



THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE FORMATION OF THE INTERNAL FORCES – THE POLICE SYSTEM OF THE ARTSAKH REPUBLIC (NKR)

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During a culminating period of the ancient Armenian statehood's development¹, the Kingdom of Van (Urartu)(9th-7th centuries BC), the name of Artsakh had been mentioned in Araratian cuneiform inscriptions in the form of *Urtehi*². At the end of the 1st millennium BC Strabo (64/63 BC - c. AD 24) mentioned the tenth of the fifteen provinces of Great Armenia³, Artsakh as Orchistene⁴, which furnished the most of cavalry⁵ to the Armenian court.



In the period of the Armenian Empire, together with the capital city Tigranakert (in Aghdznik), Tigran II the Great (95-55 BC) built several more fortress-cities bearing his name, two of which were in Artsakh and Utik - *Tigranakert* and *the other Tigranakert* (*միև Տիգրանակերտ*)⁶.



Tigran the Great

After the fall of the Armenian Arshakuni Kingdom (428 AD) of Great Armenia, the Kingdom of Haikazun-Sisakian Vachagan the Pious was established in the Eastern regions of Armenia (Artsakh, Utik, etc.) in 484- the first half of the 6th c.⁷.

Later, as a result of the fall of the Armenian kingdom of Bagratuni (1045) Artsakh remained as a semi-independent Principality (Khachen) preserving the elements of the Armenian statehood and its military power. As a bright example of it may serve the Meliqdoms of Khamsa (Five

¹ Է. Լ. Դանիելյան, Հայոց պատմական և քաղաքակրթական արժեքամակարդի պաշտպանության անհրաժեշտությունը. – “Լրաբեր” հաս. գիտ., N 3, 2010, էջ 54: E. L. Danielyan, Historical Truth Against Turkish-Azerbaijani Falsifications in Information Warfare. – 21st CENTURY, N 1, 2014, p. 123.

² Н.Арутюнян, Корпус урартских клинообразных надписей, Ереван, 2001, с. 529.

³ Մ. Ս. Երեմյան, Հայաստանը ըստ «Աշխարհացոյց»-ի, Երևան, էջ 110:

⁴ The Geography of Strabo. Literally translated, with notes, in three volumes. London, 1903.

⁵ Strabo, XI, 14, 4:

⁶ Պատմություն Սեբեոսի: Աշխատասիրությամբ Գ.Վ. Արզարյանի, Երևան, 1979, էջ 125: Movses Khorenatsi writes that the nobles of Artsakh were called *vostan* (սոսան) and descended from the royal offsprings⁶. In ancient and medieval Armenia just they comprised the elite of the Armenian cavalry (*vostanik nuypashik*) originating from the royal family (Մովսես Խորենացի, Պատմություն Հայոց, Երևան, 1991, էջ 83).

⁷ Մովսես Կաղանկատուացի, Պատմություն Աղուանից աշխարհի: Քննական բնագիրը և ներածությունը Վարազ Առաքելյանի, Երևան, 1983, էջ 50, 89; Բ.Ուլուբաբյան. Հայոց Արևելից կողմանց եկեղեցին և մշակույթը, Երևան, 1998, էջ 41, 64-65; Է.Դանիելյան, Գանձասարի վանքը, Երևան, 2009, էջ 16:

Principalities) in the 18th century and their military forces⁸. In the 19th century Shushi, nearby Vararakn (present Stepanakert) had become one of the important centers of Armenian culture. In the 19th century a considerable number of representative of the Artsakh Armenians participated in the Russian-Persian and Russian-Turkish wars in Eastern and Western Armenia. The Armenians of Artsakh confronted actively to Caucasian Tatars during the 1905-1906.

During the years of World War I a great number of people from Artsakh were recruited to the Russian army and Armenian volunteer squads, and were distinguished by their courage and heroism.

After the 1917 February revolution and October counterrevolution the situation in Transcaucasia changed drastically. Taking advantage of the short-sighted policy of the Bolshevik authorities the Ottoman army launched a full-scale attack in February 1918. The Turkish agents instigated the Tatars to attack the Armenian settlements in Artsakh. The Armenians of Artsakh organized self-defense units which made an appropriate counterattack to the enemy.

In 1918 the British command prohibited Andranik Ozanyan's regiment to advance to Artsakh. The British desired the Baku's oil, thus they by all means supported the Caucasian Tatars who were later called „Azerbaijanis“ (in the second half of the 1930s). In 1920 Dro's (Drastamat Kanayan) troop entered the Artsakh city of Shushi. On April 25, 1920 the 9th Armenian Congress of the National Assembly of Kharabagh declared the unification of Karabagh (Artsakh) to the Republic of Armenia.

On November 30, 1920, the Azerbaijan Revcom (Revolutionary Committee of Soviet Azerbaijan) made a "Declaration on recognition of Nakhichevan⁹, Zangezour and Nagorno Karabakh as inseparable parts of Soviet Armenia". On December 1, 1920 it was proclaimed in the following succession of the Armenian territories: "Declaration on recognition of Nagorno Karabakh, Zangezour and Nakhichevan as inseparable parts of Soviet Armenia". Based on free expression of Artsakh's Armenians will on 10 June of 1921 Nagorno-Karabakh was declared an integral part of Soviet Armenia. On July 5, 1921 by the illegal, unfair and forced decision of the Caucasian Bureau (Kavbureau) of CC RCP (B), Nagorno-Kharabakh (Mountainous Artsakh) was given to Soviet Azerbaijan and by the Decree of July 7, 1923 Autonomous Oblast Nagorno-Karabakh (AONK, but a considerable number of districts of NK, constituting proper Armenian territories populated by Armenians, were left out) was formed which in 1936 was renamed NKAO¹⁰.

Armenians from Artsakh had their significant contribution to the Victory in the Great Patriotic War. Artsakh gave 3 Marshals - Hovhannes Baghramyan, Armenak Khanferyanc (S.A. Khudyakov), Hamazasp Babajanyan, and one Admiral - Hovhannes Isakov (Ter-

⁸ Դաֆֆի, Երկերի ժողովածու, հ. 10, Երևան, 1964:

⁹ Nakhijevan.

¹⁰ Манасян А., Карабахский конфликт. Ключевые понятия и хроника, Ереван, 2005, с. 13, 39-41. Арсен Мелик-Шахназаров, Нагорный Карабах: факты против лжи. <http://sumgait.info/caucasus-conflicts/nagorno-karabakh-facts/nagorno-karabakh-facts-2.htm#top>

Stepanyan) (born in Kars district in a family from Artsakh), 24 Generals, 28 heroes of USSR and many officers¹¹.

In the social life of the whole Soviet Union, including also NKAO (up to 1936 called AONK) the local militia had its important place and role, but its activity was essentially limited under the Azerbaijani SSR domination. The institution of Internal Affairs (IA) in AONK was founded on August 4, 1923 and was called AONK's People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs which was renamed Department of IA in 1926¹².

The Commissariat was comprised of the following departments:

1. administrative
2. communal-economic
3. militia

Before the liberation movement of Artsakh the native Armenian population of NKAO was subjected to different limitations and repressions by the Azerbaijani Soviet authorities as a result of which 85 Armenian villages were left without the native Armenian population and the share of Armenians decreased in NKAO. In 1939-1979, i.e. between two censuses the number of Azerbaijanis increased by 2.6 times, and that of Armenians decreased by 7.3 per cent¹³.

The Soviet authorities of Azerbaijan conducted such social-and-economic policy that NKAO would be dependent not only on Baku but also the Azerbaijani settlements adjacent to it. Suffice it to say that the roads leading from Stepanakert to four district centers of NKAO were made to pass not through its territory, thus making every move of the Armenians controllable. And so, the road from Stepanakert to Martuni and Martakert passed through Aghdam, and that from Stepanakert to Hadrut – through Aghdam-Martuni-Fizuli. To get from Hadrut to some villages of the same district it was necessary to pass through the settlements Jabrail and Fizuli. It was a great psychological pressure on the Armenian population of NKAO. It was no coincidence that the first spontaneous demonstration in NKAO was organized exactly in Hadrut. February 12, 1988 signaled the start of the Nagorno Karabakh national liberation movement. Participants of the rally, organized by the future chair of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR) Supreme Council Arthur Mkrtychyan, members of underground committee Krunk among others, demanded Artsakh's reunification with Mother Armenia. The Baku and Moscow leaders were informed of this. Instructions were given to use tear gas to break up the demonstration. Head of the militia of Askeran, Volodya Stepanyan who was authorized to carry negotiations with the demonstrators suggested them that they should stand children in the front rows thus excluding the use of tear gas and breaking up the demonstration by force¹⁴.

¹¹ http://www.armweeklynews.am/awn/e12/en_1099.htm

¹² On July 23, 1923 was founded the Emergency Commission and department of IA (headed by S. Chalyan) within the Temporary Revcom (See Հ.Արրահամյան, Մարտնչող Արցախը, 1917-2000, Երևան, 2005, գիրք Բ, էջ 18).

¹³ <http://www.utro.ru/articles/2006/07/04/562296.shtml>

¹⁴ This information is according to an active participant of the events, head of department of the militia in 1987-1989 of Hadrut district of NKAO, Volodya R. Stepanyan.

During the next days Artsakh Armenians organized similar demonstrations in Stepanakert and other districts of NKAO as a result of which on February 20, 1988 the 20th session of the Karabakh Council of People's Deputies decided to secede the district from Azerbaijan and reunify it with Mother Armenia¹⁵.

The just decision (February 20) of the Artsakh Armenians was confronted by the Azerbaijanis with demonstrations calling to kill Armenians and destroy NKAO. The Azerbaijani IA Deputy Minister announced that one hundred thousand Azerbaijanis were ready to organize the massacre of Armenians in Karabagh. This irresponsible announcement had encouraged the population of the city Aghdam notorious for their illegitimacy.

On February 22, 1988 thousands of people of Aghdam accompanied by Azerbaijani militiamen moved to the NKAO border city Askeran. Learning about this numerous people from Stepanakert and the district of Askeran gathered in the suburb of the city in order to prevent the Azerbaijanis' entrance into the Armenian settlements. At the front lines of the Azerbaijani mob stood the Azerbaijani militiamen who, having led the crowd for over 10 km, now pretended to be trying to prevent their unpredictable actions. A battle of stones started, then the first shots were heard. The Armenians stood firm since they knew that they must not surrender to the Turk, because the Turk had come to annihilate. The enemy was not only confronted with resistance but also felt the terrifying force of unified Armenians.

On February 22, 1988 failing in Askeran and not achieving their aim, several days later the Azerbaijani authorities organized and realized the Sumgait pogrom. It was part of the scrupulously developed genocidal policy the aimed to terrorize the Armenian population of NKAO and hold them back from the taken decision, and to warn the Soviet authorities about the possibility of unpredicted consequences as a result of the conflict, thus to turn the central authorities to their side and to silence the Armenians of Artsakh.

The Azerbaijani authorities supported by the Soviet central authorities took a decisive step and gathered government-issued weapons and ammunition of the IA bodies of the district and transported them to the Shushi IA Department. At the same time the number of Armenian officials of the IA units was drastically reduced. Instead, additional vacancies were allotted to the district of Shushi and ten additional sections were opened in the villages populated with alien Azerbaijanis, mainly at the borders of Armenian villages¹⁶.

One of the organizers of the genocide of Sumgait of February 26-29, 1988 having an axe in one hand, and a microphone in the other, was running along the streets of

¹⁵ ԼՂԻՄ պետարխիվ, ֆ. 1, ցանկ 2, կապ 25, պահպանման միավոր 5, գործ 263, թ. 64:

¹⁶ "02", 2005, 23 սեպտեմբերի, N 37:

Sumgait shouting: "Muslims, show where the Armenians live"¹⁷. When one band entered the apartment of a lonely and old Armenian woman and did not find anything worthy to steal, one of them took two volumes of the "History of Armenia" out of the bookshelf and tore them apart out of pique, trampled on them and turning to the tortured woman, cynically said: "Don't worry, grandma Shushanik, these volumes were not written correctly, sit and write the third volume"¹⁸.

The special investigation group of the USSR Prosecutor's office on the matter of Sumgait presented in its indictment that 26 Armenians were killed, more than 400 people were seriously injured and 200 apartments were burnt¹⁹. But in fact the number of the killed people had been much more.

The Azerbaijani that had replaced the Turkish yataghan with axe, had realized that the reason for the failure in Askeran was that unlike Sumgait, the people in Askeran were protected by their only militarized institution – the militia.

Witnessing the important role taken by the Artsakh militia in the Artsakh movement, the Baku authorities aimed at neutralizing the capabilities and influence of that factor. For that purpose in March, 1988, under the pretext of operative conference the head of NKA O IA Department Robert Tumanyan and the heads of five IA sections were called to Baku. Only R. Tumanyan went to Baku and became sure of the enmity of the high officials of the Azerbaijani Ministry of IA(MIA) towards Armenians. Returned back to Stepanaket, he noted that his colleagues were completely right not to go to Baku. Disobeying the superior's order was an unusual phenomenon, thus a group of senior officers from the USSR MIA arrived in Stepanakert for the purpose of service investigation. In accordance with the established procedure the decision for such cases was taken in advance, i.e. those "guilty" were to be dismissed from the IA system. Such a decision had already been taken under the urging of Baku. But after finding out the situation on the spot the commission had been content with making a severe reprimand. Then followed staff changes: the Armenian chiefs of NKA O power structures were replaced with officials assigned by Moscow. The Artsakh Armenians saw and felt that Armenian militiamen equally shared their desires, that they were not frightened of the pressures of Baku power structures and were ready not only to protect the interests of their people, but also to use their investigation and search capabilities and experience to realize the national political problems.

In this critical situation the authority of several provincial chief police officers was much more than that of the party leaders. Due to the right behaviour of Armenian officials of IA bodies it became possible to achieve serious success, otherwise the number of victims would be more.

¹⁷ Баруздин С., Эмоции и факты, «Дружба народов», 1989, N 3.

¹⁸ П. Люкимсон, История сепаратизма, разьевшего СССР, ищитев Карабахе [http:// www.vestikavkaza.ru/articles/Istoki-separatizma-razevshego-SSSR-ishchite-v-Karabakhe -6.html](http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/articles/Istoki-separatizma-razevshego-SSSR-ishchite-v-Karabakhe-6.html)

¹⁹ Интервью заместителя прокурора СССР А. Ф. Катусева, „Коммунист“, Ереван, 2 августа 1988.

Realizing the influence of the local Armenian militia on the social processes, a lot of senior officers that had come to NKAO from the USSR MIA were trying their best to persuade them, to find room for cooperation with the officials of the Azerbaijani MIA who were the superiors of the NKAO IA Department “by constitution”. Their activity was “regulated” not only by the USSR, but also by Azerbaijani SSR laws, legislative acts, instructions, orders, etc. The NKAO IA official had triple subordination which implied triple requirement, consequently, triple pressure. The Artsakh militia not only resisted those pressures but was also ready to struggle against any infringement.

Instead of solving the problem in a constitutional way the USSR authorities made a political decision to suppress the Artsakh movement forcibly. Soon the units of the USSR MIA were moved to NKAO and on May 12, 1988 their governance was handed to General Vladislav Safonov. The IA troops led by him took punitive actions. For his anti-Armenian actions Galina Staravoytova nicknamed him “Kharabagh’s Pinochet”²⁰.

A number of generals of the USSR MIA were sent on an assignment to NKAO who were disaffected and did not even try to establish relations with the local Armenian population. The USSR authorities openly supported the Azerbaijanis with the purpose of holding Baku back from secession and orienting towards Turkey. However, at the initial stage Moscow was intended to make steps to the appeasement of the situation through social and economic measures. For that purpose on January 12, 1989 the executive committee of NKAO authorities was dissolved by the USSR leader Mikhail Gorbachov and instead of it was formed the *Special Administration Committee* of NKAO headed by Arkadi Volski. The purpose of the Committee was to make investments in the district by the financial means received from Moscow, to motivate the population materially in order to hold back the Artsakh people from the famous decision taken before. But the constitutional law of the Azerbaijani SSR Supreme council adopted on 17 September, 1989, according to which the republic had the right to create and destroy autonomous entities within itself²¹, strained the political atmosphere and worsened the situation.

The USSR MIA high officials arriving in Artsakh periodically reported to their superiors that the Armenians were strictly organized, ready to realize their decision of independence, and they suggested the central authorities take strict measures.

On January 15, 1990 by the decree of the USSR Supreme Council a state of emergency was declared in NKAO and several adjacent districts²². The NKAO Organizing Committee was formed and Viktor Polyanichko, the Second secretary of the CC of the Communist party of Azerbaijan SSR, was assigned its chairman. He was notorious for his anti-Armenian views and actions. The anti-Armenian mood and tactics of this figure were supplemented by General V. Safonov who was assigned commandant of NKAO at V. Polyanichko’s suggestion²³. Using the unlimited power granted to them they were doing their best to drown the Artsakh liberation movement in blood. For that purpose

²⁰ <http://gerodot.ru/viewtopic.php?t=13663&start=75><http://voskanapat.info/?p=861>

²¹ <http://www.armenianhouse.org/krivopuskov/karabakh/009-125.html#1>, էջ 21

²² ԼՂՀ Պետական արխիվ, ֆոնդ 2, ցանկ 1, կապ 1, պահպ.միավ. N 2, թ. 34:

²³ <http://voskanapat.info/?p=9247>

for the first time in the USSR MIA system a filtration post was opened in the city of Stepanakert. Many Armenians were brought there as a result of operative-military measures taken under pretence of checking the passport regime, as well as finding illegal weapons and ammunition. Those acts were carried out with gross violations of law. Particularly the Armenians who had come to Artsakh from the Armenian SSR were beaten and humiliated. In the filtration post an “operative” check of all the brought-in people was done, the extent of their “guilt” was specified. In case of the slightest doubt a 30-day administrative detention was carried out towards that person after which the citizen was transported to an isolation ward in Shushi or Stepanakert where special investigative actions were carried out by the operational investigative group.

During Safonov’s dictatorship 3 employees of the Artsakh militia were imprisoned who went through all the stages of Azerbaijani prison hell. One of them - lieutenant colonel of Artsakh police reserve, Gharib Harutyunyan, who was insidiously arrested on May 15, 1991 while protecting his own village Astghashen and his home²⁴. At the beginning of May of 1992 he was to be exchanged with 17 Azerbaijanis captured during the battles in Artsakh. That number did not satisfy the Azerbaijanis: they were constantly bargaining. First they required no more no less than 50 Azerbaijani prisoners of war to release him. And that’s when the Armenians suggested exchanging him with 17 people. The final agreement was reached when their additional requirement was met – to also pay a certain sum of money for Harutyunyan.

In 1992, on the eve of the operation of Shushi liberation Gharib Harutyunyan had already been released and he joined his comrades-in-arms.

Lieutenant colonel of the Artsakh Republic police reserve troops, Gharib Harutyunyan will soon celebrate his 70th anniversary. The honoured policeman now lives in his native village with his pedagogue wife.

During the governance of the Organizing Committee Armenians were deported from several native Armenian villages, dozens of them were killed or taken captive. During that period more than 150 cases of forcible passport regime checking were carried out in Armenian cities, towns and villages²⁵.

Safonov’s punitive machine that was being led by Polyanichko’s notorious experience of the Aftgan war, and oiled by the Azerbaijani bribery lubricant, was working with all its might. However, they could not live and operate in Artsakh without reckoning with the fame and professional abilities of the local Armenian militia. So even in the most dangerous period of emergency situation no effort was made to eliminate the local police

²⁴ “02”, 2014, 25 ապրիլի, N 15, 2 մայիսի, N 16: Голос Армении (Коммунист) № 91 (17275) 1991-05-17 <http://karabah.h18.ru/press/1991/may2.html>

Senior operative officer of the Askeran IA criminal investigation department, captain of militia, Armenian Gharib Harutyunyan remained bravely unbending during one year of imprisonment, interrogations accompanied with tortures and ineffective trial. He is on his land with his genetic roots going back to the historical city of Tigranakert of Artsakh which gave him spiritual nourishment. It helped him to rebel, to endure and fight against the enemy. He was sure that he had to live and fight for the free Artsakh.

²⁵ Кривопусков В., “Мятежный Карабах”. Из дневника офицера МВД СССР, Из дневника офицера МВД СССР, М., 2007, с. 21.

institutions. Though the representative of Moscow was assigned head of NKAO IA Department, unlike Safonov he was more prone to legal actions, the so-called adherence to socialist legality. This circumstance gave the Armenians of Artsakh a chance to confront the Azerbaijani authorities' announced terrorism.

In such a situation the political leaders of the Artsakh movement acted in hiding and the information they needed was received from Armenian policemen working under the same conditions. At the same time through them, with their guidance and direct participation the problems of protecting the rights of the population were realized. One of the purposes of the Armenian militia officials was to discover those people from among the senior military of the Soviet Army, as well as operational-investigative group members, who regarded this issue positively and to establish common ground with the political leaders in hiding. As well as to obtain intelligence from the high staff of the Soviet Army. For such operations Mavrik Grigoryan - captain of militia, chief of the Stepanakert filtration post in 1990 was about to pay with his life. The Armenian officer having abilities characteristic of a professional intelligence agent, had managed to win Polyanichko's and Safonov's favour and trust and had a chance to obtain diverse secret information which he passed on to the Artsakh movement leaders in hiding.

With the knowledge of the heads of the emergency situation the Azerbaijani authorities, without Moscow's awareness, had organized false Special Purpose Mobile Units (OMON) which frequently carried out raids in Armenian settlements of NKAO dressed in the militia uniform. Naturally national avengers emerged in such a cruel situation. One of these national avengers was Armen Antonyan who attempted an unsuccessful assassination toward Safonov in Rostov-on-Don in April, 1991 but nevertheless this made the latter always live in awe. V. Polyanichko three times managed to escape death from a national avenger and death found him only on August 1, 1993 in Northern Ossetia.

Times were changing, the Soviet Union was unstable and it was necessary to count on the protective instinct of the nation confident in the idea that only those win who are able to protect themselves, formulate their own interest and pursue it. In Artsakh these components had been present and gradually the resistance and struggle of the Armenian people reached their victorious end - the declaration of independence of the Nagorno-Kharabagh Republic on September 2, 1991. Presently it has an area of 11458 km².²⁶

The dissolution of the Soviet Union was followed by the formation of independent states. It resulted in the withdrawal of the 366th regiment established in Stepanakert, cancellation of the Organizing Committee and curfew. The rebellious Artsakh was facing the 7-million Azerbaijan. NKR was steadily pacing towards the establishment of statehood with its national security system. Azerbaijan and the helpless USSR authorities that were in the throes of agony still opposed this. On 20 November, 1991 – MI-8 military helicopter crashed en route from Aghdam to Martuni. Russian, Kazakh and Azerbaijani 21 troops and civilian high-ranking officials were killed in the crash²⁷.

Together with the freedom-fighters the Armenian militia squad consisting participated in the operation of liquidating the Azerbaijani firing positions located around

²⁶ <http://armenpress.am/eng/news/688901/territoriya-nkr-sostavlyayet-11-458-kvkm---nemeckaya-gazeta.html>

²⁷ <http://www.mil.am/en/68/71/287>

the capital city Stepanakert. In December 1991 the Armenian squad waged its first battle from the village Karaglukh of Hadrut and in 1992 it participated in the military operations of ousting the Azerbaijani OMON from the Stepanakert Krkzhan quarter²⁸. Together with other subdivisions the squad also participated in the fights of the Sarsang hidrosystem. During the years of the Artsakh Liberation War the IA militiamen-fighters participated in the self-defence and liberation battles of Askeran, Martuni, Martakert, Hadrut, Varanda, Karvachar districts, Stepanakert and its neighboring settlements.

In the NKR more than 300 militiamen participated in the Artsakh Liberation War²⁹. 41 of them were killed, 3 - were considered missing, 7 were awarded with the "Battle Cross" Order, 42 were injured and became disabled (I, II and III disability groups). And 44 officials of militia participated in the liberation of Shushi³⁰.

The NKR MIA was established in 1999 on the basis of the NKA O IA Department. It has departments, divisions, subsidiaries, regional bodies, its coat of arms, uniform, etc. On November 30, 2001 the National Assembly of the Artsakh Republic passed "The Law of the NKR on the Police" and then "The Law of the NKR on Service in the Police" according to which the MIA of the NKR was re-formed into the Police (Vostikanutyun) of the NKR and the MIA's official – a militiaman became a police officer. On April 16, 2003 the Artsakh militia was renamed to the police and it operates within the framework of the law "On Police" adopted by the NKR National Assembly³¹.



The NKR Police Headquarters

²⁸ "02", 2005, 23 սեպտեմբերի, N 37:

²⁹ During the years of the aggression of Azerbaijan against NKR and RA about 5 thousand militiamen (policemen) of the Ministry of IA of RA participated defending the Motherland; during the years of the Artsakh Liberation war 217 of them were killed (Ռ.Սարգսյան, Ռ. Սահակյան, Հայաստանի ոստիկանության պատմությունից, Երևան, 2015, էջ 187).

³⁰ "02", 2009, 30 հունվարի, N 4:

³¹ Ibid.

Law enforcement bodies realize the preservation of the social order and the fight with crime in the NKR. The NKR law "On Police" establishes the frameworks of their authorities. The NKR law enforcement system is headed by the Interior Ministry. The Ministry has departments in all the regions of the republic and in capital Stepanakert³². The operative situation in the NKR is controlled by the NKR Police Department orders, instructions of Police Departments' bodies, criminal and administrative codes and international documents³³.

The awards of the NKR Police:



The Medal "For Strengthening of Cooperation" is awarded for the realization of the NKR Police's tasks, considerable contribution to the activities of the system of the NKR Police, as well as strengthening of cooperation with international law enforcement agencies.

The Medal "Bulwark of Law" is awarded to the police officers for considerable contribution to the maintenance of law and legality, prevention of crime, maintenance and security of public order.

There are also other awards: the Breastplates "Honoured Serviceman" and "The Excellent Service in Police".

Speech of Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan Delivered at a Solemn Event Dedicated to the Day of Police:

Dear Police officers and veterans,

I extend my heartiest congratulations on your professional holiday and the 10th anniversary of the NKR Police.

On this solemn moment I first of all bow my head in memory of all those police officers who lost their lives during the Artsakh liberation struggle and while performing their duties. Glory and honor to the martyrs! Today is another opportunity to reflect on your work, and I am pleased to note that in recent years significant positive changes and developments have been carried out in the work of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic Police.

³² Nagorno-Karabakh Republic: Progress Toward Freedom, Democracy and Economic Development, p. 9. http://www.nkrusa.org/nk_conflict/assets/nkr-state-building.pdf

³³ Ibid., p. 31.

First of all, I would like to note that the number of crimes in 2011 decreased by 99 cases. The crime rate per 10 thousand people continued to decline and constituted 25,6 cases compared to 33 ones in 2010. This is one of the lowest rates in the world, which indicates high level of public safety in our country. A high rate of crime detection of about 91 percent is also satisfactory. However, it is necessary to work more consistently to improve this figure, as well as the effectiveness of disclosure of criminal cases suspended in previous years. There are also unsolved grave and particularly grave crimes, which is unacceptable. The detection of latent crimes should be considered a priority. This figure has grown by 16 cases in 2011 as compared to 2010, however, there is still much to be done. To make the fight against crime more efficient, consistent work should be done primarily for the prevention of crime. Within this context it is important expand and deepen cooperation between different departments of the police itself as well as between police and other relevant structures. Cooperation with police and other government agencies of the Republic of Armenia is also crucial. There are also problems in the traffic safety. To a great extent they are derivatives from steady continuing growth in traffic as well as road capacity. I am aware of the extensive work carried out to prevent road accidents and ensure traffic safety. However, substantial growth in traffic accident shows that there are still unresolved issues in this field. There is a need to carry out comprehensive measures to improve the situation. The effective solution of the tasks assigned to the police to a great extent depends on proper cadre policy, including discipline, recruitment and appointment of personnel. It is necessary to carry out continuous work in this direction. It is also thanks to the principled and dedicated work of the police and each police officer that the law and order are maintained in our republic, the rights and interests of the citizens are protected. These are among the most important areas of state functioning that have always been in the spotlight of both the authorities and the society. And naturally, the existing positive trends here as well as the shortcomings and flaws immediately get an appropriate response by the population. Therefore, the requirements for police officers are more stringent and clear-cut. I want to be sure that the leadership of the police and every officer will continue to do everything possible to realize effectively their tasks. The state in its turn will keep providing necessary assistance to the structure on a continuous and ongoing basis. Dear police officers, I once again, congratulate on this memorable occasion and wish you and your families peace, robust health and great success. Thank you.

Stepanakert, April 16, 2012.³⁴

³⁴ <http://www.president.nkr.am/en/speeches/speeches/1673/>



On August 8, 2014 the NKR President Bako Sahakyan signed a decree, according to which for personal bravery shown in detecting and arresting Azerbaijani subversive groups, which illegally crossed the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic state border, and for the proper fulfillment of the call duty in life-threatening risky conditions, two servicemen of the NKR Police under the NKR Cabinet of Ministers were decorated with the Medal "For Courage"³⁵.

Since 2014 (by Decision N 124 of the government of the NKR as of March 4) the professional day of the police in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has been celebrated on November 30³⁶.

³⁵ <http://armenpress.am/eng/news/772050/servicemen-of-nkr-police-decorated-with-medal-for-detecting-and-arresting-azerbaijani-subversives.html>; http://www.irakan.info/full_spec.php?id=17759 The Medal "For Courage" is awarded to privates, officers and high command staff of the Defence Army of the NKR for personal bravery and courage shown in the course of the military and combat actions, in the defence of inviolability of state border, in the fight against subversive actions, as well as spies and other enemies of the republic. This medal is also awarded to individuals persons not serving in the Defence Army of the NKR for skilful, initiative, brave actions contributing to the military success on the front as well as in ensuring security of the republic's population, life and health of the people in conditions dangerous for life.

³⁶ <http://www.police.nkr.am/about-the-police/%D5%BA%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%B4%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%A9%D5%B5%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B6.html>

**HRACHIK KHACHATURI SHAHBAZIAN**

Born on July 27, 1945 in the village Sardarashen of the Askeran district.

In 1964-1967 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

On June 29, 1968 was taken to serve in the MIA bodies starting as a private and then occupying the position of a senior inspector of the Stepanakert city section's duty unit of IA Department as a major of militia.

In 1972 finished the secondary school of the Baku militia.

During the service he was awarded with the medals of 3rd, 2nd and 1st degree "For Long-Term Service" and was honored with the Letter of Commendation and money reward.

On June 11, 1991 he was killed in the Shushi prison.

**ERIK SURENI POGHOSYAN**

Born on March 22, 1965 in the town of Hadrut.

During 1983-1985 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

In 1988 graduated from the Kharkov fire-technical college

From November 1, 1988 started service in the state fire control service of the Hadrut district unit of militia as an inspector. He was a lieutenant of internal service.

On December 23, 1991 after the battles for the defence of the village Karaglukh of the Hadrut district he was reported missing.

**HAKOB KIMI POGHOSYAN**

Born on July 18, 1966 in the city of Baku.

During 1984-1986 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From December 19, 1988 started service in the Hadrut district unit of IA as a junior sergeant of militia.

He was killed on December 23, 1991 in the battles for the defence of the village Karaglukh of the Hadrut district.

**VLADIK MAKARI SAHAKYAN**

Born on February 14, 1956 in the village of Edillu of the Hadrut district.

During 1974-1976 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From January 31, 1977 started service in the MIA bodies.

During 1980-1984 was head of the passport branch of the Hadrut district unit, also worked as a coroner and chief divisional inspector.

In 1987 graduated from the USSR IA Academy.

During the service as a captain of militia he was awarded with the medal of 3rd degree "For Long-Term Service", a badge "For Excellent Service" and honored with the Letter of Commendation and money reward.

He was killed on December 23, 1991 in the battles for the defence of the village Karaglukh of the Hadrut district.

**VADIM ROMANI SARGSYAN**

Born on February 11, 1969 in the city of Baku.

During 1987-1989 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

On September 18, 1989 started service in the MIA bodies as a junior sergeant of militia.

He was killed on January 22, 1992 in the battles for the liberation of Krkzhan.

On July 26, 1988 was awarded with the USSR Medal "For Courage" and on May 8, 2002 posthumously was awarded with the Medal "For Courage".

**HAYK JAMILI SHELUNTS**

Born on January 14, 1958 in the village of Verin Shen of Shahumyan district.

Graduated from the department of oenology of the Martakert vocational school.

During 1976-1978 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From 1978 started work at the Shahumyan district unit of IA as a senior sergeant of militia.

He was killed on February 18, 1992 in the defensive battles in the village of Manashid.

He was posthumously awarded with the medal "For Courage".

**SAMVEL ZAVENI HAMBARDZUMYAN**

Born on March 20, 1963 in the city of Stepanakert.

During 1982-1984 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From 1984 started service in the Stepanakert city department of IA as a junior sergeant of militia.

He was killed on February 20, 1992 in the city of Stepanakert as a result of a cannonade.

**ARTYUSHA ASHOTI MELKUMYAN**

Born on August 18, 1966 in the village of Kolatak of Martakert district.

During 1985-1987 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

After getting training at 6 year courses in Baku he worked in the IA guard division as a junior sergeant of militia.

He was killed on March 12, 1992 during the cannonade of the city of Stepanakert.

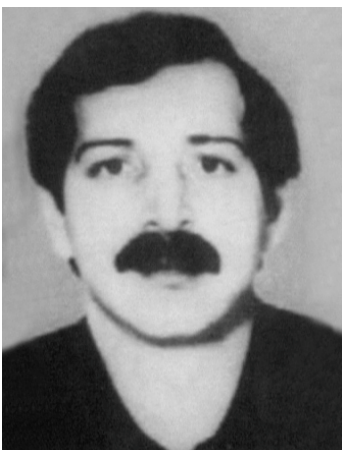
**HRACHIK SARGISI SAHAKYAN**

Born on December 6, 1947 in the village of Yeghtsahogh of Shushi district.

During 1966-1969 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From 1969 started service in the IA bodies as a senior sergeant of militia.

He was killed on March 16, 1992 in the city of Stepanakert as a result of a cannonade.

**NELSON SURKHAI POGHOSYAN**

Born on December 1, 1952 in the village of Qarin Tak of Shushi district.

Graduated from the vocational-technical school of the town of Meghri.

During 1975-1977 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

He worked in the state motor vehicle inspectorate of the Internal affairs department as a constructor.

He was killed on March 29, 1992 in the defensive battles in the village of Kyosalar of Askeran district. He was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".



HAMAYAK ARMENAKI TSATURYAN

Born on September 27, 1964 in the city of Stepanakert.

During 1983-1985 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From August 16, 1989 started service in the MIA bodies as a militiaman of the division of defence, was a junior sergeant of militia.

He was killed on May 8, 1992 in the battles for the liberation of Shushi.

In 1999 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For the Liberation of Shushi", and on May 8, 2002 with the

Medal "For Courage".



VLADIMIR AVANESI NASIBYAN

Born on September 25, 1939 in the city of Stepanakert.

During 1958-1962 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From March 8, 1965 was head of the NKAO IA Department inspectorate of corrective labour as a major of militia.

He was fatally wounded on May 7, 1992 in the 26th sentry post and died on May 8.

During service he was awarded with the Medals of 3rd and 2nd degree "For Long-Term Service" and received money rewards, on May 6, 1999, posthumously, was awarded also with the Medal "For Courage".

**SLAVIK YERMENI PETROSYAN**

Born on November 22, 1969 in the village of Tazakend of Zhdanov district.

During 1987-1989 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From April 3, 1991 started service in the MIA bodies as a sergeant of militia.

He was killed on May 11, 1992 during the combat operation of the Azerbaijani weapon emplacements neutralization.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".

YURI NAPOLEONI KARAMYAN

Born on July 8, 1954 in the city of Stepanakert.

During 1972-1974 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

Graduated from the Stepanakert Pedagogical University.

From September 24, 1984 started service as an inspector of the MIA secretariat regime.



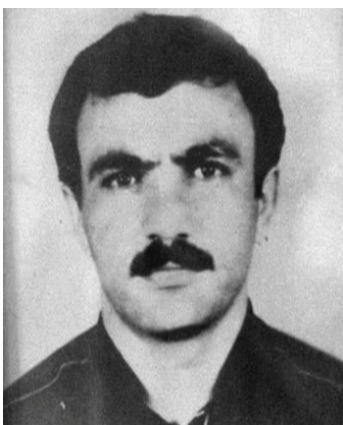
On October 22, 1990 was appointed head of the IA Department secretariat.

He was a captain of internal service.

For the conscientious performance of duties he received a number of rewards and the Letter of Commendation.

He was killed on June 16, 1992 in the defensive posts of the village of Kyatuk of Askeran district.

He was posthumously awarded with the 2nd degree Medal "Battle Cross" and the Medal "Maternal Gratitude to the Heroic Sons of Artsakh".

**KAMO SHAHENI AVANESYAN**

Born on January 30, 1967 in the city of Baku.

During 1985-1987 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From January 28, 1992 started service in the IA bodies as a private of internal service.

As a member the militia duty detail participated in a number of combat operations and was killed in the battles in the approaches to the sentry post number 4 on June 25,

1992.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".



SLAVIK YURI NERSESYAN

Born on January 25, 1957 in the city of Martakert.

During 1975-1977 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From September 30, 1980 started service in the MIA bodies as a sergeant of militia and later occupying the position of a captain of militia.

In 1986 graduated from the USSR MIA High School.

On July 27, 1992 was appointed acting head of IA district department of Martakert.

During service he was awarded with the Medal of 3rd degree "For Long-Term Service", with Letters of Commendation, Certificates of Honor and money rewards.

He was killed on August 19, 1992 during the defensive battles in the village of Mets Shen.

On September 2, 1999 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal of 1st degree "Battle Cross".



VANYA ALEKSEYI MIRZOYAN

Born on October 1, 1962 in the village of Mokhratagh of Martakert district.

During 1981-1983 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From November 10, 1990 started service in the IA district department of Martakert as a private of militia.

He was killed on August 18, 1992 during the combat operations for the defence of the village of Mets Shen. In 1999 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal of 1st

degree "Battle Cross".

IGOR PAVELI BAGHUNTS

Born on February 17, 1963 in the city of Martakert.

In 1985 graduated from the Yerevan Polytechnical Institute.

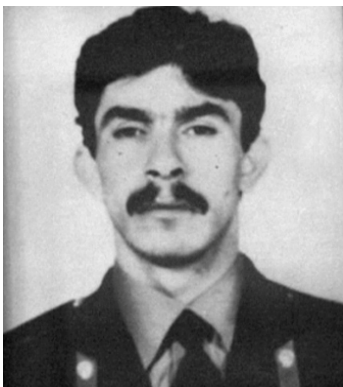
From May 25, 1991 started service in the IA district department of Martakert as a district militia inspector. He was a senior lieutenant of militia.

During service he was awarded with Letters of Commendation.



He was killed on August 18, 1992 during the combat operations for the defence of the village of Mets Shen.

In 1999 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal of 1st degree "Battle Cross".



ARTUR GEORGI BADALYAN

Born on June 27, 1964 in the city of Barda (Partav).

During 1983-1985 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From December 19, 1988 started service in the MIA bodie as a junior sergeant of militia.

He was killed on September 21, 1992 during the defensive battles in the Berdzor (Lachin) district.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the

Medal "For Courage".



ARUSTAM SHURAI ARUSTAMYAN

Born on February 11, 1969 in the village of Taghaser of Hadrut district.

During 1987-1989 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From 1989 started work in the IA bodies as a fireman of the Hadrut fire department.

He was killed on September 25, 1992 in the territory of the village of Sarishen.

He was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".

SAMVEL LEVONI HARUTYUNYAN

Born on January 1, 1968 in the village of Norshen of Martuni district.

During 1986-1988 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From February 1, 1989 started service in a city unit of the IA Department in Stepanakert as a militiaman-dog trainer. He was a junior sergeant of militia.

For the conscientious performance of duties he received money rewards during service.



He was killed on October 5, 1992 during the defensive battles in the Berdzor (Lachin) district.



DAVIT LAVRENTI MOVSESYAN

Born on September 24, 1969 in the city of Stepanakert.

During 1988-1990 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From December 29, 1990 started service in the MIA bodies as a private of militia.

During service he received money reward.

On October 5, 1992 was missing in action in the Berdzor (Lachin) district.



VLADIMIR IVANI HAMBARDZUMYAN

Born on August 19, 1963 in the village of Aknaghbyur of Askeran district.

During 1981-1984 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From February 13, 1989 started service in the MIA bodies as a junior sergeant of internal service. During service he received money rewards.

He was killed on October 10, 1992 in the posts of the village of Ghazanchi of Martakert district.



MOVSES SHAVARSHI OHANYAN

Born on September 20, 1958 in the village of Vaghuhas of Martakert district.

During 1975-1980 studied and graduated from the Yerevan road technical school.

During 1976-1978 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR. From 1982 started service as a militiaman in the division of security of the NKAO IA Department as a senior lieutenant of militia.

In 1991 worked as a district inspector of the Askeran district department of militia.

During service was awarded with the Medal of 3rd degree "For Long-Term Service", received Letters of Commendation and money reward.

On October 22, 1992 was missing in action.



GEORGI ARMENAKI BARATYAN

Born on August 28, 1939 in the town of Hadrut.

During 1957-1959 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

Worked in the IA bodies as a fireman of the Hadrut fire department.

He was killed on December 12, 1992 in the posts of Hadrut district.



GAGIK YURI SARGSYAN

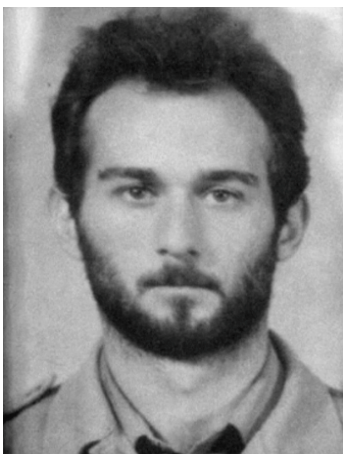
Born on February 24, 1963 in the city of Martuni.

During 1982-1984 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

Worked as a head of guards of the Martuni N2 specialized fire division of NKR MIA Fire department.

He was killed on March 24, 1993 in the territory of the village of Kurapatkino.

He was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".



KAREN YURI ISAKHANYAN

Born on March 3, 1967 in the city of Stepanakert.

During 1985-1987 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From January 28, 1992 started service in the MIA bodies as a private of internal service.

He was killed on April 10, 1993, in the posts of the village of Janyatagh of Martakert district.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".



STEPAN VLADIMIRI STEPANYAN

Born on September 3, 1961 in the village of Taghavard of Martuni district.

In 1982 graduated from the Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture of Yerevan.

During 1983-1984 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From October 5, 1990 started service in the IA bodies as a senior lieutenant of militia.

He was killed on April 16, 1993 during the defensive battles of the village of Jivani of Martuni district.



SERGEY MIKAYELI MINASYAN

Born on January 5, 1968 in the city of Baku.

During 1987-1989 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From February 25, 1993 started service in the IA bodies as a fireman. He was a private of internal service.

He was killed on July 29, 1993 in Aghdam district.



MIKAYEL MANVELI OHANYAN

Born on February 14, 1958 in the town of Hadrut.

During 1976-1978 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

In 1980 graduated from the Stepanakert Agricultural technical school.

On February 4, 1985 started service in the Hadrut district department of IA as a road inspector. He was a junior lieutenant of militia.

During service he was awarded with the Badge "High Achiever of Militia", received Letters of Commendation and money rewards.

He was killed on August 15, 1993 during the defensive battles in the village of Tsor of Hadrut district.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the medal "For Courage".

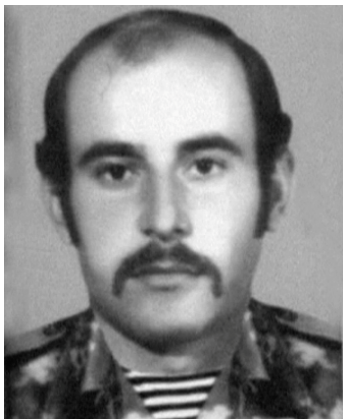
**ARTUR ALEKSEYI KARAMYAN**

Born on June 26, 1964 in the village of Taghaser of Hadrut district.

During 1982-1984 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

He worked in the IA bodies as a fireman of the Hadrut Fire department.

He was killed on August 15, 1993 in the territory of the village of Ballid.

**ARAMAYIS RUBENI PETROSYAN**

Born on June 10, 1954 in the village of Arajadzor of Martakert district.

During 1973-1975 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From April, 1993 started work in the IA bodies as a fireman of the Martakert Fire department.

He was killed on September 30, 1993 during the defensive battles in Aghdam district. Posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Military Service".

**ZAVEN ZARMAVELI BAGHDASARYAN**

Born on January 27, 1961 in the village of Taghaser of Hadrut district.

During 1979-1981 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

On October 21, 1981 was hired by the Hadrut district department of IA as a militiaman, and then as a district militia inspector.

On December 20, 1992 he was appointed senior duty inspector of militia of the Hadrut district department of IA, he was a senior lieutenant of militia.

He was killed on December 30, 1993 during the defensive battles in Fizuli district.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the medal "For Courage".

**SAMVEL HRANTI GRIGORYAN**

Born on July 30, 1972 in the village of Arajadzor of Martakert district.

In 1992 graduated from the Stepanakert Agricultural technical school.

During 1991-1993 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

On July 10, 1993 started service in the Martakert district department of IA, was a sergeant of militia.

He was killed on January 6, 1994 during the defensive battles in the village of Lyulasaz of Martakert district.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the medal "For Courage".

**SPARTAK SHURAI GRIGORYAN**

Born on October 27, 1972 in the city of Stepanakert.

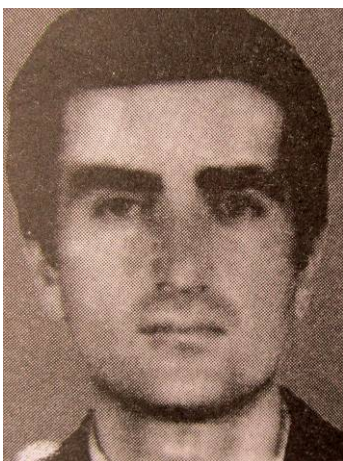
In 1992 graduated from the Stepanakert Agricultural technical school.

During 1991-1993 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From August 1, 1993 started service in the position of road inspector of the IA state motor vehicle inspectorate.

He was a private of militia.

On January 16, 1994 he was missing in action in the defensive battles of the village of Karakhanbeyl of Varanda district.

**GARNIK HRACHIKI AVTANDILYAN**

Born on March 22, 1967 in the village of Aygestan (Baluja) of Askeran district.

During 1974-1984 studied at the secondary school of Baluja.

During 1985-1987 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

In 1991 graduated from the Stepanakert Agricultural technical school.

In 1992 graduated from the department of "Mechanization" of the Stepanakert Agricultural college.

From July 10, 1993 started service in the IA system as a rapid response team militiaman, he was a sergeant of militia.

On January 16, 1994 he was missing in action in the defensive battles of Varanda

district.



DAVIT YEGHISHEI POGHOSYAN

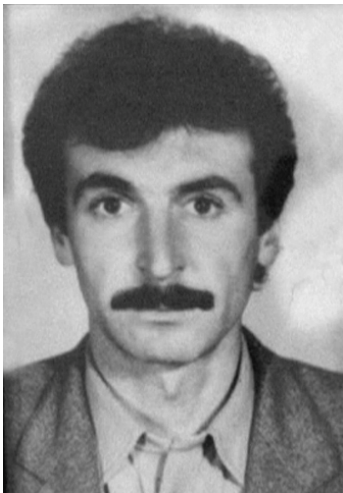
Born on November 13, 1972 in the city of Stepanakert.

During 1991-1993 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From December 1, 1993 started service in the IA bodies as a rapid response team militiaman, he was a private of militia.

He was killed on January 21, 1994 during the defensive battles of the village of Karakhanbeyl of Fizuli district.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".



GEVORG KARLOSI STEPANYAN

Born on May 14, 1968 in the city of Stepanakert.

In 1985 finished school N3 of Stepanakert.

During 1986-1988 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

During 1988-1990 he studied and graduated from the department of "Mechanization" of the Stepanakert Agricultural college.

From January 25, 1994 started service in the NKR MIA state motor vehicle inspectorate as a patrol service inspector.

He was a junior sergeant of militia.

On February 16, 1994 he was killed during the defensive battles in Varanda district.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".



ALEK GRIGORI HAKOBYAN

Born on April 1, 1962 in the village of Dahrav of Askeran district.

In 1982 graduated from Yerevan road vehicle vocational school.

During 1982-1984 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From July 5, 1984 started service in the MIA bodies.

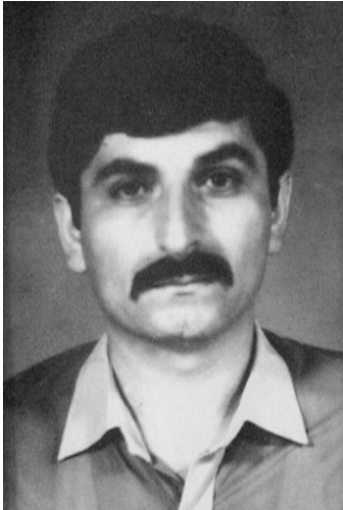
On September 16, 1992 was appointed patrol service senior

inspector of the Stepanakert IA Department as a lieutenant of militia.

During service he received Letters of Commendation and money rewards.

He was killed on March 6, 1994 during the defensive battles in Varandadistrict.

On May 8, 2002 he was posthumously awarded with the Medal "For Courage".



MAKSIM YURII DAVTYAN

Born on September 11, 1957 in the town of Hadrut.

Graduated from the Kapan vocational school.

During 1975-1977 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

Worked in the IA bodies as a fireman of the Hadrut Fire department.

On December 3, 1994 he was wounded in the defensive battle in the village of Seidahmedli and died from the wounds on December 28, 1994.



RASHID SHAHRAMANI AVAGIMYAN

Born on February 9, 1966 in the village of Ghazanchi of Martakert district.

During 1984-1986 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR.

From January 30, 1993 started service in the Martakert district department of IA as a sergeant of militia.

He died on April 22, 1996 in the village of Talish.

*Translated from Armenian by
S.E. Chraghyan*