ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ **A**

ГЕНЕРАЛЬНАЯ АССАМБЛЕЯ

Distr.
GENERAL

A/HRC/6/G/8
14 September 2007

RUSSIAN
Original: ENGLISH/FRENCH

СОВЕТ ПО ПРАВАМ ЧЕЛОВЕКА

Шестая сессия
Пункты 3, 4, 9 повестки дня

ПООЩРЕНИЕ И ЗАЩИТА ВСЕХ ПРАВ ЧЕЛОВЕКА, ГРАЖДАНСКИХ, ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ, ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИХ, СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ И КУЛЬТУРНЫХ ПРАВ, ВКЛЮЧАЯ ПРАВО НА РАЗВИТИЕ

СИТУАЦИИ В ОБЛАСТИ ПРАВ ЧЕЛОВЕКА, ТРЕБУЮЩИЕ ВНИМАНИЯ СО СТОРОНЫ СОВЕТА

РАСИЗМ, РАСОВАЯ ДИСКРИМИНАЦИЯ, КСЕНОФОБИЯ И СВЯЗАННЫЕ С НИМИ ФОРМЫ НЕТЕРПИМОСТИ: ПОСЛЕДУЮЩИЕ МЕРЫ И ОСУЩЕСТВЛЕНИЕ ДУРБАНСКОЙ ДЕКЛАРАЦИИ И ПРОГРАММЫ ДЕЙСТВИЙ

Вербальная нота Постоянного представительства Республики Армении при Отделении Организации Объединенных Наций в Женеве от 11 сентября 2007 года на имя Председателя Совета по правам человека

Постоянное представительство Республики Армении при Отделении Организации Объединенных Наций и других международных организациях в Женеве свидетельствует свое уважение Председателю Совета по правам человека и имеет честь настоящим препроводить следующие документы*.

* Воспроизводятся в приложении в полученном виде только на том языке, на котором они были представлены

- Резолюция Европейского парламента о культурном наследии в Азербайджане от 16 февраля 2006 года,

- Меморандум о разрушении археологического комплекса в Джухе и всего армянского культурного наследия в Нахичеванской Автономной Республике (Азербайджан), представленный группой европейских парламентариев в Организацию Объединенных Наций по вопросам образования, науки и культуры,

- Пояснительная записка, касающаяся хронологии разрушения археологического комплекса в Джухе.

Постоянное представительство просит также Председателя издать вышеупомянутые документы в качестве официальных документов в рамках пунктов 3, 4 и 9 повестки дня.

Приложение

P6_TA(2006)0069

Cultural heritage in Azerbaijan

European Parliament resolution on cultural heritage in Azerbaijan

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its resolutions of 9 June 2005[1] and 27 October 2005[2] on Azerbaijan,

– having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2006 on the European Neighbourhood Policy,[3]

– having regard to its previous resolutions on the South Caucasus and, in particular, its resolution of 11 March 1999 on support for the peace process in the Caucasus[4] and its recommendation to the Council of 26 February 2004 on EU policy towards the South Caucasus,[5]

– having regard to the Council decision of 14 June 2004 to include both Armenia and Azerbaijan in the European Neighbourhood Policy, in particular for the purpose of fostering good neighbourly relations, especially through respect for minorities,

– having regard to the obligations of Armenia and Azerbaijan within the framework of the Council of Europe, especially through the European Cultural Convention, the revised European Convention for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which they have ratified and undertaken to respect,

---

1 *Text Adopted*, P6_TA(2005)0243.

2 *Text Adopted*, P6_TA(2005)0411.

3 *Text Adopted*, P6_TA(2006)0028.

4 OJ C 175, 21.6.1999, p. 251.

5 OJ C 98 E, 23.4.2004, p. 193.

– having regard to the UNESCO 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its 1954 Protocol, as applicable to occupied territories, to which both Armenia and Azerbaijan are party,

– having regard to the 2003 UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage, by which the international community recognises the importance of the protection of cultural heritage and reaffirms its commitment to combat its intentional destruction in any form so that such cultural heritage may be transmitted to the succeeding generations,

– having regard to the report of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)[6] and the UN Committee for Human Rights' intermediary report on freedom of worship and religion,[7]

– having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas allegations have been made by Armenia that campaigns to destroy the Armenian cemetery at Djulfa in the region of Nakhichevan were carried out by Azerbaijani forces in November 1998 and December 2002; whereas the most recent destruction took place in December 2005, as evidenced by video footage taken by the Armenian authorities,

B. whereas there were numerous reactions by the international community to these actions; whereas Azerbaijan has not provided answers to inquiries by Mr Abdelfattah Amor, the former special rapporteur of the United Nations, concerning the events of November 1998 and December 2002,

C. whereas serious allegations have been raised about the involvement of the Azerbaijani authorities in the destruction of these monuments,

D. underlining the exceptional nature of the Djulfa cemetery, which still had 6 000 *khatchkars* (crosses carved in stone typical of Armenian religious art) remaining and which testifies to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the region,

E. whereas the destruction or desecration of any monuments or objects of cultural, religious or national heritage infringes the principles of the European Union,

---

[6] World Report on Monuments and Sites in Danger 2002.

[7] 58th Session of the UN General Assembly, 1/58/296, 19.8.2003.

F. whereas such destruction is taking place in the context of the suspended conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh,

G. whereas there might soon be a favourable outcome to the negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh and agreement might be reached on the principles for settling the conflict despite the unproductive meeting in Rambouillet on 10 and 11 February 2006 between the presidents of Armenia and of Azerbaijan,

H. recalling that the European Neighbourhood Policy aims to establish a privileged partnership with Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of common values, including the respect for minorities and their cultural heritage,

1. Condemns strongly the destruction of the Djulfa cemetery as well as the destruction of all sites of historical importance that has taken place on Armenian or Azerbaijani territory, and condemns any such action that seeks to destroy cultural heritage;

2. Calls on the Council and the Commission to make clear to the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan that all efforts must be made to stop the practice of ethnic cleansing, which has led to such destruction, and to find ways in which to facilitate the gradual return of refugees and displaced people;

3. Demands that the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan respect their international commitments, notably as regards cultural heritage, and, in particular, those deriving from the two countries' accession to the Council of Europe and their inclusion in the European Neighbourhood Policy;

4. Stresses that respect for minority rights, including historical, religious and cultural heritage is conditional on the genuine and effective development of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which must also lead to the establishment of good neighbourly relations between all the countries concerned;

5. Demands that Azerbaijan allow missions, such as experts working with ICOMOS who are dedicated to surveying and protecting archaeological heritage, in particular Armenian heritage, onto its territory, and that it also allow a European Parliament delegation to visit the archaeological site at Djulfa;

6. Calls on the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan to comply with their international commitments, in particular as regards culture and the safeguarding of cultural heritage, entered into within international bodies such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe,

and calls on both countries to do their utmost to protect archaeological, historical and cultural heritage on their territories in order to prevent the destruction of other endangered sites;

7. Invites the Commission and the Council to incorporate a clause on protecting both territories' invaluable archaeological or historical sites into the action plans currently being discussed in a European Neighbourhood Policy context;

8. Invites the Commission and the Council to make the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy action plans conditional upon the respect by Armenia and Azerbaijan for universally accepted principles, in particular their obligations as members of the Council of Europe regarding human and minority rights, and calls on the Commission and the Council to incorporate into these action plans specific provisions for the protection of the cultural heritage of minorities;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Parliaments and Governments of the Member States, the Government and the President of Armenia, the Government and the President of Azerbaijan, as well as the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Director-General of UNESCO, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Thursday, 16 February 2006 - Strasbourg

MEMORANDUM

submitted to

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the attention of Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General and the Representatives of Member States at the General Conference

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPLEX OF JUGHA AND OF THE ENTIRE ARMENIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC OF NAKHIJEVAN (AZERBAIJAN)

1. Introduction and historical background

It has been brought to the attention of the signatories of this Memorandum that since 1998 the Armenian archaeological complex of Jugha (or Julfa in Persian) in the Autonomous Republic of Nakhijevan (Azerbaijan) has been systematically submitted to willful destruction and that between December 2005 and March 2006 it has been definitively destroyed by members of Azerbaijan's military forces.

Located in the border area between Iran and Nakhijevan, to the west of the ruined city of Jugha, on a hill divided by three small valleys, this cemetery was culturally and historically a unique testimony of Armenian presence in the region. With originally more than 10,000 memorial stelae, it constituted the largest collection of Armenian tombstones and cross-stones (*khatchkars*), many of them bearing philologically relevant inscriptions. They covered a period from the early Middle Ages (5th century) until the early 17th century. Most *khatchkars* date from the 15th and 16th centuries and represent a style which is at the same time typical for the region Nakhijevan and for Armenian craftsmanship of the late Middle Ages.

The historical Armenian provinces of Shahaponk, Yernjak and Goghtn are situated in a territory that is now known as the Autonomous Republic of Nakhijevan in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The former city of Jugha is situated in Yernjak, on the left bank of the river Araxes, which today defines the border between Iran and Nakhijevan. Already in the 7th century AD Jugha was a famous settlement.

During the 10-13th centuries it developed into a town, and eventually, during the 15-17th centuries, became an important trading centre for the entire South Caucasian region.

When in 1605 the Iranian Shah Abbas retreated after having been defeated by the Ottoman forces, he deported the entire regional Armenian population of the Jugha borderland into Iran with the intention to leave a depopulated and devastated area behind him; a positive consequence of this cruel eviction was the improvement of commerce, arts and manufacturing in Iran by the new Armenian settlers. The depopulated city of Jugha was partially destroyed by the Iranian forces. Yet, the eighteen ancient churches of Jugha, as well as the ruins of a magnificently built bridge, the caravanserai, the covered market, many public and private houses, and a number of scattered headstones in the cemetery, remained the silent, but expressive witnesses of History. The wide range of surviving building types and the historical complex of the town told the history of the people and their architecture. It was a life-size museum - an irreplaceable cultural documentation of humanity.

Having survived massacres and expulsions of the indigenous Armenian population in the early 17th century, this outstanding site had been repeatedly attacked and ruined during the 20th century, in particular during Russian railway constructions in 1903-1904 and after the final massacre and expulsion of the Armenians of Nakhijevan in 1919-1922. In 1928-1929, there were still up to 3,000 *khatchkars* and a few thousand flat, two-edged, cap-shaped tombstones.

The French Jesuit missionary Alexandre de Rhodes, during his travel in 1648, described the cemetery of Jugha and registered about ten thousand existing, standing and well-preserved *khatchkars*. In 1903-1904 a railroad was built near the Russian border: many headstones were then irreversibly damaged or destroyed. However, approximately 6,000 headstones remained intact.

In 1915, the photographer Aram Vruyr, and after him the historian S. Ter-Avetissian, in 1938-1939, counted and documented some tomb-stones which had been cut obliquely; this shows that many of these headstones had been intentionally broken already in the Soviet period.

2. The annihilation of Nakhijevan's entire Armenian cultural heritage

The decisive destruction process, which began in 1998 when 800 *khatchkars* were removed, was temporarily stopped after protests by UNESCO. From November 2002 until February 2003, however, the destruction continued. During the most recent phase of destruction, in December 2005, even those monuments the fragments of which were already laying on the ground, or smaller tombstones, were removed, broken and carried away or thrown into the river Araxes. In early March 2006, the cemetery had been completely levelled; on that site, the Azerbaijani authorities established a military training camp and a firing range.

During these three phases, the destruction was thoroughly documented from the Iranian side by representatives of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Iranian journalists and various art historians. Photo and video documentation about the ongoing destruction is also available on the Internet.[8]

The destruction of Jugha is not a unique case in this remote province of Nakhijevan. As examples, we would like to draw attention to the cases of the monastic site of Surb Karapet (Saint John the Forerunner), built in the town of Abrakunis in the historic Armenian region of Yernjak in 1381. When the Scotsman Steven Sim, a specialist in Oriental art history, visited Surb Karapet in the summer of 2005 among other Armenian sacred places in Nakhijevan, he witnessed complete destruction[9]. Sim tried to check other places, but the local police prevented his entering these areas. Thereafter, Sim went to one of the remotest regions of Nakhijevan to verify if such a situation existed everywhere; he went to the village of Shorut: what he discovered there convinced him that a deliberate state policy of destruction was carried out throughout all Nakhijevan.[10]

As representatives of our respective national Parliaments involved in human rights issues, we are very sensitive towards illegal acts such as cultural genocide or ethnocide. In this given case, we are all the more concerned as this particular case of ethnocide can easily turn into an immense obstacle for the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace-finding process towards Nagorno Karabakh. The systematic and repeated destruction of Armenian architectural heritage, which includes important religious and spiritual sites of the Armenian population of Nakhijevan, is completely incompatible with the OSCE peace-process in Nagorno Karabakh and confidence-building efforts.

3. Violation of national and international law

Azerbaijan's policy of destruction of the Armenian cultural heritage of Nakhijevan contradicts the basic principles of various international instruments for the protection of cultural heritage. In particular, it violates the instruments defining the duty of a State to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, in times of peace and war. The protection,

---

[8] <http://www.aga-online.org/de/ethnozid/ethnozid_aserbeidschan.php>.

[9] A special report dedicated to the destruction of Armenian monuments in Nakhijevan has been written by Steven Sim and first published in <http://www.hra.am/eng/?page=issue&id=15680>.

[10] Mkrtchyan, Gayane: «Monumental Effort: Scotsman wants to prove Azeri policy of cultural destruction in Nakhijevan», *Armenia Now*, 33 (155), 2 September 2005: <http://www.armenianow.com/?action=viewArticle&AID=1045&IID=1040&lng=eng>.

safeguarding and respect of cultural heritage is provided in the following international documents adopted within UNESCO:

- The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (14 May 1954);[11]

- The World Heritage Convention for the Protection of Global Cultural and Natural Heritage (16 November 1972);[12]

- The Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (17 October 2003);

- The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (20 October 2005).

Additionally, it is worth remembering that other international instruments aiming at the protection of historical monuments have been violated by this ethnocide, such as:

- Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments (15 April 1935);[13]

- The European Cultural Convention (19 December 1954);[14]

- The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (6 May 1969);[15]

- The European Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (23 June 1985);[16]

---

[11] The Republic of Azerbaijan adhered to the Convention on 20 September 1993.

[12] Ratified by the Republic of Azerbaijan on 16 December 1993.

[13] Also known as the “Roerich Pact”.

[14] The Republic of Azerbaijan is member of the Council of Europe, thus adheres to this Convention.

[15] Ibid. This Convention has been replaced by the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (16 January 1992).

[16] See note 7.

– The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (3 October 1985).[17]

Furthermore, Azerbaijan violated its own Constitution of 1995. In particular, the provisions of Article 77 hold responsible every citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the protection of historical and cultural memorials.

4. Diplomatic initiatives and political steps undertaken within the UNESCO and the European Parliament

Hoping to save what was still left, the Government of the Republic of Armenia at numerous occasions alerted the international community about the ongoing destruction of Armenian cultural heritage in Nakhijevan, in particular the destruction of monuments in Jugha. On 14 December 1998, the Armenian Minister for Foreign Affairs sent an official letter to the Director-General of UNESCO concerning the destruction of the medieval cemetery in Jugha and requested UNESCO's assistance in persuading the authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan to stop the cultural genocide against Armenian cultural heritage and to organize a fact-finding mission of experts to Nakhijevan.

On 20 November 2002, the destruction of tombs and the remaining (although already reduced in number) churches and monastic sites in Jugha was accomplished. Since then, numerous workers have again been engaged in dismantling valuable relics of medieval culture.

On 16 December 2002, in an official letter addressed to the Director-General of UNESCO, the Minister for Foreign Affairs again expressed concerns about the renewed attempts of the Azerbaijani authorities to carry out the destruction of the Armenian cemetery and church in Jugha. He suggested that an inspection mission to Nakhijevan should determine the extent of the systematic destruction. Answering this letter, the UNESCO representatives promised to contact the relevant authorities in Azerbaijan to obtain the necessary prior authorization for such a mission. UNESCO's intention to send an expert commission to Nakhijevan to research the destruction first-hand did have the effect of slowing down the destructive activities of the Azerbaijani authorities; however, the destruction did not stop entirely.

The National Council of Armenians of Nakhijevan submitted several declarations to various international organizations, such as the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and UNESCO, requesting them to put

---

[17] Ibid.

under international protection the ancient Armenian monuments that had been destroyed in Nakhijevan from 1999 to 2003.

On 10 February 2003, the Armenian National Committee ICOMOS appealed to the presidents of the National Committees of ICOMOS for their assistance in protecting Armenian historic and cultural heritage in Nakhijevan. Attached to the appeal were photographs, taken by eye-witnesses, of several destroyed monuments.

On 7 October 2005, in Paris, at the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO, the Armenian Minister for Foreign Affairs once again addressed the international community in an official statement regarding the destruction of the Armenian cultural heritage in Nakhijevan:

> *"Intentional destruction of cultural heritage should be characterized as cultural terrorism and a crime against humanity, which must be fought, the perpetrators must be punished, with the same resolve and determination as those who use terrorism as a tool against man."*

On 16 December 2005, the Armenian Minister informed the Director-General of UNESCO in an official letter that Azerbaijani soldiers were destroying the remnants of historically and religiously significant *khatchkars* in the medieval Armenian cemetery in Nakhijevan. The Minister urged the UNESCO officials to put an end to those acts of vandalism and violence.

In its 16 February 2006 resolution on "Cultural Heritage in Azerbaijan"[18], the European Parliament strongly condemned the destruction of the Jugha cemetery in Nakhijevan and demanded that there public of Azerbaijan allow the visit of a delegation composed of experts such as those working with ICOMOS who are specialized in surveying and protecting archaeological heritage, in particular Armenian heritage, onto its territory, and that it also allow a European Parliament delegation to visit the archaeological site at Jugha.

On 16 March 2006, the Armenian Minister for Foreign Affairs sent an official complaint to the UNESCO Director-General explaining the definitive destruction of the Jugha cemetery and the construction of a military shooting-area on the site.

---

[18] 1P6_TA(2006)0069, text adopted.

5. Recommendations

For all the above-mentioned reasons, the signatories appeal to UNESCO and the concerned authorities to take immediate and effective steps to call upon Azerbaijan to fulfil its international obligations for the protection of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the signatories urge the UNESCO:

1. To condemn in no uncertain terms the willful destruction of the cultural sites of Jugha, irreversibly annihilated during the last destruction phase begun by Azeri military forces on the 10 December 2005 and completed in mid-March 2006;

2. To denounce the ethnocidal nature and context of the destruction of the site within a systematic demolition operation, to which all Armenian architectural monuments from the Middle Ages have been subjected in Nakhijevan;

3. To demand a formal international investigation in this area, coordinated by UNESCO, aimed at preparing an accurate report about the destruction;

4. To publish a multi-disciplinary study (archaeological, architectural, ethnographic, etc.) of the area of Jugha, to be undertaken by international experts, and overseen by UNESCO;

5. To study safeguard mechanisms for the protection of historical memory and heritage destroyed on the site of Jugha; given the impossibility of any reconstruction of the destroyed site and its *khatchkars* – now literally pulverized – and in consideration of the fact that under the surface there are still the buried bodies of people to whose memory the former *khatchkars* had been erected, we suggest to transform this gross act of outspoken hatred into a positive step towards confidence-building and reconciliation. Two concrete measures could be envisaged:

(a) To convert the site of Jugha into an international centre of cross-community learning and a training centre for ethnocide prevention studies, in order to enable future generations to meet and learn from this example of hate and destruction;

(b) To erect a religious memorial building to honour the memory of those generations, who rest interred at this place;

6. To decide with the appropriate Azerbaijani institutions the setting up of a more effective system for the protection and preservation of the still existing remains of Armenian culture on the territory of Azerbaijan;

7. Should the Azerbaijani Government refuse to agree with at least one of the above recommendations, to sanction the Republic of Azerbaijan for having violated all international conventions on the protection of historical monuments to which it is a signatory. In this case, the suspension of the UNESCO membership could be taken into consideration as one of the logical options.

Paris, 17 October 2006

The undersigned are members of the international delegation established to deal with the issue of the destruction of the archaeological complex of Jugha and of the entire Armenian cultural heritage in the Autonomous Republic of Nakhijevan (Azerbaijan):

The Hon. **Dominique de Buman**, National Councillor (Vice-Chairman of the Christian Democratic Party, Switzerland)

The Hon. **Ueli Leuenberger**, National Councillor (Vice-Chairman of the Greens, Switzerland)

The Hon. **Roland Blum**, Representative to the National Assembly (UMP, Vice-Chairman of the French delegation to the PA of the OSCE, France)

The Hon. **Frédéric Dutoit**, Representative to the National Assembly (PCF, France)

The Hon. **Evgenios Haïtidis**, Member of Parliament (Nea Dimokratia, Greece)

The Hon. **Jim Karygiannis**, Member of Parliament (Liberal Party, Canada)

The Hon. **Richard Mallié**, Representative to the National Assembly (UMP, France)

The Hon. **Christophe Masse**, Representative to the National Assembly (PS, France)

The Hon. **Mark Pritchard**,Member of the House of Parliament (Conservative Party, United Kingdom)

The Hon. **François Roelants du Vivier**, Senator (MR, Chairman of the Commission of ExternalAffairs and Defence of the Belgian Senate)

The Hon. **André Santini**, Representative to the National Assembly (UDF, France)

Mr. **Steven Sim**, Architect and art historian (Glasgow, Scotland)

Jugha. Chronology of an annihilation

The Jugha cemetery is the largest Armenian medieval cemetery known. After deportation of the Armenian population of Jugha to Iran in the early 17th century, the French Jesuite Missionary Alexandre de Rhodes, passing thereabouts recorded the fact that there were approximately 10'000 *khatchkars* (tombstones and cross-stones) in place, all in good condition. By the beginning of the XXth century approximately 6'000 *khatchkars* remained intact or were in a fallen position. Later in 1915, Aram Vruyr and S. Ter-Avetisian in 1938-1939 counted up to 3'000 *khatchkars* plus a few thousand gabled, smooth and ram-shaped tombstones. During the Soviet years, the Jugha cemetery was completely neglected by the Azerbaijan Monuments Preservation Department; moreover, under state auspices, the *khatchkars* were steadily destroyed, cut into small pieces and used as building material.

According to surveys of the Jugha cemetery by Dr. Argam Aivazyan in 1971-1973, there were 462 *khatchkars* on the first hill as it is called, either intact, fallen or broken; on the second hill there were 1'672; while on the third there were 573 *khatchkars*, intact or fallen down, for a total of 2'707. In addition to the *khatchkars,* there were over one thousand ram-shaped as well as gabled, smooth tombstones with ornamental reliefs in this important cemetery. More than 250 *khatchkars* were counted in the Amenaprkich monastery cemetery plus those of the town church and elsewhere. In addition, the number of *khatchkars* and ram-shaped tombstones buried in the earth, broken or shattered to pieces in the main and other cemeteries is estimated at over 1'400.

Yet the systematic destruction wave of the Jugha *khatchkars* began in 1998. At the end of November 1998, architect Arpiar Petrossian from Teheran sent an e-mail to the Research on Armenian Architecture (RAA) organisation with the following content:

"On the road leading to the monastery of St. Stepanos Nakhavga (St. Stephen the Protomartyr), on 26 November, at 11 o'clock am (Teheran time), some Armenian architects and I observed, that on the Nakhijevan side of the Araxes river, a systematic destruction of the present *khatchkars* belonging to the historical Jugha cemetery was taking place. At that very moment, a bulldozer, a mobile crane as well as a train with special lifting equipment were active in the cemetery. Workers were observed removing richly carved *khatchkars* and other precious burial sculptures. The artefacts were removed on railway wagons so that the ground could be flattened.

These facts have also been recorded by representatives of the Committee for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who joined us two hours later. Based on observations by workers involved with conservation activities at the monastery of St. Stepanos, and taking into account also reports from native inhabitants, the destruction had begun one week earlier. Our estimates suggest that nearly twenty percent (20%) of the existing artefacts observed one month earlier had already been destroyed. The photographs included hereby clearly document this plundering. The objectionable presence of the train, which belongs to and is in fact maintained by authorities of the Nakhijevani government, indicates not only that this

act is quite well known to the Azerbaijani authorities, but also directly implicates these authorities. We strongly believe that if this destruction is not immediately stopped, our civilization will be faced with an irreversible loss of incalculable cultural value."

The annihilation was resumed on 9 November 2002, when the *khatchkars* were toppled and ruined. By the time the incident was written up by ICOMOS in its World Report on Monuments and Sites in Danger for that year[1], the 1'500-year old cemetery was described as "completely flattened". The pictures taken by eye witnesses from the Iranian side of the river Araxes revealed that the cemetery no longer had a single *khachkar* left standing.

Between 10 and 14 December, 2005, the final annihilation wave started and the three hills of the Jugha cemetery were completely purged. It is not clear exactly how many *khatchkars* were left, but on 14 December 2005 witnesses in Armenian reports stated that about 200 soldiers of the Azerbaijani military forces using heavy hammers and pickaxes, demolished the remaining stones, loading them onto trucks and dumping them in the river Araxes. These actions were recorded from across the river in Iran by an Armenian film crew and are available on Internet[2].

An International War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) contributor has become the first journalist to visit the site of the cemetery on Azerbaijan's border with Iran - and has confirmed that the graveyard has completely vanished[3]. Photographs taken on 10 March, 2006, show that a shooting range has instead been located on the site of the Jugha cemetery, lying over thousands of human remains. Having transformed the site of a former cemetery into a "military zone", the Azeri authorities will certainly insist on banning any international fact finding missions from entering for any visitor's "own safety".

* * *

The Government of Armenia has continuously raised this issue alerting the international community about the destruction of the Armenian cultural and religious heritage in Nakhijevan, in particular the destruction of the ancient cemetary of Jugha. Official letters of complaint were sent to the UNESCO, to the Council of Europe, to the OSCE, to other international organisations in December 1998, December 2002, February 2003, December 2005 and March 2006.

On 8 May 2003, Mr. Abdelfattah Amor, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief of the Commission on Human Rights made an inquiry to the Azerbaijani Government on the systematic destruction of thousands of *Khatchkars* in the Djulfa cemetery in November 2002 and in November 1998. The Azerbaijani Government has not responded to the inquiry. All subsequent inquiries by other bodies also remained unanswered.

---

[1] http://www.international.icomos.org/risk/2002/azerbaijan2002.htm
[2] http://www.armenica.org/multimedia/video/jougha1-qt.html;
http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/jugha/video1.html.
[3] http://iwpr.net/index.php?p=crs&s=f&o=261191&apc_state=henpcrs261191

Following the European Parliament Resolution on Cultural Heritage in Azerbaijan dated 16 February 2006, which, inter alia, demanded that Azerbaijan allow a European Parliament delegation to visit the archaeological site at Djulfa, members of the delegation from the European parliament visiting the region in April 2006 were not permitted to enter Nakhijevan.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in its turn has initiated an inquiry mission led by Mr. Edward O'Hara, Rapporteur on cultural heritage, to asses the situation of cultural monuments in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh. Following several postponements, the mission finally intended to visit the region in September 2007. The authorities of Armenia and of Nagorno Karabakh have reconfirmed their consent for the visit. However, the visit of the PACE delegation has now apparently been cancelled as a result of the non-constructive stance of the Azerbaijani side, due solely to their intent to veil the demolition of Armenian monuments, including the medieval cemetery of Jugha in Nakhijevan.
