

2. METHODOLOGY

1. Methodology of the Preparation of the Report

9. During the preparation of the report, the Human Rights Defender's Office was guided by the principles of independence, impartiality, objectivity and integrity adopted by the institution, and carried out the conclusions regarding the violations regardless of the identity or nationality of the alleged culprits.

10. In all the activities carried out for the preparation of the report, the Human Rights Defender's Office adhered to the victim-centered approach adopted by the institution, guided by the "do no harm" principle.

11. The data presented in this report includes data on the cruel and inhuman treatment of Armenian POWs captured by Azerbaijan in the period from 13 to 15 September 2022 - from the moment of their capture until their repatriation on October 4.

12. In the report, the torture inhuman and degrading treatment of the Armenian captives by Azerbaijan was presented according to the stages and the treatment manifested by the relevant competent authorities of Azerbaijan. Thus, the period of the capture and transfer to the military facility is presented first; at this stage, the issue is related to the treatment shown by the Azerbaijani military personnel. Next is the stage where the Armenian captives are kept in the Azerbaijani law enforcement body, where the treatment shown by law enforcement officers is presented. Finally, the stage when the Armenian POWs are in a prison or a medical institution, and where their treatment by the servicemen of the penitentiary institution and the medical institution is presented.

13. The information in this report is based on the private interviews held with the 17 Armenian POWs, who were repatriated on October 4 2022, with the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office. The results of the private interviews, in addition to this report, were summarized in a separate document by the Human Rights Defender's Office. The methodology of conducting the above-mentioned private interviews is presented below -in point 2 of the methodology.

14. Taking into consideration that the report contains descriptions and scenes of inhuman, degrading, cruel treatment of Armenian PoWs, disrespecting the bodies of killed Armenian servicemen, the report is presented in a closed format, taking into account the sensitivity of the subject, the nature of the photos and videos, as well as to protect the repatriated PoWs, their family members and those still in Azerbaijani captivity since 2020 from double victimization. Based on the same principle, the personal information of the repatriated Armenian PoWs, including the first letters of their names and surnames, are not presented, instead, random names were given to each one of them.

15. In addition to the information from the private interviews conducted with the POWs, the information that the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office disclosed during the reception of the family members of the persons held captive, as well as the videos available on various social media platforms and media sources, recorded during the period of capture and captivity of Armenian servicemen, were used for the preparation of this report. Moreover, the results of monitoring activities carried out by the Human Rights Defender's Office, information contained in the individual applications addressed to the Human Rights Defender were taken into consideration. The videos, photos, publications and other information available in the Azerbaijani mass media, and social media platforms, including Telegram channels, were monitored in detail.

16. The results of the private interviews with the repatriated Armenian POWs were analyzed in conjunction with each other, as well as the information provided by the latter were analyzed with the available videos, photos, information available in public sources, and the information available in the applications-complaints addressed to the Human Rights Defender. In addition, the received information was compared with the information received from the competent state bodies of the Republic of Armenia at the request of the Human Rights Defender.

2. Methodology of Conducting Interviews with Repatriated PoWs

17. Firstly, from the perspective of the methodology of conducting private interviews with persons returned from captivity, the place and time of conducting the interview were given importance. As a rule, the private interviews were conducted as soon as possible after the return of the captives to Armenia, to ensure that the information received was fresh and reliable. Thus, the interviews with repatriated captives were conducted on the day of their repatriation, on the two days following the night of October 4-5 2022 (on October 6-7). As for the place of the private interviews, they were mainly conducted at the place where the repatriated PoWs underwent medical examinations after the return, in medical institutions, or

in similar places, where the latter would not be constrained as much as possible to present the data about their capture and being in captivity.

18. The private interviews with the repatriated captives were conducted individually, exclusively with the participation of the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office and the person who returned from captivity. Namely, the private interviews were conducted outside the audio-visual observation of any other person, including other repatriated POWs. The course of the interviews was not video-recorded, the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office made handwritten notes.

19. Before starting each interview, the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office introduced themselves to the persons returned from captivity, and then presented the Human Rights Defender's mandate, authorities, explained the nature of the institution's work and functions. At the same time, the repatriated PoWs were informed about the confidentiality of the conversation with them; it was clarified in detail that the information received will not only be disclosed in public sources, but also sensitive information will not be provided to domestic criminal prosecution or state administration bodies, as well as that information they provide will not have a negative consequence on them in any case .

20. The purposes for which the private interviews were conducted, the methods of using the received information and the possible scope of persons having access to it were presented to the repatriated PoWs by the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office. At the same time, the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office clarified to the repatriated PoWs, that the latter may refuse to provide them with the requested information regarding their capture or being in captivity, both in whole and in part, and this also would not have a negative consequence on them.

21. After conveying the above-mentioned information to the repatriated PoWs, and making sure that the information was understood by them, the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office suggested that the repatriated PoWs should, if they wish, answer the questions addressed to them in their own words¹.

22. At least 2 representatives from the Human Rights Defender's Office participated in the interview conducted with each person, one of whom, the interviewer, constantly maintained visual contact with the repatriated PoWs. In other words, in accordance with the Four eyes principle, one of the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office constantly communicated with the person, and

¹ The standard questionnaire for interviews with repatriated captives is presented below.

maintained eye contact with the latter, while the other representative took notes. The representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office had with them the pre-prepared questionnaire, around which they conducted the conversation and received the information about the issues mentioned in it.

23. No guiding questions were asked by the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office. The representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office, conducting the interview about these and other necessary principles, held a guidance (orientation) discussion with the Human Rights Defender in advance.

24. At the end of the interview, the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office provided the repatriated PoWs with the twenty-four-hour hotline number of the Human Rights Defender's Office, to report additional information in case they remember it or to contact them with any other issue within the mandate of the Human Rights Defender.

25. At the end of the private interviews, the representatives of the Human Rights Defender's Office directed the repatriated PoWs to receive free psychological support services, to which some of the latter responded positively on the spot and expressed their desire to receive it, while others expressed their desire later – by applying to the Human Rights Defender's Office.

Questionnaire

1. Name, Patronymic, Surname, date of birth
2. Please indicate your status (MOB or serviceman), rank and military unit. If you are a civilian, please indicate your place of residence.
3. When and where were you captured?
4. Under what conditions were you captured? Please describe the events preceding the capture. Were you injured at the time of your capture? Was medical assistance provided?
5. Who were you captured with? Please include all possible personal data.
6. Where did they transfer you after you were captured?
7. Who among the captured persons were kept in the same place with you? Please include all possible personal data.
8. In what conditions were you kept during the captivity? Please describe the treatment towards you in as much detail as possible.
9. Were You been given the opportunity to contact family members, if so, when and how often?
10. Was physical or psychological violence been committed against you, in your presence or with your knowledge? Was medical assistance provided?
11. What acts did they make you do? What documents were you forced to sign? Were you forced to be videotaped and provide specific information?
12. Were you been visited by the International Committee of the Red Cross or another non-Azerbaijani organization? If so, was a doctor also present?
13. Were you provided with a medical examination? If so, at what frequency?
14. What additional information would you like to provide to the Human Rights Defender?