using emotionally charged language in their own reporting. The emotionally charged wording, however, was kept in press releases that the news outlets republished. For example, in one of the news items on April 2 Azatutyun cites the press release of Ministry of Defence "Defence Army's subdivisions disabled two hostile [from the word "enemy" in Armenian -թշնամական] tanks."[11] Other outlets published the same press release as well.

The independent news outlet Hetq, unlike Azatutyun, in some instances resorted to emotionally charged language and visuals. On April 2, Hetq published a news item with graphic photos from the village of Talish showing killed and mutilated civilians with the title "Brutalities in Talish". In the text Hetq writes: "We wish to apologize to our readers. 'Hetq' has never published this sort of photos, it's a violation of our code of

[10] *Aliyev speaks about "war victory"*, April 3, 2016, http://www.azatutyun.am/a/27651664.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.
[11] *One child died, another 2 injured: Defence Army informs about heavy clashes along the line of contact*, April 2, 2016, http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/27649954.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

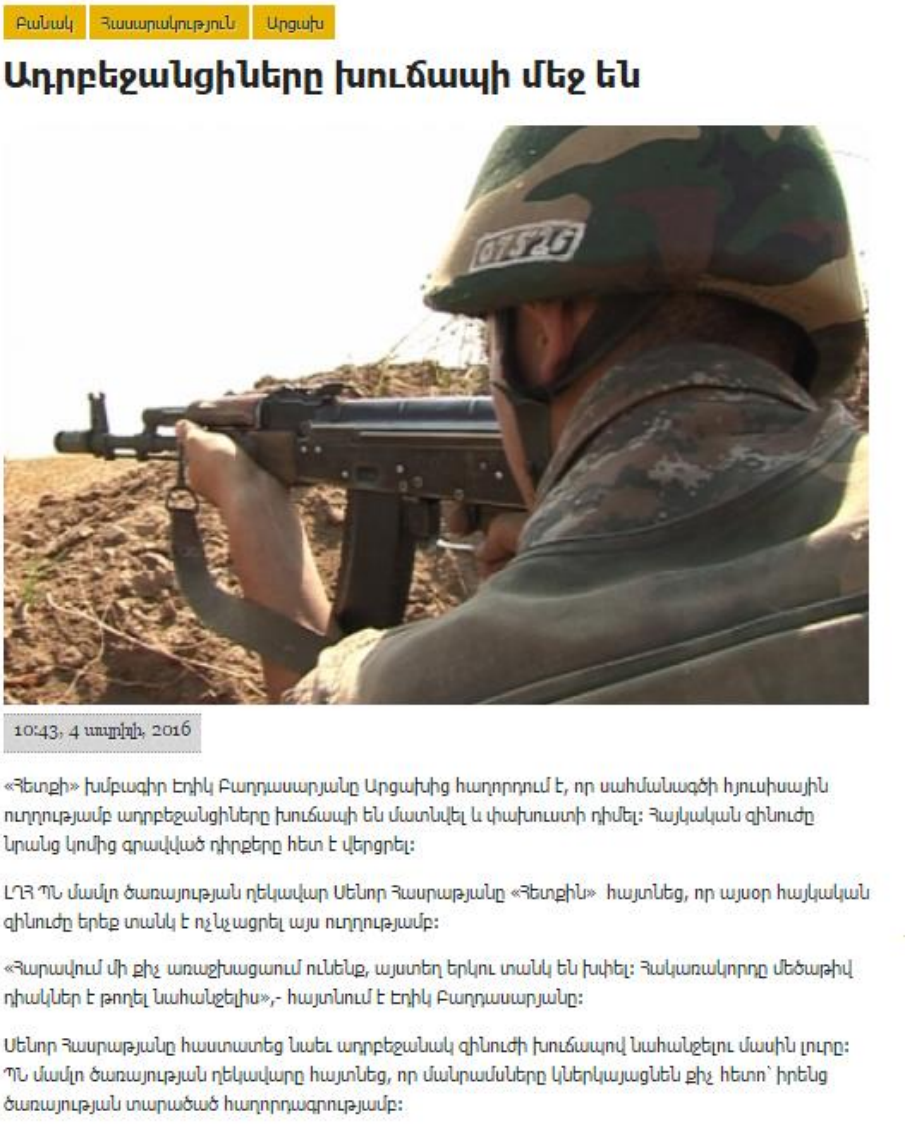
ethics but we do not have any other means to show the reality at the moment."[12] By confessing that they are intentionally violating their own code of ethics, Hetq effectively suggests that they abide by one set of rules in peace times and another in war times. The published photos received a strong resonance, contributing to the further de-humanization of image of Azerbaijanis in the Armenian society.

The emotionally charged words painting Azerbaijanis as occupiers and barbarians and Armenians as defenders and liberators are also kept while citing parts of press releases, constructing an image of different nature between two identities, one supposed to be inherently good and the other inherently evil: "Armenian units considerably advanced in some parts of frontline **liberating** new lands… During the military clashes the **adversary** excelled with **barbaric actions** along the line of contact not only against Army's servicemen but also against peaceful population… Those are only a few of the **corps of killers** who were killed by an Armenian soldier during their retreat…" In some cases, it is not mentioned in the headlines that the news item is a press release. For example, the sentences such as "Azerbaijani army lost 14 tanks, Armenian units considerably advanced in some parts of frontline liberating new lands" were presented without a reference to the source.

In another news item citing its chief editor who was reporting from Nagorno-Karabakh Hetq writes: "**Azerbaijanis** are panicking and are retreating along the Northern part of the line of contact. The Armenian forces recaptured the lands occupied by them."[13] There is no differentiation made here between Azerbaijani soldiers or Special Forces involved in the incident and the general public. This essentializing statement suggests that the panic applies to "Azerbaijanis" in general, reinforcing the stereotype of Azerbaijanis in Armenia as a monolithic and cowardly group.

[12] *Atrocities in Talish (Attention: Photos of shot people are published)*, April 3, 2016, http://hetq.am/arm/news/66976/vayragutyunner-talishum-zgushacum-hraparakvats-e-gndakaharvats-andzanc-lusankar.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[13] *Azerbaijanis are in panic*, April 3, 2016, http://hetq.am/arm/news/66991/adrbejancinery-khutchapi-mej-en.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.



Բանակ | Հասարակություն | Արցախ

## Ադրբեջանցիները խուճապի մեջ են



10:43, 4 ապրիլի, 2016

«Հետքի» խմբագիր Էդիկ Բաղդասարյանը Արցախից հաղորդում է, որ սահմանագծի հյուսիսային ուղղությամբ ադրբեջանցիները խուճապի են մատնվել և փախուստի դիմել: Հայկական զինուժը նրանց կոմից գրավված դիրքերը հետ է վերցրել:

ԼՂՀ ՊՆ մամլո ծառայության ղեկավար Սենոր Հասրաթյանը «Հետքին» հայտնեց, որ այսօր հայկական զինուժը երեք տանկ է ոչնչացրել այս ուղղությամբ:

«Հարավում մի քիչ առաջխացաում ունենք, այստեղ երկու տանկ են խփել: Հակառակորդը մեծաթիվ դիակներ է թողել նահանջելիս»,- հայտնում է Էդիկ Բաղդասարյանը:

Սենոր Հասրաթյանը հաստատեց նաեւ ադրբեջանակ զինուժի խուճապով նահանջելու մասին լուրը: ՊՆ մամլո ծառայության ղեկավարը հայտնեց, որ մանրամասները կներկայացնեն քիչ հետո՝ իրենց ծառայության տարածած հաղորդագրությամբ:

The government-connected outlets, Armenpress and razm.info, were even less reserved in their reporting. During all four days of escalation Armenpress interviewed experts and politicians who expressed strongly worded negative views about Azerbaijanis, linked them with ISIS and terrorism. Citing an interview with Russian political analyst Stanislaw Tarasov, Armenpress wrote: "Speaking on the issue that **'Islamic State' terrorists were fighting for Azerbaijan** against Armenian armed forces in the line of contact, Tarasov said that the Azerbaijani leadership has to realize that **terrorists** are a serious problem for them."[14] In the interview with the spokesperson of the Nagorno-Karabakh President Armenpress cites: "Azerbaijan is a **terrorist, fascist, abnormal** state."[15]

[14] *Azerbaijan fails to reach its goals with provoking action*, April 6, 2016, https://armenpress.am/arm/news/842399/adrbejany-sadrich-gortsoxutyunnerov-chhasav-ir-npatakin.html, last accessed November 10, 2016.

[15] *The actions of Azerbaijan are unprecedented since 1994. David Babayan*, April 2, 2016, https://armenpress.am/arm/news/841783/adrbejani-ays-gortsoxutyunnery-1994-tvakanic-heto-kareli.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

# Ադրբեջանի այս գործողությունները 1994 թվականից հետո կարելի է համարել աննախադեպ. Դավիթ Բաբայան

10:26, 2 Ապրիլ, 2016

ԵՐԵՎԱՆ, 2 ԱՊՐԻԼԻ, ԱՐՄԵՆՊՐԵՍ: Ադրբեջանի գործողությունները մարտահրավեր են՝ ուղղված միջազգային հանրությանը: Այս մասին «Արմենպրես»-ի հետ զրույցում նշեց Արցախի նախագահի մամուլի քարտուղար Դավիթ Բաբայանը: «Ադրբեջանն ահաբեկչական, ֆաշիստական աննորմալ պետություն է: Սա մարտահրավեր է ամբողջ քաղաքակիրթ մարդկությանը: Վաշինգտոնում ընթանում են բանակցություններ, ամբողջ աշխարհը հավաքված է այնտեղ, իսկ Ադրբեջանը Թուրքիայի օժանդակությամբ նման քայլերի է գնում: Իհարկե, Ադրբեջանը մեր կողմից ստացել է համարժեք պատասխան, հսկայական զոհեր ունեն, հետ են շպրտվել, բայց ամեն դեպքում այսպիսի պահելածևը պետք է համարժեք պատասխան ստանա միջազգային հանրության կողմից»,-ասաց Դավիթ Բաբայանը:

Նրա խոսքով, Ադրբեջանի այս գործողությունները 1994 թվականից այս կողմ կարելի է համարել աննախադեպ: «ԱՄՆ պետքարտուղար Ջոն Քերիի հետ հանդիպումից հետո Ադրբեջանը շնորհակալություն էր հայտնել միջնորդության համար: Հիմա նույն Ադրբեջանը հարձակում է գործում: Մի բան ասում է, մեկ այլ բան անում: Մենք ենք այստեղ քաղաքակիրթ աշխարհի պատիվը պահում: Վերջապես պետք է միջազգային հանրության կողմից Ադրբեջանը կոշտ արձագանք ստանա նման պահվածքի համար: Միանշնակ է, որ միջազգային հանրությունը պետք է գործնական քայլերի գնա»,-ասաց Դավիթ Բաբայանը:

Արցախի նախագահի մամուլի քարտուղարը նշեց, որ Ադրբեջանի կողմից կրակոցները շարունակվում են, խոցվել է ադրբեջանական ուղղաթիռ, նրանք ունեն մեծ կորուստներ, հայկական կողմից իրավիճակը վերահսկելի է: Հայկական կողմում որևէ խուճապ չկա, Ադրբեջանի սահմանային հատվածում մեծ խուճապ է սկսվել:

*Արցախի պաշտպանական գերատեսչության հաղորդագրության մեջ նշվում է. «Այս պահի դրությամբ ղարաբաղա-ադրբեջանական հակամարտ զորքերի շփման գծի ողջ երկարությամբ տեղի են ունենում թեժ բախումներ:*

*Պաշտպանության բանակի առաջապահ ստորաբաժանումները, ընդունելով հակառակորդի մարտահրավերը, վարում են հուսալի պաշտպանական մարտեր: Առաջնագծում ստեղծված իրադրության մասին առավել մանրամասն կանդրադառնանք մեր առաջիկա հաղորդագրություններում:*

Armenpress also portrayed Armenian soldiers in positive or neutral and Azerbaijanis in negative light, using expressions about Azerbaijanis such as “the enemy has been thrown back”, “provocation of the adversary”, and about Armenians “feats of Armenian soldiers”, “Armenian forces bravely do their job”. On April 3 Armenpress writes: “Azerbaijani TV channels treat their own people like sheep, showing video materials from the front line that show ‘the losses’ of the Armenian side where those losses actually are

not seen."[16] On April 4 Razm.info wrote: "We remind you that Azerbaijani armed forces exercised atrocities in the Armenian regions of Artsakh. A child and three civilians died in Artsakh."[17]

Razm.info republished all the press releases of Nagorno-Karabakh military using the enemy image constructing language saturated with words such as "enemy", "Azerbaijani aggression", and similar. Starting from April 3 the main function of the website and the majority of its news items were reports about casualties of the "Azerbaijanis side," as it appears providing inflated numbers. They cited "open sources" or "social media profiles" as the sources of information.[18] The numbers of the Armenian casualties were underreported or not reported at all. In some cases, graphic photos of violence were published without verification. A news item on April 2 reported 18 deaths on the Armenian side, citing Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan.[19] Writing about the deceased people of Azerbaijani side Armenian news media outlets were again repeating the numbers given by the military officer of Armenia. Later it was revealed that there were more deaths than was reported on the first day. On April 14, the Ministry of Defense of Armenia officially announced that there were 92 death cases in Armenian side between April 2 and 5, although it didn't reveal how many of them were killed on the first day of clashes.[20]

Conversely, the numbers of Azerbaijani deaths were inflated. An article from April 2 cites the Ministry of Defense of Nagorno-Karabakh on April 2 alone the Azerbaijan side lost more than 200 soldiers.[21] The claims on these days of hundreds of Azerbaijanis killed and retreating and minimal casualties on the Armenian side contrasted sharply with the reports in Azerbaijani media about great numbers of Armenians killed and Azerbaijani forces advancing with minimal casualties.[22] The inflation of the numbers of the casualties on the other side and the underreporting of the casualties on their own side, was an effective tool used by each side to fabricate through media a reality that would fit their militaristic discourse of own superiority propagated for years in order to maintain popular support for the existing governments.

The monitoring of the selected news outlets shows that there is no common approach while describing the deceased people ranging from dead, victim, casualty (զոհ) to losses (կորուստ) used for deaths from the Armenian side. For describing the deaths from Azerbaijan, the words most commonly used were: losses by the Azerbaijani side or killed.

The disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh is named differently in different media outlets. Armenpress uses either "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic" or "Artsakh", the first version of the toponym is aimed at stressing

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[16] *Azerbaijani TV channels treat their own people like sheep showing fake reports from the line of contact*, April 3, 2016, https://armenpress.am/arm/news/842005/adrbejany-sepakan-zhoxovrdin-ochkhari-tex-e-dnum-cucadrelov.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[17] *Defense Army warns the authorities of Azerbaijan*, April 4, 2016, http://razm.info/81875, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[18] *Losses of Azerbaijan between April 1-5, April 6, 2016*, http://razm.info/82125, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[19] *President of Armenia: Armenian army has 18 dead, about 35 injured*, http://razm.info/81600, last accessed: November 10, 2016

[20] *The number of Karabakh war deaths reached to 92 during the clashes in Artsakh*, April 14, 2016, https://www.armenianow.com/en/hy/karabakh-hy/2016/04/14/armenia-casualties-update-karabakh-april/995/, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[21] *Defense Army presents the losses of the enemy*, April, 2, 2016, http://razm.info/81581, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[22] See the Azerbaijani section of the report.

that Nagorno-Karabakh has statehood and the second is the Armenian name for the disputed territory. Hetq uses only "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic", while Razm.info uses only "Artsakh". Azatutyun refers to the toponym as "Nagorno-Karabakh", which is a term commonly used internationally along with the borrowed from Russian version Nagorny Karabakh by those trying to appear neutral.

The main actors in most of the monitored news items are either the states or armed forces or the generic term "side" (Armenian side, Armenian forces, forces of Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army, Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani side, Azerbaijani forces). As it was mentioned above in many cases Azerbaijan is called adversary side and enemy.

The coverage of the escalation rarely reports on the situation with civilians, and stayed mainly focused on military actions. Particularly when it comes to reporting the Azerbaijani casualties, the numbers are given without specification whether they are civilian or military. When it comes to Armenian casualties, there were some video and photo stories about the civilian victims and survivors. Some stories were published about the lives and families of the killed servicemen.[23] People living in the Armenian populated village of Talish who escaped during the first night of clashes also received special attention.

Armenpress covered a few funeral ceremonies of Armenian soldiers, mentioning who was present. They also posted quotes from the relatives. All the texts contained praise of soldiers' personal and professional qualities, patriotism, referring to them heroes.[24] Hetq covered only one funeral ceremony.[25] There were many other news outlets; however, not included in this study, that excessively covered funerals creating an image of a collective loss.

Turkey was covered in the media rarely. When covered, it was presented as an actor that is allied with Azerbaijan and is hostile to Armenia. Armenpress published an article about the call between the Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan Zaqir Hasanov and the Minister of National Defence of Turkey Ismet Yilmaz where the latter supported the actions of Azerbaijan. In other piece Armenpress reports "Erdogan was fast to support his 'younger brother'"[26] in reference to Azerbaijani president. Armenpress, curiously, also claimed that the statements of support for Azerbaijan and reposts of the information of the Azerbaijani Defence Ministry are being reported by pro-governmental outlets in Turkey only, suggesting that the support for

[23] *"Papa came and said – Don't be afraid, I'm with you, mama replied – If you're with us won't the bombs explode?",* April 4, 2016, http://hetq.am/arm/news/67023/papan-ekav-asec-mi-vakheceq-es-dzer-het-em-maman-el-te-or-du-mer-het-es-ed-rumbery-chen-paytelu.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[24] *He gave the most valuable to his homeland: farewell of the killed soldier in Artsakh*, April 4, 2016, https://armenpress.am/arm/news/842177/na-hayreniqi-hamar-tvec-amenatanky-verjin-hrazheshty-arcakhum.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[25] *Requiem of 23-year-old Merujan Stepanian from Gyumri was held in St. Nishan church*, April 5, 2016, http://hetq.am/arm/news/67073/gyumreci-23-amya-meruzhan-stepanyani-hogehangsti-araroxutyuny-katarvec-surb-nshan-ekexecum.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

[26] *Turkey "justified" the aggression of Azarbaijan towards NKR,* April 2, 2016, https://armenpress.am/arm/news/841920/turqian-ardaracrel-e-adrbejani-otndzgutyuny-lxh-i.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016. Erdogan hurried to support "younger brother", April 2, 2016, https://armenpress.am/arm/news/841909/erdoxany-shtapel-e-ajakcutyun-haytnel-poqr-exbory.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

Azerbaijan is limited to government and is not widely shared. As an alternative, the source cited DemokratHaber article that criticized the statements of Azerbaijani side as lies.[27]

The escalation on April 2-5 that was later labelled in the Armenian media as the "4-day war" is described in Armenia exclusively as the responsibility of Azerbaijan with no alternative version discussed. The monitoring of different news outlets reveals that there is a considerable gap between the independent news outlets and the government outlets. The independent outlets try to use primary sources, follow ethics codes and conflict sensitive reporting, although they do that inconsistently. On the other hand, the governmental and pro-government outlets aim to paint an enemy image of Azerbaijan and rely heavily on reposting information from the official sources.

[27] *Turkish media disapproves the messages of Azerbaijani MFA on NKR*, April 2, 2016, https://armenpress.am/arm/news/841913/turqakan-mamuly-herqum-e-lxh-shurj-adrbejani-pn-haxordagrutyunnery.html, last accessed: November 10, 2016.

# AZERBAIJAN

Armenia and Armenians are portrayed as Azerbaijan's grave enemies in public discourse, and media. According to a research conducted by the Yerevan Press Club and Yeni Nesil Journalists' Union, Armenians are portrayed as murderers, rapists, and occupiers and there is no differentiation in generations or acknowledgement of time change.[28] Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) captured this depiction in a story, "History lessons in Armenia and Azerbaijan", with Armenian and Azerbaijani journalist debunking the historical narrative that exists in history textbooks in both countries: "Tofig Veliyev, head of the Slavic history department at Baku State University is the author of this textbook and insists he had to use negative language in order to tell the truth. 'Those phrases [our eternal enemies] give an accurate picture of the Armenians', Veliyev said. 'I would be falsifying history unless I described them like that".[29]

In the course of the last three years, a number of Azerbaijani writers, intellectuals, and journalists were labelled "Armenians". Akram Aylisli,[30] one of Azerbaijan's well known writers and recipient of national orders "Istiglal" [Independence] and "Shokhrat" [Fame] was targeted for his novel titled "Stoned Dreams" in 2013. The novel covered the period of 90s Baku when Armenians were killed. For depicting Armenians in a positive light, and being critical of the former president Heydar Aliyev, Aylisli was stripped of his titles and endured mass belittling and defamation in the aftermath. Pro-government youth groups staged protests in front of his house, parliament members suggested burning his books, depriving him of his citizenship and deporting him from Azerbaijan all together. Unlike Tofig Valiyev, Aylisli was accused of "purposefully distorting the history of Azerbaijan".[31]

This and many other illustrations, become more visible at the time of escalation on the frontline. The aggressive rhetoric and dehumanization of the other multiplies aggressively leaving little or no room to argue differently, be it in governmental or independent media.

The following is a monitoring of the language used by governmental and independent media platforms at the period when the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict escalated between April 2 and 5, 2016 and based on the criteria indicated in the introduction of this report. For this analysis, we have selected the following media outlets:

> **Report.az**: is a semi-independent online news outlet with links to the State Oil Company (SOCAR); most of the coverage by this outlet is based on its own reporting. However, it largely

[28] *Glossary of hate speech in the media of Armenia and Azerbaijan*, Yerevan Press Club, Yeni Nesil Journalists' Union, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, 2008-2013, http://epfarmenia.am/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/glossary_eng-1.pdf, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[29] Haykuhi Barseghyan and Shahla Sultanova, *History lessons in Armenia and Azerbaijan*, IWPR, March 2, 2012, https://iwpr.net/global-voices/history-lessons-armenia-and-azerbaijan, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[30] Damien McGuinness, *Azeri writer Akram Aylisli hounded for 'pro-Armenian' book*, BBC News, February 15, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21459091, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[31] *Media reports: Baku detains famous writer Akram Aylisli attacked by authorities for describing pogroms of Armenians*, Panorama.am, March 30, 2016, http://www.panorama.am/en/news/2016/03/30/Media-reports-Baku/1553787, last accessed: November 9, 2016; Sultan Kerimov, *Lawyer of armenianism, Amal Clooney used BBC to slander Baku*, April 26, 2016, http://news.day.az/politics/774458.html, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

reflects the position of the official Baku, unless it is a general reporting on any unrelated to the country's internal politics issue;

**azadliq.org:** Azadliq Radiosu or Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Azerbaijan service, is an independent online news outlet, with daily radio shows broadcasted on AM waves, and news shows broadcasted via satellite daily and radio's official YouTube channel; its reporting is based on the work of its journalists and is known as a reliable source of information;

**Trend.az:** is a pro-government online news outlet, and its reporting heavily reflects government line. In matters critical of the government, the outlet sides with the ruling establishment; similarly, when the platform covers the conflict, the reporting reflects the line of official Baku;

**Meydan.tv:** dissident news outlet based out of Berlin; it was initiated by a former political prisoner; its goal is to provide objective coverage and it's based on its own reporting through freelance reporters based in Azerbaijan as well as the work carried out by the Berlin office;

## FINDINGS

Azerbaijan's media environment is limited, therefore often it is hard to find diverse opinions in general, not to mention diverse views on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Much of the media depicts Armenia as the enemy in its discriminatory discourse. Armenia is portrayed as weak and in constant economic struggle. The media in Azerbaijan continuously boasts about the government military budget (from $177m in 2003 to $3 billion in 2015[32]) and it being several times higher than Armenia's overall state budget. Dehumanizing of the other is common and widespread, especially across media platforms that are readily available for people's public consumption.

The heavy fighting in Karabakh between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces between April 2 and 5 were no exception to media war or the blame. At the onset of the conflict, each side blamed the other for the escalation. In one of the statements issued by Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defence, the report said 12 of Azerbaijan soldiers "became shahids" or "Muslim martyrs" while more than 100 Armenian soldiers were killed or wounded; and artillery destroyed.[33] In a similar statement issued by the Nagorno-Karabakh Ministry of Defence, it said more than 200 Azerbaijani soldiers were killed, while praising own soldiers as heroes.

During the monitored period, with an exception of analytical pieces or editorials, most of the news items published by the monitored outlets were unsigned (practice that is not limited to the monitored period). Except for Azadliq Radiosu that exchanges information with the Armenian service of the Radio Liberty, neither of the remaining outlets used in the analysis here, have access to journalists either in Armenia or Nagorno-Karabakh. The biggest reason for this is the overall approach to the conflict and

[32] *A frozen conflict explodes*, The Economist, April 9, 2016, http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21696563-after-facing-decades-armenia-and-azerbaijan-start-shooting-frozen-conflict-explodes, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[33] *Conflict erupts between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces*, The Guardian, April 2, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/02/conflict-erupts-between-azerbaijani-and-armenian-forces, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

to the ‘other’ in this context. As there are limited ties between the two governments, there are no journalists accredited to work on the other side and no collaboration between the media outlets.

All four outlets, provide information about the conflict at the end of each news item. This information usually contains dates and key events related to the conflict, like the ceasefire agreement signed in 1994 as well as the four UN resolutions that demand Armenian troops to withdraw from Azerbaijani territory.

Azerbaijan media outlets heavily relied on these days on the information provided by the Ministry of Defence and government spokespersons. Official statements from Armenia were also posted, but qualified as provocations and lies. In the coverage period, Trend.az, an outlet known for its pro-government stand, resorted to such language in every piece that was published on their website regarding the escalation. Violations of ceasefire were reported only on the Armenian side and Azerbaijan’s own position was repeatedly described as “responsive and successful”.

In its coverage, the most commonly used words and phrases by Trend.az to describe Armenians were “enemy”, “provocateur”, “criminal” or “criminal regime”. The Azerbaijani soldiers who lost their lives in these days were described as “martyrs”, while the Armenian soldiers are named as “losses” or as “destroyed”.

Армяне прибегают к фальсификации, чтобы скрыть свои потери - минобороны Азербайджана

2 апреля 2016 22:49 (UTC+04:00)



БАКУ /Trend/ - Армяне прибегают ко всякого рода фальсификациям, чтобы скрыть свои потери. Об этом Trend сказал глава пресс-службы минобороны Азербайджана Вагиф Даргяхлы.

"Это не впервые, мы неоднократно были свидетелями этого. Распространяемая армянскими СМИ на протяжении дня информация является ложью, она не отражает реальную ситуацию", - отмечается в сообщении.

Сообщается, что изображения с телами погибших азербайджанских солдат и со сбитым беспилотником Азербайджана, распространяемые на армянских сайтах, являются фальшивыми. "По кадрам можно увидеть, что данные видео являются очередной фальсификацией для того, чтобы скрыть свои потери", - добавил Даргяхлы.

"Солдаты, показанные на видео - в летней одежде. Погодные условия в настоящий момент не позволяют быть в летней одежде, личный состав азербайджанской армии одет в зимнюю форму", - добавил глава пресс-службы.

Он также сказал, что изображенный на видео беспилотник не находится на балансе ВС Азербайджана "У армии Азербайджана нет БПЛА такой модели. Это видео - очередная фальсификация армянской стороны", - сказал Даргяхлы.

В ночь на субботу все приграничные позиции Азербайджана подвергались интенсивному обстрелу из крупнокалиберного оружия, минометов, гранатометов и артиллерийских установок. Кроме того, был обстрелян ряд населенных пунктов вблизи линии соприкосновения войск, где компактно проживает гражданское население. В результате обстрелов есть погибшие и раненные среди гражданского населения.

В боях были уничтожены шесть армянских танков, 15 артустановок и укрепленные инженерные сооружения, уничтожено и ранено более 100 военнослужащих ВС Армении.

12 военнослужащих ВС Азербайджана стали шехидами, подбит один вертолет Ми-24 и получил повреждения на мине один танк.

Конфликт между двумя южно-кавказскими странами возник в 1988 году ввиду территориальных претензий Армении к Азербайджану. Нагорный Карабах и семь прилегающих к нему районов - 20 процентов территории Азербайджана - находятся под оккупацией вооруженных сил Армении.

"During the fighting, six Armenian tanks were destroyed, and over 100 servicemen of Armenian armed forces were destroyed or wounded. 12 Azerbaijani soldiers became **martyrs;** one helicopter was shot and one tank damaged",[34] read the coverage of Trend.az on April 2, 2016. The online outlet referred to Azerbaijani soldiers as martyrs and just soldiers in the Armenian case. At the same time, in what can be considered a development in direction of ethical conflict coverage, there were no negative adjectives when describing Armenian soldiers, which has been the case in the past.

Trend.az also refers to Azerbaijani military forces as "liberators". "As a result of counter strikes, Azerbaijani army on the front line was able to liberate several strategic heights and residential units". The story uses such phrases as "**provocateurs**" and "**enemy**" when describing Armenian armed forces and the territory in need of "**cleaning**": "As a result of the operation, several heights in Talish were **cleaned** from the **enemy**".[35]

In case of Azadliq Radiosu, the outlet often cited deaths on both sides as "losses" or "soldiers" vs. "civilians" without resorting to qualifying terms as "martyrs". "Armenia **lost** four more soldiers", read the article published on April 6, 2016.[36] "Armenia's Ministry of Defence, announced names of four more soldiers who **died** in fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh". The news item goes on to provide additional number of losses. "According to the information released on April 5 by the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh regime Armenia lost a total of 29 soldiers since the escalation on the frontline since April 2. 28 are missing while 101 have been wounded. According to the Armenian's resources, in addition, 14 tanks were destroyed during the fighting."

Ermənistan daha 4 əsgər itirib

Ermənistanın müdafiə nazirliyi Dağlıq Qarabağda gedən son döyüşlərdə həlak olmuş daha 4 əsgərinin adını açıqlayıb.

Nazirlik bu məlumatı aprelin 6-da yayıb.

Bunlar sıravi əsgərlər Aram Abramyan, Sarqis Saakyan,Narek Mkrtçyan və Rafik Akopyandır.

Separatçı Dağlıq Qarabağ rejiminin aprelin 5-nə olan məlumatına görə, aprelin 2-dən bu yana təmas xəttində gedən döyüşlərdə erməni tərəfi 29 əsgər itirib, 28 nəfər itkin düşüb, 101 nəfərsə yaralanıb.

Ermənistan tərəfi həmçinin bu döyüşlərdə 14 tank itirdiyini bildirir.

[34] *Armenians falsify information in order to hide its losses- Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry*, April 2, 2016, http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/2513836.html, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[35] *Azerbaijan liberated occupied residential territories and strategic heights*, April 2, 2016, http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/karabakh/2513753.html, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[36] *Armenian lost four more solders*, RFE/RL, April 6, 2016, http://www.azadliq.org/a/27658051.html, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

On April 4, 2016, the outlet reported a story about the total losses both of Armenia and Azerbaijan. 20 dead soldiers, 72 wounded, 26 soldiers missing and 7 tanks destroyed on Armenia's side while 15 dead on Azerbaijani side read the story titled "Armenia's side confessed: 20 dead, 26 missing, 72 wounded".[37] At the end of the news item there is a reference to the number of casualties on the Azerbaijani side as well.

While the overall language of casualty reporting remained neutral, Azadliq Radiosu also published interviews with Azerbaijani experts who were less restrained and boasted of the country's success during that escalation period. On April 6, 2016, the outlet published an interview with Azad Isazade, military expert who praised the Azerbaijani army for retaking some strategic heights, even though he himself confessed that he did not possess any evidence to support his arguments. "I do not have precise information. But military advantage isn't only calculated by how far troops have managed to progress. It is also based on securing important strategic heights".[38] The rest of the news item relies on the words of the expert but does not provide views of a similar expert from the other side.

Azadliq Radiosu describes the leadership in Karabakh as "separatist Nagorno-Karabakh regime" and uses quotation marks to describe Nagorno-Karabakh's "Ministry of Defence".

Report.az also had stories featuring positions of Turkey, Georgia and other countries vis-à-vis the escalation mainly quoting experts supporting Azerbaijan and its territorial integrity: "Recent military operation demonstrated openly the level of technical and military preparedness of **Azerbaijan's Armed Forces** in contrast to **Armenia's army** and branches fighting in occupied territories of Nagorno-Karabakh", reported the outlet by quoting a Russian expert, Oleq Kuznetsov. The comparative language of military superiority in case of Azerbaijani Armed Forces (written in capital letters) over Armenian army (written in one and shorter and not capitalized word) illustrates the subtle bias used in reporting about the two sides of the conflict and aimed at belittling the Armenia side.[39]

"Germany and the European Union stand against the illegal occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh. The resolutions of the Minsk Group as well as all resolutions of the United Nations, of the OSCE and the Council of Europe have to be implemented", read another article in favor of Azerbaijani positions dating April 3, 2016.[40]

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[37] *Armenian side confessed: 20 dead, 26 missing, 72 wounded*, RFE/RL, April 4, 2016, http://www.azadliq.org/a/ermenistan-azerbajcan-qarabag/27654130.html, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[38] *Azerbaijan holds military superiority*, RFE/RL, April 6, 2016, http://www.azadliq.org/a/27658101.html, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[39] *Russian expert: 'Azerbaijan secured local victory by occupying one of Armenia's fortified regions'*, April 3, 2016, http://report.az/analitika/rusiyali-ekspert-azerbaycan-ermenilerin-istehkam-rayonunu-ele-kecirmekle-lokal-qelebe-qazanib-r/, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[40] *Bundestag official: Armenia's withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh is overdue*, April 3, 2016, http://report.az/en/diaspora/bundestag-official-armenia-s-withdrawal-from-nagorno-karabakh-is-overdue/, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

"Belgium's Foreign Affairs Ministry is calling on the sides to respect the ceasefire";[41] "Lebedev: Escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict caused great grief and concern in all of CIS region";[42] "Georgian Defence Minister: Georgia always supports territorial integrity of Azerbaijan";[43] "NATO Coordinator: Escalation of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict may have an impact on the entire region"; are just some of other similar examples of how international actors' positions were described vis-à-vis the conflict in the reported period. The use and reference of these quotes and statements are in particular indicative of a selective approach to reporting: all international experts quoted are in support of Azerbaijan's position in the conflict, while the opinions of those critical of Azerbaijani are left out. These examples illustrate how the pro-government media platforms serve the nationalistic rhetoric that exists in Azerbaijan.

Report.az resorted to an explicit language when reporting on casualties on the Armenian side. "Armenian side lost 29 servicemen including seven officers in **Azerbaijan's occupied territories of Nagorno-Karabakh** confessed Armenian officials to local media outlets".[44] "Confessions" are often used by Azerbaijani media outlets as if to illustrate an additional victory of Azerbaijan while mentioning of Nagorno-Karabakh as "Azerbaijan's territory" is yet another position oriented reporting.

Another form of "belittling" the other side was revealed in a story published on April 5, 2016, titled "Myth collapses: Armenian army **begs** for food" where the outlet talks about "serious supply problems". "Armenians started to collect food and other means for army via social network posts. Report informs, the ads show the Armenian army is in need of first aid kits, bedding, blankets, water, underwear, food and some other staples".[45] The outlet omits to mention a similar campaign that was initiated in Azerbaijan as well which Guardian newspaper described as a sign of patriotism and people's support on both sides.[46]

[41] *Belgium's Foreign Affairs Ministry is calling on the sides to respect the ceasefire*, April 4, 2016, http://report.az/en/nagorno-karabakh/belgian-foreign-minister-calls-for-restraint-and-respect-of-ceasefire/, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[42] *Lebedev: Escalation of the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict caused great grief and concern in all of CIS region*, April 4, 2016, http://report.az/en/nagorno-karabakh/lebedev-escalation-of-situation-in-nagorno-karabakh-caused-deep-grieving-and-great-concern-in-all/, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[43] *Georgian Defense Minister: 'Georgia always supports territorial integrity of Azerbaijan'*, April 4, 2016, http://report.az/en/nagorno-karabakh/georgian-defense-minister-georgia-always-supports-territorial-integrity-of-azerbaijan/, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[44] *Armenia confess that in total 29 servicemen were killed including 7 officers*, April 6, 2016 http://report.az/dagliq-qarabag/ermenistan-7-zabitinin-oldurulduyunu/, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[45] *Myth collapses: Armenian army begs for food*, April 5, 2016, http://report.az/en/analytics/myth-collapses-armenian-army-collects-food-comment-photo/, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

[46] Marianna Grigoryan and Durna Safarova, *Azerbaijan-Armenian conflict: patriotism prevails on both sides*, April 7, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/07/azerbaijan-armenia-nagorno-karabakh-patriotism-prevails-on-both-sides, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

# Mif dağılır: Ermənistan ordusuna ərzaq toplanır - ŞƏRH - FOTO

5 Aprel, 2016 14:51

Bakı. 5 aprel. REPORT.AZ/ Azərbaycanın işğal altında olan Dağlıq Qarabağ bölgəsində aprelin 2-də gecə Ermənistan tərəfindən atəşkəsin pozulması ilə başlayan və bu günə kimi davam edən gərginlik erməni silahlılarının təchizatı ilə bağlı ciddi problemlərin olduğunu bir daha üzə çıxardı.

Ermənistan KİV-in ordusu barədə yaratdığı mifin yamaq-yumağı açıq aydın görünməkdədir.

4 günlük hərbi əməliyyat nəticəsində məlum olub ki, erməni silahlılarının ilkin tələbat mallarına ehtiyacları var. Ermənilərin sosial şəbəkələrdə yaydığı plakatlarda orduya lazım olan ərzaq və başqa ləvazimatların toplanmasına başlanıb.

"Report"un məlumatına görə, yayılan elanlarda bildirilib ki, orduda ilkin tibbi yardım çantalara, yataq ləvazimatlarına, ədyal, su üçün qab, corab, alt paltarları, içməli su, şirələr, kolbasa, çay, kofe, konservləşdirilmiş ət və s. ehtiyac var.

Qeyd edək ki, yayılan məlumatda pul toplamaq üçün Əmanət bankının kart nömrəsi də plakatda göstərilib.

Əslində, Ermənistan ordusu, habelə onun Dağlıq Qarabağdakı qolunun vəziyyəti daha acınacaqlıdır. Bu ölkədə hakimiyyətə gələnlər Dağlıq Qarabağdan istifadə edərək, illər uzunudur ABŞ, Rusiya, Fransa və Çindən müxtəlif layihələr adı altında maliyyə vəsaiti və başqa yardımlar alırlar. Erməni ekspertləri isə dəfələrlə bu yardımların başqa məqsədlərə sərf edildiyini bəyan ediblər.

"Transparency International"ın Antikorrupsiya Mərkəzinin bu ilin fevralında yaydığı hesabat da bunu təsdiqləyir. Həmin hesabatda bildirilirdi ki, keçirilən yoxlama zamanı Ermənistanın Müdafiə Nazirliyində böyük məbləğdə maliyyə vəsaitlərinin təyinatı üzrə xərclənmədiyi məlum olub: "Müdafiə naziri və nazirliyin ayrı-ayrı əməkdaşları maliyyə fəaliyyəti şəffaf olmayan bir sıra ticarət mərkəzlərinin sahibidir, yaxud aksiyalarda payları var".

Bu səbəbdən ölkənin müdafiə naziri Seyran Ohanyanın istefaya gedəcəyi də ehtimal edilirdi. Məlumatda bildirilirdi ki, nazirin ailə üzvləri, yaxınları yoxlama aparan məmurları "dilə tutur", onlardan qanun pozuntularına göz yummalarını istəyirlər.

Beləliklə, Ermənistanın Dağlıq Qarabağı işğal altında saxlamağa hüquqi, siyasi, tarixi, mənəvi əsası olmadığı kimi, maddi imkanının da olmadığı özünü aşkar şəkildə büruzə verir.


Reporting on the conflict Meydan.tv dissident media outlet used conflict sensitive language when covering the casualties. The story titled, “Armenian side announces [information] on its casualties”, reported the total number of casualties and overall damages. “Armenian side says 20 soldiers died, 72 wounded, and 26 are missing”.[47]

While reporting on the casualties on the Azerbaijani side, Meydan TV reporters reached out to the families directly affected by the escalation. After suspecting that the number of casualties in the official reports were suppressed, Meydan TV’s main coverage during the escalation period focused on documenting and exposing the real numbers of deaths on Azerbaijani side. On April 7, the outlet

[47] *Armenian side disclose [information] of its losses*, April 4, 2016, https://www.meydan.tv/az/site/news/13313/, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

published the full list of names of 93 soldiers, a number that exceeded the numbers reported by the government.[48]

Overall, the overview of Meydan TV's coverage of April war indicates multi-perspective analysis and reporting. Unlike Trend.az, or Report.az, Meydan TV's coverage provides among others opinions of international community condemning the war, and did not only highlight those international reports which were in support of the Azerbaijan's position.

The report showed a vast difference between conflict reporting by the close to government outlets and the independent outlets. The pro-government outlets actively used their resources to build an enemy image of the Armenians, downplay the Azerbaijani losses and augment the Armenian losses, praise the Azerbaijani Army and belittle the Armenian one, and cite only those members of the international community who were speaking in favor of Azerbaijan. At the same time the independent media outlets showed an inclination toward multi-perceptivity, presenting positions of various experts including those critical of Azerbaijan, triangulated the numbers of casualties.

[48] *The list: 93 solders, 6 civilians die [Updated]*, April 7, 2016 https://www.meydan.tv/az/site/opinion/13405/m, last accessed: November 9, 2016.

# TURKEY

The clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia which had started on April 2, towards morning in Nagorno-Karabakh, were covered in Turkey's media on April 3. Therefore, in the study, the media monitoring work was carried out according to the criteria mentioned in the introduction section, covering the period between April 3 and 7, 2016. The circulation numbers of the newspapers were taken into consideration while choosing the newspapers to be monitored. However, in order to examine the approach of different political positions to the subject, we paid attention to select newspapers from different media groups. Thus, according to the daily circulation[49] of the newspapers, Hürriyet (339.655), Sabah (309.467), and Sözcü (286.288) newspapers were selected respectively. Although selected newspapers also broadcast on their websites, only the printed copies were examined in order to facilitate the examination methodologically.

**Hürriyet**: the best-selling newspaper in Turkey during the examined period, belongs to the Doğan Media Group, which is one of the biggest media holding companies in Turkey. Even though it is criticized by the present government because of its opponent publications, it is sometimes also criticized by some groups on account of making pro-government publications. According to the Hrant Dink Foundation's periodic hate speech reports, even if it seems like paying attention not to produce hate speech, the use of latent discriminatory language still appears widely.

**Sabah**: One of the newspapers which belong to Turkuaz Media Group is mostly known for its pro-government broadcasting policy. According to the Hrant Dink Foundation's reports, in recent years, it shows an upward trend in the production of hate speech.

**Sözcü**: It does not belong to any media group and seems economically independent as compared to others. The broadcasting policy is only based on opposition to the AKP. Although it does not rank among the top in hate speech reports, it frequently produces hate speech.

## FINDINGS

Almost all of the articles in Sözcü and Sabah about the subject were published without a signature of a reporter. It is also notable that all articles published about Karabakh in Hürriyet were written by Nerdun Hacıoğlu, the Moscow correspondent of the newspaper.

Hürriyet shares short information notes about the historical background of the conflict between two countries at the end of the most news stories published about the developments concerning the clashes. These notes are significant as they include the death toll on both sides during this war which continued throughout 90s, show the war as a problem and draw attention to its humane aspect: "At the beginning of 1990's**, 30 thousand people died** in the war that broke out between the two countries".[50]

[49] *http://www.medyatava.com/tiraj/2016-04-04*, last accessed: November 9, 2016.
[50] Nerdun Hacıoğlu, *Dağlık Karabağ'da tehlikeli tırmanış*, Hürriyet, April 4, 2016, p. 18.

Within the period examined, the newspaper Sözcü conveyed information in only one article regarding the history of the conflict, while the newspaper Sabah didn't publish anything about the historical background of the conflict within any of its articles. But this narrative of history, which contained a language similar to the discourse used in its other publications, incited hostility between the two countries. This part attached to the end of the article with the subheading "Azeri territory, Armenian governance" reinforces the hostility between the two societies: "Nagorno-Karabakh is situated legally within the frontiers of Azerbaijan. However, **the Armenian separatists** possess the region's de facto governance".[51]

It has been also observed that the newspapers in Turkey selected for this study almost did not recognize the Armenian side at all about the conflict. In the few news articles reporting the statements of the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and the government officials were reported indirectly – without quoting their own words and using quotation marks– and often with expressions such as "he claimed", "he argued" in a way questioning their accuracy. In Hürriyet, the statements of Sargsyan have been reported under the sub-heading of "Sargsyan **threatened** with a big war."[52] On the other hand, in the news article titled "Protest against Sargsyan's meeting with Merkel" Sargsyan's statement is mentioned in a judgmental stance: "Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan **claimed** that he expects the 'international community to recognize the right of the people of Karabakh to live freely."[53]

Sarkisyan, büyük savaşla tehdit etti

Ermeni Devlet Başkanı Sarkisyan yaralıları ziyaret etti.

Ermenistan Cumhurbaşkanı Serj Sarkisyan, Karabağ cephe hattında üçüncü gününü geride bırakan çatışmaların bölgede büyük bir savaşı tetikleyebileceği yönünde tehdit ve uyarılar yaptı. Sarkisyan, Türkiye'yi de eleştirerek, "Azerbaycan yönetimi Türkiye'nin de desteğiyle maceracı bir çizgi izlemeye başladı. İhtilafın turmanması bölgede büyük bir savaşı tetikleyebileceği gibi geri dönüşü olmayan sonuçlar doğurabilir. Bu sonuçlardan sadece Güney Kafkas bölgesi değil, tüm Avrupa'nın olumsuz etkileneceğini düşünüyorum. AGİT Minsk grubunun bölgede gözlem ve denetme başlatmasını talep ediyoruz" dedi. Bu arada Azerbaycan Cumhurbaşkanı İlham Aliyev'in önceki gün tek taraflı ve şartlı ilan ettiği ateşkes Dağlık Karabağ'daki Ermeni güçlerinin 2 Nisan'da kaybettikleri toprakları geri almak için yürüttüğü saldırılardan ötürü işlemiyor. Azerbaycan ordusu da saldırılara cevap veriyor. Azerbaycan Savunma Bakanlığı dün üç askerin şehit olduğunu açıkladı. Bakanlık, 170 Ermeni askerinin öldürüldüğünü, 3 tankın da imha edildiğini iddia etti. Azerbaycan Savunma Bakanlığı Sözcüsü Vagif Dergahlı dün öğle itibariyle Ermenilerin 24 saatte 121 kez ateşkesi ihlal ettiğini, Azeri ordusunun ise topçu ateşiyle Ermenilerin Hankendi yakınlarındaki karargâhını hedef aldığını söyledi. Dergahlı'ya göre ölenler arasında Ermeni general de bulunuyor.

SARKİSYAN'IN MERKEL ZİYARETİNE PROTESTO

Merkel

Sarkisyan

ERMENİSTAN'ın işgal altında tutmaya devam ettiği Azerbaycan'ın Karabağ bölgesinde ateşkes nispeten sağlanırken dün Almanya'da Başbakan Angela Merkel ile görüşen Ermenistan Cumhurbaşkanı Serj Sarkisyan "Karabağ halkının, özgürce yaşama haklarının uluslararası toplum tarafından tanınmasını beklediği" çıkışında bulundu. Kriz döneminde Sarkisyan'ın Berlin'e yaptığı ziyaret bir grup Azeri ve Türk tarafından protesto edildi. Azerbaycan, Türkiye ve Almanya bayrağı sallayan kalabalık, ziyaret aleyhine slogan attı. Berlin'de Almanya Başbakanı Angela Merkel ile düzenlenen ortak basın toplantısında konuşan Sarkisyan, Karabağ'ın kendi kaderini tayin hakkını uluslararası toplumun tanımasını istedi. Merkel ise "Çatışmalar devam ettiği sürece siyasi sürece geçilemez" diye konuştu. 2 Nisan'da başlayan, en az 75 kişinin öldüğü çatışmaların durması için taraflar, Rusya'nın başkenti Moskova'da önceki gün ateşkes imzalamışlardı. Karabağ cephesinde genel olarak silahların sustuğu belirtiliyor.

ATEŞKES İHLALİ İDDİASI

Öte yandan Azerbaycan Savunma Bakanlığı, Ermenistan'ı dün ateşkesi ihlal etmekle suçladı. Bakanlıktan yapılan açıklamada, Ermenistan ordusunun Nahçıvan Özerk Cumhuriyeti'ne ateş açtığını iddia etti. Bakanlık adına yapılan açıklamada, Azerbaycan ordusunun ateş açan Ermeni birliklerine misillemede bulunduğu kaydedildi.

Sözcü and Sabah mostly showed the statements of Azerbaijan Minister of Defence and Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev as the primary source of the news articles. A language approving of these statements was used in the way these sources were covered.

In Sözcü's news article dated April 4, 2016, the statement of Aliyev is written with the headline "Aliyev: **Armenian occupants** set our villages on fire."[54] Aliyev's statements declaring that Armenia doesn't pursue peace and is not sincere about the process of reconciliation are covered as they are without covering the opinions of the opposite side. In a news article published by Sabah on April 4, which includes the statements of Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan Minister of Defence and Azerbaijani journalist

[51] *Dağlık Karabağ'da silahlar susturuldu*, Sözcü, April 6, 2016, p. 14.
[52] Nerdun Hacıoğlu, *KARABAĞ NİYE ŞİMDİ PATLADI*, Hürriyet, April 5, 2016, p. 15.
[53] *SARKİSYAN'IN MERKEL ZİYARETİNE PROTESTO*, Hürriyet, April 7, 2016, p. 28.
[54] DHA, *Aliyev: Ermeni işgalciler köylerimizi ateşe tuttu*, Sözcü, April 6, 2016, p. 14.

Garine Ataşova, the opinions of the other side are again not covered. Aliyev's statement "We won a great victory" is being used as a sub-heading without any quotation marks used. During the period examined in the study, no news article with such a biased content in favor of Armenia is observed.

Regarding the subject, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches have been covered most heavily after Azerbaijan. While statements of Erdoğan had widespread coverage in Hürriyet and Sabah; the news items on the subject examined in Sözcü never used Erdoğan's speeches as a primary source. Lastly, a few news articles contained commentaries of Russia, France, Iran commissioners and representatives of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Considering the narrow range of actors that have been referred by these three newspapers, it can be observed that even Sözcü as an anti-government newspaper takes a similar position with the other two newspapers. Therefore, it is also convenient to say that taking a position alongside Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict is a common reflexion for most newspapers from different political views in Turkey.

When we look at how two parties, deceased soldiers and civilians are named in the news items concerning the subject, it is possible to find clues about the approaches of the newspapers to the conflict. Similar to the Azerbaijani media, it is observed that Turkey's media describes Azerbaijani soldiers who loses their lives as "martyr" and Armenian soldiers as "dead." Usage of the word martyr can be justified by pointing at the Muslim identity of Azerbaijani soldiers. On the other hand, dignifying some losses with the word "martyr", while trivializing some losses solely as dead within a single sentence can be interpreted as a hierarchical approach reflected in the language. Sanctifying deaths, via the expression of "martyr" can be interpreted as a reproduction of militarist discourse rather than mitigating the outcomes of violence and war.

For instance, Sözcü newspaper announced the death toll during the confrontation on April 6, 2016 with following words: "While 26 Azerbaijani soldiers were **martyred**, 70 soldiers of Armenian armed forces **died**."[55]

Çatışma topyekun savaşa dönmeden ateşkes ilan edildi

Dağlık Karabağ'da silahlar susturuldu

Azerbaycan–Ermenistan cephe hattında 4 gündür devam eden çatışmalar durduruldu. Çatışmalarda 16 Azeri askeri şehit olurken, Ermeni silahlı güçlerine bağlı 70 asker öldü

İşgal altındaki Karabağ'ın Ermenistan güdümündeki hükümeti, Dağlık Karabağ'da ateşkes kararı alındığını açıkladı. Azerbaycan Dışişleri Bakanlığı'ndan "Dağlık Karabağ'daki çatışmalarla ilgili ateşkese varıldığı konusunda bilginiz yok" açıklaması geldi. Kısa süre sonra ise Azerbaycan Savunma Bakanlığı da Ermenistan-Azerbaycan cephe hattında tarafların vardığı anlaşmayla ile çatışmaların durdurulduğunu doğruladı.

CEPHEDEN GERİYE KALAN

Dağlık Karabağ sınırında meydana gelen çatışmalarda 16 Azeri askeri şehit oldu. Ermeni silahlı güçlerine bağlı 70 kişi de öldürüldü. Çatışmaların durmasından sonra Ermeni ayrılıkçılar, ölenlerin silahlarını böyle topladı.

ERMENİLER KÖYLERİ BOMBALADI

Azerbaycan Savunma Bakanlığı'ndan daha önce yapılan açıklamada, cephe hattındaki gerginliğin devam ettiği, Ermeni güçlerin kaybettikleri mevzileri geri alma girişimlerinin başarısız olduğu, Azerbaycan sivil yerleşim birimlerinin ateşe tutulduğu bildirildi. Azerbaycan ordusunun açtığı ateşle Ağdere bölgesinde Magadiz mıntıkasında Ermeni askeri karargahının imha edildiği belirtildi. Dağlık Karabağ sınırındaki çatışmalarda 16 Azeri askerinin şehit olduğu, Ermeni silahlı güçlerine bağlı 70 askerin öldürüldüğü, 12 zırhlı aracın da imha edildiği kaydedildi. Azeri yetkililer, çatışmaların başlamasından bu yana dört Azeri sivilin hayatını kaybettiğini bildirdi. Geçen cumartesi günü Azerbaycan tarafından ilan edilen ateşkes, Ermeni tarafının topçu ateşinin sürmesi üzerine başarısız olmuştu.

Aliyev: Ermeni işgalciler köylerimizi ateşe tuttu

AZERBAYCAN Cumhurbaşkanı İlham Aliyev, ordunun temas hattında kendi üstünlüğünü güçlendirdiğini söyledi. Savunma Bakanlığı Merkezi Askeri Hastanesi'nde tedavi edilen yaralı askerleri ziyaret eden Aliyev, Ermenistan'ın barış istemediğini söyledi. Aliyev açıklamasına şöyle devam etti: "Ermeni işgalcilerinin bu provokasyonlara el atması ilk değil. Onlar işgal altındaki toprakları daima kendi fetvalerinde tutmak istiyorlar, barış istemiyorlar, görüşmeler sürecinde samimiyetsizdirler. Tüm uluslararası, ahlaki normları ihlal edip, sivil halka ateş açıyorlar. Bu olaylardan birkaç gün önce Ermenistan-Azerbaycan sınırında, bu olaylar sırasında ise bizim köylerimizi ateşe tutuyorlar. Sivil halktan ölenler var. Onların hareketleri budur. Azerbaycan ordusu askerleri hiçbir zaman sivil halka karşı savaşmazlar." (DHA)

İlham Aliyev

AZERİ TOPRAĞI ERMENİ YÖNETİMİ

Ermenistan ile Azerbaycan arasında 1980'lerin sonlarında başlayan çatışmalar, 1991'de Sovyetler Birliği'nin yıkılmasının ardından savaşa dönüştü. Savaş 1994'te sona erdiyse de bölgenin statüsü konusunda anlaşmaya varılamadı. Dağlık Karabağ hukuken Azerbaycan sınırları içinde yer alıyor. Fiili olarak ise bölgenin yönetimi Ermeni ayrılıkçılarda bulunuyor. Uluslararası toplum Karabağ'ın bağımsızlığını tanımıyor.

[55] *Dağlık Karabağ'da silahlar susturuldu*, Sözcü, April 6, 2016, p. 14.

Once again, the differentiation between sacred and worthless losses is clearly observed in Sözcü newspaper's news article entitled "Azerbaijani artillery blew Armenian command centre up –170 deaths."[56] In the news article which nearly announces a victory by saying "blew up" in the heading, the expression of "170 deaths" was written with a distinct color next to the heading, hence reducing those who lost their lives into a score in this "victory".

Ateşkes sonuç vermedi
gerginlik büyüyor

Azeri topçusu, Ermeni
komuta merkezini
havaya uçurdu

170
ölü

ULUSLARARASI hukuka göre Azerbaycan'a ait olmasına rağmen 1994'ten beri Ermenistan işgali altında olan Dağlık Karabağ bölgesinde hafta sonundan beri artan gerilim sürüyor. Cumartesi günü iki taraftan 30 askerin ölümüne neden olan çatışmaların ardından Azerbaycan önceki gece tek taraflı ateşkes ilan etmişti. Buna rağmen çatışmalar son bulmadı. Ermenistan tarafından gelen ateşin kesilmemesi üzerine Azeri ordusu, güçlü bir topçu ateşiyle karşılık verdi. Azerbaycan Savunma Bakanlığı, Ermenistan'ın işgal topraklarında kurduğu komuta-kontrol merkezinin imha edildiğini açıkladı. Olay sırasında merkezde bulunan çok sayıda askeri personel, albay ve generalin de öldüğü açıklandı. Ayrıca cephe hattında da 12 zırhlı aracın etkisiz hale getirildiği bildirildi. Her iki olayda generaller de dahil olmak üzere toplam 170 Ermeni askerinin öldüğü açıklandı. Çatışmalarda 3 Azeri askerinin de şehit düştüğü belirtildi.

In addition to this, narrating the loss of lives along with destroyed military vehicles such as tanks, cannons and armoured vehicles within the same sentence, is one of the clearest examples to the trivialization of deaths and dehumanization. In the news article of Sabah newspaper, which is given with the heading of "Azerbaijan: We hit their command centre," again represents killed Armenian soldiers in a mood of victory and as a loss that is comparable to armored vehicles: "It is stated that; around 170 Armenian soldiers are **killed** and 12 armoured vehicles are **destroyed**."[57]

A resembling example appeared also in Sözcü: "Ministry [The Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan] announced that 6 tanks, 15 artillery units and fortified engineering structures belonging to Armenia were **destroyed;** over a hundred Armenian soldiers were **killed**."[58]

It was remarkable that, death toll of the conflict changed according to the parties and these numbers were instrumentalized for the sake of political rivalry. In a news article published by Hürriyet, it is emphasized that death toll is significant although the exact number cannot be determined: "Estimates of death toll during the four day armed clashes have been changing according to the parties. Both sides claim that the other suffers serious casualties. However, it is understood that there **are tens of deaths**."[59]

[56] *Azeri topçusu, Ermeni komuta merkezini havaya uçurdu*, Sözcü, April 5, 2016, p. 14.
[57] *Azerbaycan: Komuta merkezlerini vurduk*, Sabah, April 5, 2016, p. 16.
[58] *Azerbaycan: Sınırda 12 askerimiz şehit*, Sözcü, April 3, 2016, p. 12.
[59] Nerdun Hacıoğlu, *Karabağ'da ATEŞKES ÜMİDİ*, Hürriyet, April 6, 2016, p. 30.

It is observed that the media is supporting the war discourse by covering the casualties as scores in a sporting event, hence reproducing the rivalry between the politicians on the number of casualties on both sides: "It is **reported** that 12 Azerbaijani soldiers became martyrs, one Mi-24 helicopter was shot down by Armenian forces and one tank went out of service due to land mine explosion. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan **claimed** that 18 Armenian soldiers had been killed and 35 wounded."[60]

YUKARI KARABAĞ'DA TEHLİKELİ TIRMANIŞ:

22 yılın en şiddetli çatışması

Ermenistan'ın sivil yerleşimlere ateş açmasına Azerbaycan karşılık verince bölgede 1994'ten bu yana en şiddetli çatışmalar yaşandı. Azerbaycan'a ait helikopter düşürülünce 12 asker şehit oldu. Azerbaycan, öldürülen veya yaralanan Ermenistan askeri sayısının 100'den fazla olduğunu duyurdu

'Daha ağır darbeler vurulacak'

Azerbaycan - Ermenistan cephe hattında bir süredir devam eden çatışmalar dün tehlikeli bir boyuta ulaştı. Çatışmalar önceki gece Ermeni güçlerinin, Azerbaycan sivil yerleşim birimlerine ateş açmasıyla şiddetlendi. Gün boyu devam eden çatışmalar dünyanın da gündemine oturdu.

Azerbaycan Savunma Bakanlığı'ndan yapılan açıklamada, Ermenistan ordusunun Azerbaycan mevzilerine 82 ve 120 milimetrelik havan topları, top ve büyük çaplı silahlarla ateş açtığı bildirildi. Ermenistan ordusunun askeri mevzilerin yanı sıra cephe hattına yakın bölgelerdeki yerleşim birimlerini de ateşe tuttuğu duyurulduu. Ermenistan'ın top atışları sonucunda bir sivil hayatını kaybetti.

Cephe hattında Ağdere, Terter, Ağdam, Hocavend ve Fuzuli bölgelerinde şiddetli çatışmaların yaşandığı öğrenildi.

**6 TANK İMHA EDİLDİ**

Azerbaycan Savunma Bakanlığı, çatışmalarda Ermeni ordusuna ait 6 tank ve 15 topun imha edildiğini, öldürülen veya yaralanan Ermeni asker sayısının 100'den fazla olduğunu duyurdu. Açıklamada, Azerbaycan ordusunun da 12 şehit verdiği, bir Mi-24 helikopterinin Ermeni güçlerince düşürüldüğü, bir tankın ise patlayan mayın nedeniyle kullanılamaz hale geldiği bildirildi. Ermenistan Cumhurbaşkanı Serj Sarkisyan ise çatışmalarda 18 Ermenistan askerinin öldüğünü, 35'inin yaralandığını iddia etti.

1991-1993 yıllarında Ermenilerin Yukarı Karabağ ve çevresindeki illeri işgaliyle başlayan sorun hala çözülemedi. 1994'te imzalanan ateşkes anlaşması da barışı sağlayamamıştı. Barış sürecinin başlaması için önce Ermenistan ordusunun işgal altında tuttuğu tüm bölgelerden çekilmesini şart koşan Azerbaycan, Yukarı Karabağ'a yüksek statülü özerklik vaadediyor. Rusya Devlet Başkanı Vladimir Putin, Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan'a çatışmaların sonlandırılması ve itidal çağrısında bulundu.

Dışişleri Bakanlığı Ermenistan'ın Azerbaycan'a yönelik saldırılarını kınayarak, ateşkese uymayı çağırdı.

**AZERBAYCAN** Savunma Bakanlığı sivillerin can güvenliğinin temin edilmesi için ordunun Ağdere, Terter, Ağdam, Hocavend ve Fuzuli bölgelerinde operasyonlara başladığını açıkladı. Azerbaycan ordusunun saldırısında kısa sürede Ermeni mevzileri yarılarak stratejik öneme sahip bazı tepeler ve yerleşim birimleri geri alındı. Goranboy ve Naftalan kentleri için tehlike oluşturan Talış köyü etrafındaki tepe ve Seysulan yerleşim birimi Ermeni güçlerinden temizlendi. Fuzuli bölgesinde, Horadiz kentinin güvenliği için önemli olan Lale Tepesi de Azerbaycan ordusunun kontrolüne geçti. Bakanlığın açıklamasında, "Ateşkesin tekrar ihlali durumunda Ermenistan'a daha ağır darbelerin vurulacağı" ifade edildi.

Too little information was released about the condition of civilians in the conflict zone. Civilians, only the ones on Azerbaijan side, became visible solely as numbers of casualties. No quantitative or qualitative information can be reached about the Armenian civilians during the surveyed period. Additionally, the negative effects of the conflict on civilian lives on both sides, life stories of the dead or the ones in the conflict zone have found no place in surveyed newspapers. This situation can be linked to the fact that, as mentioned above, these newspapers have no reporters in the conflict zone. However, to reveal how conditions of war and conflict effect civilian lives is of paramount importance in establishing peace and maintaining the language of peace. Therefore, we deem it necessary to underline this failure of the media to cover the civilian perspective.

It is also seen that all newspapers have adopted a similar language in naming the dispute between two countries and use the word "conflict" almost all the time. It is convenient to say that the newspapers in question have embraced a quite neutral approach regarding the naming of the event by preferring this word which is congruent with the choice of the international media and bureaucratic language.

[60] *22 yılın en şiddetli çatışması*, Sabah, April 3, 2016, p. 20.

Additionally, within the scope of this study, "conflict" has stood out as the most frequently used word in the relevant news items.

Concerning the way actors have been described by the newspapers, it can be observed that media, in a way mimicking the Turkey's state policy, has taken sides with Azerbaijan. Accordingly, in news items about the conflict, identity name rather than the country name has been preferred for Armenia and expressions such as "Armenian side", "Armenian forces", even "Armenians" have been repeated frequently. This usage has paved the way for the production of hate speech by holding the whole Armenian society responsible for the actions of the Armenian State in some news items: "Farewell ceremony was held for Azerbaijani soldiers martyred by **Armenians**",[61] "**Armenians** bombed villages".[62] In short, while framing the language of the news stories "**we**" always refers to Azerbaijan whereas "**they**" refers to Armenia/Armenians.

In news items published by Hürriyet and Sabah on April 4, which are reporting the statements of Erdoğan, another striking detail is the alleged connection with ASALA.[63] In the speech he delivered in an event in the United States of America, Erdoğan was mentioning a dialogue he had with above-mentioned Azerbaijani journalist Garine Ataşova. Erdoğan was reciting with admiration how Ataşova's eyes had been filled with tears for Azerbaijani soldiers died in the conflict. In his speech at Atatürk Airport on his return from a USA trip, Erdoğan uttered "We see there how representatives of PKK terror organization, YPG, ASALA and Parallel State Structure stand side by side." These statements, he made in two different occasions, were compiled and published side by side and even under the same title by Hürriyet and Sabah newspapers.[64] Reporting about Karabakh conflict with a reference to ASALA contributes to the reproduction of prejudice on the readers against Armenians and reinforces the image of "enemy".

During the surveyed period and newspapers, it is observed that only one columnist touched upon the conflict in Karabakh. Necati Doğru shortly traced the history of the conflict dating back to 1922 in his opinion column published by Sözcü on April 6.[65] Doğru showed his relatives and friends in Caucasus as the source of the information for his article where he mentions "Armenian occupation in Azerbaijani territories" and "sneaky strategies of Russians". The author repeated the discourse –employed in most news stories as mentioned above– which describes two sides of the conflict as Azerbaijani State and Armenians and he holds all Armenians responsible for the policies he criticizes. At the end of the column, although Doğru expressed his wish for peace between Turkey's neighbors, considering the overall tone of the column, this wish seems to be limited to a unilateral resolution offer based on the victory of Azerbaijan in Karabakh.

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[61] *Ermenilerin şehit ettiği Azeri askerler uğurlandı*, Sözcü, April 4, 2016, p. 13.

[62] *Dağlık Karabağ'da silahlar susturuldu*, Sözcü, April 6, 2016, p. 14.

[63] ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) was an armed organization which carried out a number of attacks during the 1970s and 1980s with the aim of bringing international attention to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

[64] Mesut Altun, *"PKK, Paralel Yapı ve ASALA yan yanaydı"*, Sabah, April 4, 2016, p. 20,
Sefa Özkaya, *PKK, YPG, ASALA, Paralel yan yana*, Hürriyet, April 4, 2016, p. 26.

[65] Necati Doğru, *Bana az izin!*, Sözcü, April 6, 2016, p. 2.

Finally, among newspapers studied within the scope of this report, the most striking and maybe even the sole example showing the devastating results of war and militarism was the news story published by Hürriyet on April 6 titled "1.700.000.000.000 dollars invested in arms".[66] The news story which covers Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)'s report on global military expenditure, was right next to the news story about Karabakh conflict. As part of the news story which reports the increase in military spending in the last four years, the newspaper highlights the data about two conflicting countries with a sub-title "The military expenditure of Azerbaijan and Armenia increased". With reference to the SIPRI report, the story also emphasizes that with only 10% of the money world countries invest in armament, United Nations can realize the goal of ending poverty and hunger by 2030.

**1.700.000.000.000 dolar silaha yatırıldı**

İSVEÇ merkezli Stockholm Uluslararası Barış Araştırmaları Enstitüsü (SIPRI), küresel silah harcamalarının son dört yılda ilk kez yükselerek yaklaşık 1.7 trilyon doları bulduğunu bildirdi. 2015 yılındaki silah harcamalarının incelendiği raporda silahlanmaya en çok harcama yapan ülke 596 milyar dolarla ABD oldu. Ancak ABD'nin harcaması bir önceki yıla göre yüzde 2.4'lük bir düşüş gösterdi.

Silah harcamalarındaki yükselişin asıl kaynağı ise Çin ve Ortadoğu ülkeleri oldu. Çin, yüzde 7.4'lük bir yükselişle 215 milyar dolar harcama yaptı. Suudi Arabistan ise 87.2 milyar dolarlık silahlanmasıyla listede Rusya'yı geçerek üçüncü sırada yer aldı. Raporda silaha en çok para harcayan ilk 15 ülke değerlendirildi. NATO'nun Türkiye'nin de içinde yer aldığı Avrupa ülkeleri ise silahlanmaya bir yılda 250 milyar dolar harcadı. Raporda, petrol fiyatlarında devam eden düşüşün petrol ihraç eden ülkelerde askeri harcamaların düşmesiyle sonuçlandığına işaret edildi. Ancak Cezayir, Azerbaycan, Rusya, Suudi Arabistan ve Vietnam gibi bazı petrol ihracatçısı ülkelerin askeri harcamaları ise artmaya devam etti.

**AZERBAYCAN VE ERMENİSTAN'IN SİLAH HARCAMASI ARTTI**

SIPRI'nin raporuna göre, geçen yıl Azerbaycan 3 milyar dolar, Ermenistan ise 447 milyon dolar askeri harcama yaptı. Petrol fiyatlarındaki düşüşe rağmen, Azerbaycan'ın 2014 yılına oranla askeri harcamalarını, 2015'te Ermenistan ile yaşanan gerginlikten dolayı yüzde 8 oranında artırdığı vurgulandı. 2015 yılında 447 milyon dolar askeri harcama yapan Ermenistan'ın ise 2014'e göre 7.7 oranında askeri harcamalarını artırdığı belirtildi.

**Yoksulluğun kökü kazınabilir**

SIPRI raporunda dünya ülkelerinin silaha yaptığı yatırım ve harcamanın sadece yüzde 10'uyla Birleşmiş Milletler'in 2030 yılına kadar yoksulluğu ve açlığı bitirme hedefinin gerçekleştirilebileceğini belirtti.

[66] *1.700.000.000.000 dolar silaha yatırıldı*, Hürriyet, April 6 2016, p. 30.

# CONCLUSION

We tried to examine how the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia that had started towards morning on April 2, 2016 along Karabakh border was covered in the media in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey in this report, which was issued with the collaboration of Hrant Dink Foundation and Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation.

In this study, we mainly aimed to examine the media of three countries comparatively to find out how discriminatory discourse was produced in the news items covering the conflict and to what extent media contributed to the language of peace.

Many items reproducing war discourse were found in various media outlets that were selected in consideration of different criteria of representation in the three countries. Similarity and even sameness of the expressions used for the 'other' in different countries' media revealed the 'universality' of discrimination and marginalization once again.

Although universal ethical codes aim to minimize discriminatory discourse, news items that only provide information and 5Ws and 1H of the event are not sufficient. It goes without saying that the media, as one of the most significant sources to obtain information, has great a power to influence society's perception and behaviors with all of its traditional and digital means. It should not be ignored that media also has influence and responsibility to pave the way for constituting peace insofar as it has the power to escalate conflicts and intensify the hatred between societies by regenerating discrimination and war discourse.

With this report, we hope to support peace journalism in the media of all three countries and to remind the fact that media outlets and employees have a great responsibility and a great power on the road to peace.

We urge journalists to contribute to the peace that we hope to be built at the end of this process of conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which has been going on for many years and also constituting a significant barrier to Turkey's relations with Armenia.