

The State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic issued the following statement today:



Armenia's First Deputy Defense Minister, David Tonoyan, meeting with Mrs. Caroline Douilliez, Head of the ICRC delegation in Armenia

“On April 10, in accordance with the arrangement reached earlier, the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, through the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office, carried out the exchange of bodies of the deceased between the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and Azerbaijan near the Bash Karvend settlement. The bodies of 18 servicemen of the NKR Defense Army, fallen as a result of the large scale military aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan in April 2-5, were transferred to the NKR side during the exchange.

At the presence of the representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the NKR State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons registered that all bodies of the deceased transferred by the Azerbaijani side had signs of torture and mutilation.

Those acts, being a flagrant manifestation of inhumanity, run counter to the laws and customs of war and are in grave violation of the international humanitarian law, in particular, the Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (1949), Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (1949) and the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I).

The Karabakh side will seek to ensure that such behavior of the Azerbaijani side is condemned in strongest terms by the international community and the specialized agencies, and those responsible are brought into account.”

OSCE Minsk Group American Co-chair James Warlick spoke about this in a meeting with journalists, answering a question from an “Armenpress” reporter, “How do the Co-chairs assess the cases of civilian murders and vandalization of bodies of killed soldiers and civilians by Azerbaijani armed forces and mercenaries?”

“We have seen the photos and have information about it. We have raised this issue in the capital as well. I would like to reiterate that we are deeply concerned over any incident of human rights violation,” Warlick mentioned.

He also informed that during their meetings with the representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Co-chairs have touched upon this issue and asked them to closely investigate the recorded incidents.

On April 11th in Yerevan, Armenia’s First Deputy Defense Minister David Tonoyan met with Mrs. Caroline Douilliez, Head of the ICRC delegation in Armenia to discuss issues related to the search for and recovery of the bodies of the soldiers killed as a result of the military actions unleashed by Azerbaijan.

David Tonoyan expressed gratitude to the Head of the ICRC Delegation for organizing the exchange of bodies with the mediation of the ICRC and OSCE representatives.

The Deputy Defense Minister informed Mrs. Douilliez that all 18 bodies handed over the Armenian side were mutilated, which not only violates the second paragraph of Common Article 3 of all 1949 Geneva Conventions (...To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons: (a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture), the 1st paragraph of Article 130 of the 1949 4th Geneva Convention, the provisions of Article 4.2. of the Second Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, but also constitute a heavy crime under the criminal jurisdiction of any legal state.

David Tonoyan noted that the Armenian side will pursue the condemnations of the crimes committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces by the international community and specialized bodies.