The Language of Displacement: Rethinking Legal Approaches to Hate Speech Through the 2023 Armenian Exodus from Nagorno-Karabakh

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ABSTRACT

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Maria-Vera Azadian

This thesis examines the role of Azerbaijani state-sponsored hate speech in the 2023 forced displacement of over 100,000 Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh. It argues that government rhetoric functioned as a form of discursive coercion, shaping a hostile environment that contributed to the exodus without meeting international legal thresholds for incitement. Using a mixed-methods approach—HateBERT analysis, z-score tracking, and qualitative content analysis—the thesis identifies patterns of rhetorical escalation preceding military action. Six recurring themes emerged: historical revisionism, glorification of violence, dehumanisation, appeals to territorial integrity, delegitimization of Armenian presence, and victimhood narratives. These findings highlight a gap in international human rights law which fails to address covert, or elite hate speech. The thesis calls for a reconceptualization of hate speech in legal terms, adding that sustained state discourse may function as a tool of coercion ultimately leading to displacement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Azerbaijan and Armenia at the International Court of Justice

In September 2021, Armenia began proceedings against the Republic of Azerbaijan for violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The proceedings contain a number of allegations concerning discriminatory murder, torture, and inhumane acts (para. 26 (2)), the glorification of such acts (para. 26 (3)) and practices of enforced disappearances (para. 26 (5)) during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War.[1]

This thesis will focus on the specific allegation that "Azerbaijan has violated its obligations under Articles 2 (1), 4, 6 and 7 of the CERD by facilitating, tolerating, inciting and failing to punish and prevent hate speech targeting ethnic Armenians". [2] In its Application to the Court, Armenia alleges the existence of a "pervasive atmosphere of racially discriminatory speech and sentiment" (para. 96), where "[a]s a result of this State-sponsored policy of Armenian hatred, Armenians have been subjected to systemic discrimination, mass killings, torture and other abuse".[3] The ICJ's Judgment on 12 November 2024 finds that such an atmosphere, if proven, would be relevant to in determining whether Azerbaijan has violated its obligations under CERD. [4]

[1] "Judgment of 12 November 2024 | INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE," 12, https://www.icj-cij.org/node/204315, para. 26(6).
[2] "Judgment of 12 November 2024 | INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE," 12, para. 96.
[3] "Judgment of 12 November 2024 | INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE," 12, para. 34(6).
[4] "Judgment of 12 November 2024 | INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE," 12, para. 94.

1.2: Historical Background

Claims over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh – known as Artsakh in the Armenian language – serve as the main reason for the hostility between Armenia and Azerbaijan. As the Soviet Union collapsed, demands from Armenians that Nagorno-Karabakh be transferred to Armenia intensified.[5] At the same time, anti-Armenian sentiment grew in Azerbaijan, culminating in three major pogroms targeting Armenians in the Azerbaijani cities of Sumgait, Baku, and Kirovabad.[6] In 1991, a referendum about independence was held in Nagorno-Karabakh as Azerbaijan seceded from the Soviet Union. This referendum was not recognized by Azerbaijan, and, in early 1992, full-scale fighting begun. In 1994, the Bishkek Protocol established an indefinite ceasefire, with the Republic of Artsakh remaining *de facto* independent until 2020 but was unrecognized internationally.

In 2020, Azerbaijan launched a full-scale attack on the Republic of Artsakh. A trilateral ceasefire agreement between Armenia, Russia, and Azerbaijan was reached on November 9, 2020, placing the territory of Artsakh under Azerbaijani control and deployed Russian peacekeeping forces in the region. The Lachin corridor, the sole route connecting Artsakh to Armenia, was placed under the control of the Russian mission. On December 12, 2022, the Lachin corridor was blockaded by Azerbaijani environmental protesters, who were widely understood to be "backed

[5] Tsypylma Darieva and Wolfgang Kaschuba, eds., *Representations on the Margins of Europe: Politics and Identities in the Baltic and South Caucasian States* (Campus Verlag, 2008), https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/R/bo5456613.html.

[6] Armenian Prelacy, "The Sumgait Massacres (February 28, 1988)," Armenian Prelacy, February 25, 2021, https://armenianprelacy.org/2021/02/24/the-sumgait-massacres-february-28-1988/; Caroline Cox, John Eibner, and Elena Bonnėr, *Ethnic Cleansing in Progress: War in Nagorno Karabakh* (Zürich ; Washington: Institute for Religious Minorities in the Islamic World, 1993), https://catalog.lib.uchicago.edu/vufind/Record/1587507; Darieva and Kaschuba, *Representations on the Margins of Europe*; Michael Parks, "Soviet Tells of Blocking Slaughter of Armenians : General Reports His Soldiers Have Suppressed Dozens of Massacre Attempts by Azerbaijanis," Los Angeles Times, November 27, 1988, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-11-27-mn-1060-story.html.

by the country's authorities."[7] This blockade remained in place until September 2023, when Azerbaijan once again invaded Nagorno-Karabakh. This military operation lasted two days. However, by its end, the Republic of Artsakh was dissolved, and the Armenian government announced that nearly 100,500 ethnic Armenians had crossed to the Republic of Armenia, in an event many scholars agreed was forced deportation.[8]

1.3: Research Question, Subquestions, and Human Rights Significance

In the context of current ICJ litigation, as well as the forced deportation of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, this thesis will address the following research question:

What role did Azerbaijani state-sponsored hate speech play in the 2023 Armenian forced deportation from Nagorno-Karabakh, and how does it challenge international hate speech law?

1. How did the content and intensity of Azerbaijani government speech change in the months preceding the 2023 exodus from Nagorno-Karabakh?
2. What recurring themes of hate speech can be identified in state-sponsored speech?
3. To what extent did these rhetorical patterns correspond with major coercive actions?
4. How do existing international legal instruments, such as the ICCPR, ICERD, and the Rabat Plan of Action, conceptualize and address hate speech?
5. Are existing legal instruments fit to address government-sponsored hate speech?

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[7] "Azerbaijan: Blockade of Lachin Corridor Putting Thousands of Lives in Peril Must Be Immediately Lifted," Amnesty International, February 9, 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/02/azerbaijan-blockade-of-lachin-corridor-putting-thousands-of-lives-in-peril-must-be-immediately-lifted/.

[8] "Panic in Nagorno-Karabakh but Azerbaijan Rejects Fears of Ethnic Cleansing," September 23, 2023, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66888945.

The human rights significance of this research lies in its interrogation of how international law deals with hate speech, especially when it is used by states. State-sponsored discourse often operates more subtly than other forms of hate speech, as it may use legalistic framing, historical revisionism, or rhetorical exclusion. In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, a decades-long territorial conflict has been accompanied by a persistent campaign of anti-Armenian rhetoric at the highest levels of government. This raises important questions about how hate speech contributes to systemic discrimination, group erasure, and displacement — even when it falls below the threshold of direct incitement to violence. If international human rights law is to remain effective as a tool for prevention and accountability, it must deal with the different forms that hate speech takes in state discourse and reconsider where the boundaries of legal protection ought to lie.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1: A Complete History of Nagorno-Karabakh

While different empires, from Persians to Arabs to Mongols, passed through the territory now known as Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenians held a consistent, and demographically dominant presence in the territory since at least the fourth century CE.[9] At the beginning of the 19th century, the enclave was integrated into the Russian empire. After its dissolution in 1917, Armenia and Azerbaijan declared independence and emerged as two, albeit short-lived, republics. Nagorno-Karabakh became a contested territory.[10] In July 1918, the democratically elected congress in Nagorno-Karabakh voted to unanimously join the young Armenian Republic. However, they continued to govern themselves until the Soviet consolidation of power in the region in 1920.

The status of Nagorno-Karabakh then became an internal Soviet matter. The Bolshevik Caucasus Bureau, in July 2021, opted to place the region in the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). However, the Bureau granted it autonomy through its status as a distinct administrative area, or an oblast. The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) was therefore established in 1923. [11] The creation of the Armenian-majority oblast and its placement under Azerbaijani administrative control ultimately laid the foundation for decades of ethnic and political tension.

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[9] Khachig Tololyan, "National Self-determination and the Limits of Sovereignty: Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Secession of Nagorno-Karabagh," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 1995): 86–110, https://doi.org/10.1080/13537119508428422.
[10] Ohannes Geukjian, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in the South Caucasus: Nagorno-Karabakh and the Legacy of Soviet Nationalities Policy* (London: Routledge, 2016), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315580531, p. 53-57.
[11] Geukjian, 70-71.

During the Soviet era, the autonomy granted to the NKAO allowed it to sustain a relative stability. However, by the 1980s Karabakh Armenians began to voice their frustration over cultural and linguistic marginalization, as Armenian-language textbooks were denied in local schools, Armenian-language broadcasts were banned from television, among the suppression of other cultural rights in the Azerbaijani SSR. Armenian leaders described these policies as part of a systematic campaign to "Azerify" the region and shift its demographic balance.[12] Soviet census records reflect this change. In 1926, Armenians made up 89.1% of the NKAO's population, while Azerbaijanis constituted 10%. However, by 1989, the Armenian population had declined to 76.9%, and Azerbaijanis had risen to 21.5%.[13]

Tensions reached a turning point in the context of the Soviet Union's imminent collapse in the late 1980s. This period saw a surge in anti-Armenian violence, most notably the brutal pogroms in Sumgait in February 1988, and in Baku in January 1990.[14] First, in what is now known as the Sumgait massacre, Armenians were raped, mutilated, burned alive, and killed in the streets. Two years later, the Armenian population of Baku was violently expelled from city after a number of beatings and killings. In the midst of this violence, both the Soviet of People's Deputies of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR formally appealed for the transfer of the NKAO to Armenia in 1988. However, the Soviet central government rejected the request, though it acknowledged that the "autonomous region's constitutional rights [had] been

[12] Mark Malkasian, *Gha-Ra-Bagh!: The Emergence of the National Democratic Movement in Armenia* (Wayne State University Press, 1996).
[13] "NKR Office in Washington, DC," http://www.nkrusa.org/nk_conflict/references.shtml.
[14] Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, Anniversary,Updated edition (New York: NYU Press, 2013), p. 33-45, 93-102.

breached." Rather than address these violations, Moscow called vaguely for a negotiated settlement to rising ethnic tensions.[15]

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in a further escalation of ethnic tensions in the region. Just days after Azerbaijan declared independence on 30 August 1992, the People's Deputies of Nagorno-Karabakh, alongside local administrators, also declared the region's provisional independence on 2 September. A referendum held on 10 December 1991 revealed an overwhelming local support for independence. On 6 January 1992, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic formally declared itself an independent state.[16]

This assertion of self-determination quickly led to war. By 1992, open hostilities had erupted between the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh backed by the Republic of Armenia, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, who aimed to reestablish control over the territory. The First Nagorno-Karabakh War followed, a conflict which would leave approximately 30,000 dead and hundreds of thousands displaced.[17]

A ceasefire was brokered on 5 May 1994 through the Bishkek Protocol, signed by Armenia and Azerbaijan. From that point until 2023, the Republic of Artsakh (the name adopted by Nagorno-Karabakh) operated as a de facto independent entity. Armenian forces retained control over both the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts historically populated by

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[15] Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War*, Anniversary,Updated edition (New York: NYU Press, 2013), p. 33-45, 93-102.
[16] Geukjian, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in the South Caucasus*.
[17] Benjamin Lieberman, *Terrible Fate: Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe*, Reprint edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), p.284-292.

Azerbaijanis but outside the NKAO's Soviet-era borders. Despite exercising effective governance and maintaining a functioning political system, the Republic of Artsakh remained unrecognized internationally. [18]

After the 1994 ceasefire, a line of contact came to mark the de facto borders of the self-proclaimed Republic of Artsakh, governed by ethnic Armenian authorities. Though never internationally recognized and formally claimed by Azerbaijan, the territory functioned independently for over two decades, with a stable civilian population and operating civil institutions. While largely peaceful, this period was punctuated by intermittent Azerbaijani ceasefire violations, particularly in 2008, 2010, and between 2014 and 2016.

That fragile stability, however, was shattered on the morning of 27 September 2020, when Azerbaijan launched a full-scale assault on the Republic of Artsakh, marking the beginning of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. Civilian infrastructure, like schools, homes, and places of worship, was devastated and noncombatants were killed or wounded in large numbers. The war culminated in a trilateral ceasefire agreement brokered by Russia on 10 November 2020. The aftermath left Artsakh with profound territorial and cultural losses: numerous Armenian heritage sites were seized, and control over large swaths of land was transferred to Azerbaijan.[19]

Two years later, on 12 December 2022, Azerbaijan imposed a blockade on the Lachin corridor, the sole route connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Responsible for transporting 90% of the region's food, medicine, and essential goods, its closure triggered a slow-moving

[18] Benjamin Lieberman, *Terrible Fate: Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe*, Reprint edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), p.284-292.
[19] "INTERIM REPORT ON THE AZERBAIJANI ATROCITIES AGAINST ARTSAKH POPULATION IN SEPTEMBER 2020," Ombudsman, https://artsakhombuds.am/en/document/722.

humanitarian disaster. Over the next ten months, the population endured systematic starvation, forced rationing, and near-total isolation. Families were separated, patients were denied critical medical care, and journalists were barred from reporting on the ground. Coupon systems replaced commerce, and everyday life came to a halt.[20]

Despite growing international pressure, Azerbaijan delayed the resumption of aid until mid-September 2023. Yet mere days after allowing the first shipment in three months to pass through Lachin, Azerbaijan launched another large-scale military offensive on 19 September. The attack targeted an already-starving population, with Azerbaijani forces threatening to advance on Stepanakert.[21] Under intense bombardment and the threat of further escalation, Nagorno-Karabakh's authorities surrendered within 24 hours and, under coercion, accepted a Russia-brokered ceasefire. The agreement included the dismantling of the region's self-defence force, the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army, and the formal dissolution of the Republic of Artsakh. By October 2023, more than 100,000 Armenians had fled Nagorno-Karabakh, and, for the first time in over 1,500 years, the region no longer had an Armenian population.[22]

[20] "We Are No One: How Impunity for Three Years of Atrocities Is Erasing Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians," University Network for Human Rights, https://www.humanrightsnetwork.org/publications/we-are-no-one.
[21] Tim Lister Walsh Gianluca Mezzofiore,Christian Edwards,Anna Chernova,Nick Paton, "Azerbaijan Launches Operation against Armenian Forces in Nagorno-Karabakh," CNN, September 19, 2023, https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/19/asia/armenia-azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh-bombardment-intl/index.html.
[22] "UN Karabakh Mission Told 'Sudden' Exodus Means as Few as 50 Ethnic Armenians May Remain | UN News," October 2, 2023, https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1141782.

2.2: Defining Hate Speech

2.2.1: Theoretical Approaches to Hate Speech

In their review of existing definitions and methodologies to study hate speech, Vergari et al find the existence of a number of definitions.[23] Definitions may differ in many ways. Some take teleological approaches, where hate speech is defined by intention, or "tendency" of the act, while others use consequentialist approaches, where hate speech is rather measured by the "effects or perceived effects" of the acts.[24] Formal models may also be used to define the phenomenon, characterising hate speech as an immoral, unlawful, or derogatory act.[25]

Genocide scholar Susan Benesch argues that mass violence occurs "neither spontaneously nor abruptly"[26], and that thought leaders may use hate speech to make atrocities seem necessary, or even acceptable.[27] She uses a consequentialist approach to propose *inflammatory*, or *dangerous* speech as a new framework for hate speech and argues such speech may serve as a new early warning indicator. [28]

Dangerous speech refers to speech that causes indirect harm. Specifically, she finds that conventional definitions of hate focus significantly on the harm caused directly to groups through,

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[23] Matteo Vergani et al., "Mapping the Scientific Knowledge and Approaches to Defining and Measuring Hate Crime, Hate Speech, and Hate Incidents: A Systematic Review," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 20, no. 2 (June 2024): e1397, https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1397, p.9.
[24] Matteo Vergani et al., "Mapping the Scientific Knowledge and Approaches to Defining and Measuring Hate Crime, Hate Speech, and Hate Incidents: A Systematic Review," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 20, no. 2 (June 2024): e1397, https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1397, p.17, 25.
[25] Matteo Vergani et al., "Mapping the Scientific Knowledge and Approaches to Defining and Measuring Hate Crime, Hate Speech, and Hate Incidents: A Systematic Review," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 20, no. 2 (June 2024): e1397, https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1397, p.17-18.
[26] Susan Benesch, "Countering Dangerous Speech: New Ideas for Genocide Prevention," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, February 11, 2014), https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3686876. p.4.
[27] Benesch, p.6.
[28] Benesch, p.4.

for instance, name-calling or dehumanisation. However, dangerous speech refers to speech that aims to make its audience hate and discriminate against a particular target. Benesch finds that genocide prevention efforts ought to focus on such speech due to its "unique capacity to catalyze mass violence". [29] She points to four tell-tale signs of dangerous speech, which, in light of further literature, may be placed in two categories: overt, and covert/elite hate speech. The signs of overt hate speech are:

1. "References to the target group as pests, vermin, insects, or animals, since such dehumanization tends to make killing and atrocities seem acceptable.
2. Claims that members of the target group pose a mortal or existential threat to the audience, aptly dubbed "accusation in a mirror" in a Rwandan Hutu propaganda manual. […] One of the most famous examples is the Nazi assertion, before the Holocaust began, that Jews were planning to wipe out the German people." [30]

While those of covert hate speech remain:

3. "Assertions that the members of the target group are besmirching the audience group, or damaging its purity or integrity
4. Identifying the target group as foreign or alien, as if to expel them from the audience's group." [31]

The first two signs will be discussed through the lens of David Livingstone Smith's theory of dehumanisation, while the next two will be addressed through Teun van Dijk, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, and Vamik Volkan's understandings of elite discourse.

Overt Hate Speech

[29] Benesch, p.5.
[30] Benesch, p.8-9.
[31] Benesch, p.8-9.

Dehumanisation diminishes groups by equating them with despised subhuman entities like rats, germs, or filth, stripping them of individuality and humanity. This paves the way for collective blame and removes guilt from the in-group for supporting or committing violence, as it is no longer seen as violence against humans.[32]

In his 2020 book, *On Inhumanity,* David Livingstone Smith elaborates a more specific approach to dehumanisation, which he defines as the process of transforming a human person into a "monster". Monsters, in Smith's text, present two threats: a physical threat, and a metaphysical threat.[33] He states that the definition of a physical threat is "evident", in the sense that monsters must be "out to get you". Metaphysical threats, on the other hand, tend to undermine our understanding of reality, meaning that they are "unnatural". The dehumanised are therefore threatening physically, because they are framed as barbarians or violent invaders, and metaphysically, because they appear to be both human and subhuman.[34]

In an article entitled "Paradoxes of Dehumanization", Smith provides further explanation of the metaphysical threat a "monster" must pose.[35] He argues that the dehumaniser implicitly recognises the humanity of the dehumanised, because they treat their victims differently than they would treat the pests they may be compared to. Smith says "Nazis thought of Jews as vermin in human form, but there was no Auschwitz consecrated to the torture of real vermin".[36] This view of the dehumanised as both human and subhuman produced "uncanny valley", a term coined by

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[32] Babak Bahador, "Classifying and Identifying the Intensity of Hate Speech," *Items*, accessed November 21, 2024, https://items.ssrc.org/disinformation-democracy-and-conflict-prevention/classifying-and-identifying-the-intensity-of-hate-speech/.
[33] David Livingstone Smith, "Monsters," in *On Inhumanity: Dehumanization and How to Resist It*, ed. David Livingstone Smith (Oxford University Press, 2020), 0, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190923006.003.0022.
[34] Smith.
[35] David Livingstone Smith, "Paradoxes of Dehumanization," *Social Theory and Practice* 42, no. 2 (2016): 416–43.
[36] Smith.

roboticist Masahiro Mori, which refers to the sense of unease one might feel when one encounters what *seems* but is *not quite* human.[37] This unease, caused by assumptions about the "natural" sustains the metaphysical threat, which, along with the physical threat, creates the "monster". Dehumanisation, in Smith's view, therefore, combines the Benesch's two signs of overt indirect hate speech.

Covert/Elite Hate Speech

Because this thesis specifically focuses on the allegation that the Azerbaijani state is responsible, at least in part, for the dissemination of hate speech, it is appropriate to consider covert hate speech. This section also refers to covert hate speech as "elite". As per van Dijk's analysis of far-right discourse in Western parliaments, elite groups tend not only to conceal hate speech behind rhetorical strategies such as national self-glorification, but they also use such speech to manufacture consent for potentially discriminatory policies.[38] This section will analyse two methods of covert hate speech, as elaborated by Trouillot and Volkan.

In his book *Silencing the Past,* Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues that historical production is shaped by existing power structures through the strategic use of silence, where erasure of alternative narratives takes place in every step of the process: the creation of sources, archives, narratives, and finally, history.[39] In other words, he claims that "any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences"[40], and argues, through his example of the Haitian revolution, that

[37] M. Mori and K. Macdorman, "The Uncanny Valley: The Original Essay by Masahiro Mori-IEEE Spectrum," 2017, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Uncanny-Valley%3A-The-Original-Essay-by-Masahiro-Mori-Macdorman/243242898b3148b32a31df5f884d4c4f01ea4e61.
[38] Teun A. van Dijk, "Discourse and the Denial of Racism," *Discourse & Society* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 1992): 87–118, https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926592003001005, p. 192.
[39] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History, 20th Anniversary Edition*, 2nd Revised edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), p.26.
[40] Trouillot, p.27.

dominant powers may reinterpret [41] or ignore [42] historical facts to fulfil strategic goals. He brings up the silence surrounding the Haitian revolution during celebrations for the Bicentennial of the French Revolution (1989-1991), where long compilations on revolutionary France showed near total neglect for Haiti.[43] Acknowledging the Haitian Revolution would have required rethinking the West's narrative of itself as the birthplace of modern liberty, a narrative that depends on the exclusion of Black revolutionary agency. Power therefore operates not just through what is said, but also through what is excluded from discourse. Erasing a group's historical presence may therefore serve to justify Benesch's last sign of hate speech, where such discourse constitutes a strategic way to depict a group as foreign or alien.

In his 2001 article "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity", Vamik Volkan discusses "chosen trauma" as a way for ethnic, national, or religious groups to construct their identities.[44] Chosen trauma refers to a "shared mental representation" of a trauma inflicted to the group's ancestors by an enemy. Volkan discusses the danger of chosen trauma through the Serbs' representation of the battle of Kosovo, and its role in the atrocities in Bosnia. For instance, Slobodan Milošević, as the president of Serbia in 1989, erected a monument memorializing the 600 years since the Serbian loss of the battle of Kosovo. The monument, featuring a battle cry summoning Serb men to fight the Turks, serves to mythologize the battle, but also to create a sense of "entitlement for revenge".[45] This sense of entitlement stirred up by mentions of the Serbian defeat therefore facilitated mass atrocities against

[41] Trouillot, p.99.
[42] Trouillot, p.98.
[43] Trouillot, p.102.
[44] Vamik D. Volkan, "Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity," *Group Analysis* 34, no. 1 (2001): 79–97, https://doi.org/10.1177/05333160122077730, p.79.
[45] Volkan, 93.

the Bosnian Muslims, who stood as a symbol for the Turks. [46] Chosen trauma thus serves as a relevant framework to consider covert hate disseminated by high levels of government as it corresponds to Benesch's third sign of dangerous speech.

2.2.2: Hate Speech in International Human Rights Law

This section deals with three international legal instruments that address hate speech: the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), as well as the Rabat Plan of Action. It will provide a description of each instrument's approach to hate speech and will situate these definitions in Vergari et al's typology of definitions (teleological, consequentialist, formal). This section will also consider international legal jurisprudence surrounding hate speech, through ICTY and ICTR precedents.

International Convention on Civil and Political Rights

In a 2013 article, legal scholar Nazila Ghanea situates the prohibition of hate speech between Articles 19 and 20 of the ICCPR, referring to it as an "Article 19 ½."[47] Article 19 safeguards the right to freedom of expression, subject to necessary limitations for public order and the protection of others' rights. In contrast, Article 20 mandates the prohibition of advocacy that incites discrimination, hostility, or violence. Article 20 is widely understood to describe incitement to violence specifically, as opposed to hate speech.

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[46] Volkan, 94.
[47] Nazila Ghanea, "Intersectionality and the Spectrum of Racist Hate Speech: Proposals to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," *Human Rights Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2013): 935–54.

The ICCPR presents an overall consequentialist approach to dealing with hate speech. While Article 20 may appear formal because of its legal clarity, its prohibition on incitement is rooted in the concept of anticipated harm, or, the incitement to violence. The distinction it draws between protected and prohibited speech hinges not just on the presence of offensive content, but on the likelihood of causing public disorder or harm to others' rights. Ghanea's framing of it as "Article 19½" demonstrates this balance, finding that the limitation on expression is justifiable only when it can be shown to have consequential effects. Therefore, while the legal structure appears formal, its underlying rationale is consequentialist.

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Hate speech is also elaborated in ICERD's article 4, and in its treaty body's General Recommendation 35. The severity of hate speech may be assessed through 5 criteria: (1) the content and form of speech, (2) the economic, social and political climate prevalent at the time the speech was made and disseminated, (3) the position or status of the speaker in society and the audience to which the speech is directed, (4) the reach of the speech, and (5) the objectives of the speech. Paragraph 22 notes that hate speech disseminated by "public authorities or public institutions" is especially of concern.[48]

ICERD is best understood as teleological, with some consequentialist elements. Article 4 and. The instrument aims not merely to regulate speech in a vacuum but to achieve the broader normative goal of the elimination of racial discrimination. However, some consequentialist elements are also involved, as the criteria it uses to assess hate speech are not only concerned with

[48] "General Recommendation No. 35 (2013) on Combating Racist Hate Speech," OHCHR, accessed December 2, 2024, https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-recommendation-no-35-2013-combating-racist.

the potential of speech to reinforce structures of discrimination but also consider the consequences of the speech through its reach.

Rabat Plan of Action

The Rabat Plan of Action is the result of a series of expert workshops conducted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) about the prohibition of incitement to hatred in 2011 and 2012. While it is not a binding document, the Rabat Plan functions as a soft law document. It contains a six-part threshold test to "measure" hate speech. [49] The test measures the following elements:

(a) Context: The Rabat definition of context refers to "likel[iness of statements] to incite discrimination, hostility or violence against the target group", and may have an impact on intent and causation. An analysis of context would place the speech within the prevalent sociopolitical context at the time of dissemination.

(b) Speaker: This element refers to the speaker's status in the society, emphasizing their standing vis-à-vis the audience towards whom the speech is directed.

(c) Intent: Intent follows the definition of Article 20 of the ICCPR, where "negligence and recklessness are not sufficient for an act to be an offence", and where a "triangular relationship between the object and subject of the speech act as well as the audience" is necessary.

[49] "The Rabat Plan of Action," OHCHR, accessed April 17, 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/outcome-documents/rabat-plan-action.

(d) Content and form: the content of speech may include the degree to which "the speech was provocative and direct, as well as the form, style, nature of arguments deployed in the speech, or the balance struck between arguments deployed"

(e) Extent of the speech act: Extent measures the reach of the speech, through elements such as magnitude, methods of dissemination, frequency, and quantity, among others.

(f) Likelihood, imminence: For speech to amount to a crime, the action must have some degree of risk or harm, even though it is not necessary that the action it advocates for be committed.[50]

The Rabat Plan is the clearest example of a consequentialist approach, where the threshold test seems to be structured to evaluate the likelihood of harm. It encourages nuanced, context-specific assessments of how speech may lead to violence or discrimination. The use of "likelihood" and "imminence" as factors, along with speaker status and intent, shows that what matters is the actual, or probable impact of speech in its environment. Unlike ICERD, which is concerned with achieving the elimination of racial discrimination, Rabat focuses on harm prevention.

Previous Jurisprudence

The International Criminal Court considers jurisprudence from its predecessors, the International Tribunals for Rwanda (ICTR) and for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), primarily on methodological grounds.[51] While cases from these ad hoc tribunals do not bind the Court, they do

[50] "The Rabat Plan of Action."
[51] Volker Nerlich, "The Status of ICTY and ICTR Precedent in Proceedings before the ICC," in *The Emerging Practice of the International Criminal Court* (BRILL, 2009), https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzMwODE2MF9fQU41?sid=97801177-6687-4037-be8b-b905f826814b@redis&vid=3&format=EB&lpid=lp_281&rid=0.

serve as helpful tools for the interpretation of the main legal instruments of the Court. *Nahimana et al*, or the *Media* case, is therefore worth examining for its interpretation of hate speech.

Guido Acquaviva and Fausto Pocar agree that the ICTR's *Media* case demonstrates that hate speech, either on its own or in conjunction with similar acts, may be so grave as to amount to a persecutory act, especially if it is carried out in conjunction with other discriminatory acts.[52] Furthermore, the Court finds that there need not be a connection between persecution and violence to judge whether persecution has occurred.[53] In other words, persecution in IHRL can exist independently of violence. Additionally, the Court finds that hate speech does not need to contain any call to action to constitute persecution – the speech itself becomes persecution.[54] The Court also notes that hate speech violates the right to dignity of the targeted group. Lastly, if such speech escalates to incitement to violence, it may also violate the right to security.[55]

2.3: Coercion and the Crime of Forced Deportation

This thesis will follow the consensus of several legal scholars, including Luis Moreno Ocampo, former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, as well peace and conflict historian Vahagn Avedian, in defining the exodus of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh as an instance of the crime against humanity of forced deportation.[56] Forced deportation is outlined as a

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[52] Fausto Pocar, "Persecution as a Crime Under International Criminal Law," *Journal of National Security Law & Policy* (blog), December 15, 2008, https://jnslp.com/2008/12/15/persecution-as-a-crime-under-international-criminal-law/; Guido Acquaviva, "Forced Displacement and International Crimes," June 2011, https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/4e0344b344.pdf.
[53] "The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana, Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, Hassan Ngeze (Appeal Judgment)," Refworld, accessed December 7, 2024, https://www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/caselaw/ictr/2007/en/91996, para. 977.
[54] "The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana, Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, Hassan Ngeze (Appeal Judgment)," Refworld, accessed December 7, 2024, https://www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/caselaw/ictr/2007/en/91996, para. 984.
[55] "The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana, Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, Hassan Ngeze (Appeal Judgment), para. 986."
[56] Vahagn Avedian, "Opinion – The Choice in Nagorno-Karabakh: Ethnic Cleansing or Self-Determination?," *E-International Relations* (blog), September 22, 2023, https://www.e-ir.info/2023/09/22/opinion-the-choice-in-nagorno-karabakh-ethnic-cleansing-or-self-determination/; Anthony Deutsch and Stephanie van den Berg, "Nagorno-Karabakh Exodus Amounts to a War Crime, Legal Experts Say," *Reuters*, September 29, 2023, sec. Asia

crime in the 2002 Rome Statute, and there is significant ICTR and ICTY jurisprudence surrounding the matter. This section, through international human rights law jurisprudence and scholarship, will briefly offer a definition of forced deportation and will then focus on different ways in which hate speech has been related to coercion.

Art. 7(1) of the Rome statute states that a crime against humanity ought to be committed as (1) part of a widespread or systematic (2) attack directed against any civilian population (3) with knowledge of the attack.

(1) The *Katanga* Trial Chamber states that "widespread or systematic" refers to the large-scale nature of the attack, as well as the number of targeted persons. These measures are relative and depend on the facts of the case.[57]

(2) An "attack", according to Article 7(2)(a) of the Rome Statute and confirmed in the *Ntaganda* case states that an attack against a civilian population means "a course of conduct involving the commission of multiple acts referred to in paragraph 1 against any civilian population, pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such attack."[58] An attack does not need to involve violent force. As the Trial Chamber in *Musema* describes, a non-violent attack may mean "exerting pressure on

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Pacific, https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nagorno-karabakh-exodus-amounts-war-crime-legal-experts-say-2023-09-29/; Luke Harding, "'They Want Us to Die in the Streets': Inside the Nagorno-Karabakh Blockade," *The Guardian*, August 22, 2023, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/22/inside-nagorno-karabakh-blockade-armenia-azerbaijan; Luis Moreno Ocampo, "Call What Is Happening in Nagorno-Karabakh by Its Proper Name," *Washington Post*, September 23, 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/09/22/nagorno-karabakh-genocide-armenia/.

[57] "Judgment Pursuant to Article 74 of the Statute | International Criminal Court," accessed November 3, 2024, https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/04-01/07-3436-teng.

[58] Rome Statute, "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court," OHCHR, 2002, https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/rome-statute-international-criminal-court; "Judgment | International Criminal Court," accessed November 3, 2024, https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/04-02/06-2359.

the population to act in a particular manner, which may come under the purview of an attack orchestrated on a massive scale or in a systematic manner."[59]

(3) The Katanga Trial Chamber finds that indicators of "knowledge of the attack" may include a State or organizational policy with a political objective, a guiding plan, or an ideology aimed at destroying, persecuting, or weakening a community, as well as the involvement of high-level political or military leaders.[60]

Vincent Chetail's 2016 article, "Is there any Blood on my Hands?" provides a comprehensive introduction to the crime of forced deportation under the Rome Statute, using three cumulative conditions of forced deportation, "(i) the forcible character of the displacement; (ii) the lawful presence of the deportee; (iii) the absence of a permitted ground under international law."[61] This project deals solely with the first element, and considers, in light of the history of the territory and of its Armenian inhabitants, that the other two conditions have been met.

In defining the "forcible character" of a displacement, the Rome Statute's Elements of Crime finds that "*forcibly* is not restricted to physical force but may include threat of force or coercion".[62] Assessing "genuine choice" to leave, according to ICTY and ICTR case law, requires first and foremost a close examination of each situation's unique circumstances.[63] However, existing jurisprudence outlines some elements that may point to coercion. For instance, the *Prlić* and *Krnojelac* Trial Chambers find that even the *threat* of force or physical or mental coercion is

[59] "The Prosecutor v. Alfred Musema (Judgement and Sentence)," Refworld, accessed November 3, 2024, https://www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/caselaw/ictr/2000/en/64129.
[60] "Judgment Pursuant to Article 74 of the Statute | International Criminal Court."
[61] Vincent Chetail, "Is There Any Blood on My Hands? Deportation as a Crime of International Law," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 29, no. 3 (September 2016): 917–43, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156516000376.
[62] International Criminal Court, "Elements of Crime," 2002, https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/Publications/Elements-of-Crimes.pdf.
[63] Acquaviva, "Forced Displacement and International Crimes."

can be sufficient to prove the crime.[64] The *Media* case also demonstrates that hate speech can amount to persecution, would be useful in determining create a coercive climate.[65] Lastly, the Ntaganda trial chamber determined that a civilian fleeing "at the first sign of fighting[66]" may be considered "forcibly displaced" if, in light of the attackers' known behavior elsewhere, the civilian feared violence to their life and property. This fear is justified, and distinct from "fear of violence commonly associated with armed conflict," and from "general distrust" of opposing forces.

2.4: Case Study: Government-Sponsored Hate Speech in the Rohingya Genocide

Section 2.1 established theoretical approaches through which to consider hate speech as a whole, and as a government-sponsored phenomenon, and section 2.2 dealt with the jurisprudence surrounding the crime against humanity of forced deportation and the relationship between hate speech and coercion. Through the case of the Rohingya genocide in 2016 and 2017 this section acts as a synthesis of these sections, demonstrating the con of the hate speech spread by the highest levels of the Burmese government. However, prior to discussing this, it should be noted that this case differs from that of Nagorno-Karabakh because the Rohingya are not a separatist group, nor did they govern themselves at any point before 2021. Unlike Nagorno-Karabakh, which operated as a de facto republic until 2023, the Rohingya have been solely under the rule of Myanmar.

[64] Chetail, "Is There Any Blood on My Hands?"
[65] "The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana, Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, Hassan Ngeze (Appeal Judgment)."
[66] THE PROSECUTOR v. BOSCO NTAGANDA (International Criminal Court 2019), para. 1067.

2.4.1: History of the Rohingya

The Rohingya are a Muslim ethnic minority group, mostly residing in Rakhine, on the west coast of Myanmar.[67] They trace their roots in the region back centuries, with some scholars suggesting their presence dates to the 15th century, while others argue that significant migration occurred during British colonial rule in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Despite their longstanding presence, the Rohingya have faced systemic discrimination, notably being denied citizenship under Myanmar's 1982 nationality law, which excluded them from the list of recognized ethnic groups. [68] This statelessness has led to severe restrictions on their freedom of movement, access to education, and employment opportunities.[69] Tensions escalated into violence in 2017, when a military crackdown following attacks by Rohingya militants led to the killings and the displacement of over 700,000 Rohingya to the neighbouring country of Bangladesh.[70]

2.4.2: Government-Sponsored Hate Speech in Myanmar

Government-sponsored hate speech in Myanmar was responsible for the dissemination of different narratives surrounding the Rohingya. Benesch points to influential Buddhist monks who frame the Rohingya as both existential threats to the Buddhist nation and as animals[71], resulting in not only a concretisation of Smith's paradox of dehumanisation, but also as a . However, covert forms of hate speech, focusing on the specific claim that the Rohingya are do not belong to the *taingyintha*, the national race "linked to civil and human rights in Myanmar" also served as

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[67] Haradhan Kumar Mohajan, "History of Rakhine State and the Origin of the Rohingya Muslims," *IKAT: The Indonesian Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 2, no. 1 (May 24, 2020): 19–46, https://doi.org/10.22146/ikat.v2i1.37391, p. 20.
[68] Mohajan, p.30-31.
[69] Mohajan, p.21.
[70] "Rohingya Emergency," UNHCR US, accessed April 17, 2025, https://www.unhcr.org/us/emergencies/rohingya-emergency.
[71] Benesch, "Countering Dangerous Speech."

rhetorical justification for subsequent the mass violence.[72] Myanmar's exclusionary citizenship also imply this view of the Rohingya as alien, reflecting Benesch's last component of dangerous speech.[73]

2.5: Anti-Armenian Atmosphere in Azerbaijan

As established in the '*Media'* case, hate speech may amount to persecution under IHRL. Because this thesis will focus on *"government-sponsored"* hate speech, it will examine government statements and actions preceding the exodus of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023. These statements and events have each been mentioned in Armenia's communications to the ICJ.

2.5.1: Government Statements

For several years, dehumanising rhetoric against Armenians has been spread by the highest level of Azerbaijani government. To begin, in August 2012, Ramil Safarov, an Azeri military officer who murdered an Armenian counterpart, Lieutenant Gurgen Margaryan with an axe during a NATO partnership training exercise in 2004 in Budapest, returned to Baku.[74] Safarov was convicted of premeditated murder in Hungary in 2006, noting during his trial that he was motivated by anti-Armenian sentiment.[75] He was extradited to Azerbaijan in 2012, where he was pardoned

[72] Swapna Gopinath, "Ronan Lee. Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide: Identity, History and Hate Speech," *Genocide Studies International* 14, no. 2 (May 31, 2023): 191–92, https://doi.org/10.3138/GSI-2022-0001, p.191.
[73] Gopinath, p.192.
[74] "Azeri Killer Ramil Safarov: Concern over Armenian Anger," *BBC News*, September 3, 2012, sec. Europe, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19463968.
[75] "What Does the Safarov Case Tell Us about Hungary Today? | Heinrich Böll Stiftung," accessed February 18, 2024, https://www.boell.de/en/intlpolitics/europe-north-america-safarov-case-hungary-15461.html.

by President Aliyev and hailed as a hero. In this highly publicized affair, several government officials claimed his actions were 'justified' and 'heroic'.[76]

Similarly, in a 2020, nationwide address, President Aliyev stated his intent to "chase [Armenians] away like dogs." [77] He also stated that "[Armenians] have neither conscience nor morality. They don't even have the brain."[78] A few days later, he claimed that "for 30 years, [Fuzuli] was in the hands of vultures, in the hands of predators, in the hands of jackals", when referring to Armenians.[79]

At the end of the year, Azerbaijan issued a stamp showing the fumigation of the territory of Artsakh, implying a view of Armenians as a "virus in need of 'eradicating'". [80] Furthermore, in April 2021, President Aliyev inaugurated the Military Trophies Park in Baku. This highly publicized event introduced an attraction, with equipment seized from soldiers during the 2020 war, as well as wax figures depicting Armenian soldiers, sporting exaggerated ethnic features. Soon after the park's opening, its creators stated in an interview that they attempted to "create the most freakish depictions of Armenians possible".[81]

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[76] "What Does the Safarov Case Tell Us about Hungary Today?"
[77] "Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Major Cities Hit as Heavy Fighting Continues," October 4, 2020, 202, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54407436.
[78] Lucía de la Torre, @azermarka, "Azerbaijani Postal Stamps Accused of Spreading Anti-Armenian Propaganda," New East Digital Archive, accessed March 14, 2024, https://www.new-east-archive.org/articles/show/12442/azerbaijan-stamps-nagorno-karabakh-war-anti-armenian-propaganda.
[79] "Ilham Aliyev Addressed the Nation » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic," accessed February 18, 2024, https://president.az/en/articles/view/43696.
[80] Lucía de la Torre, @azermarka, "Azerbaijani Postal Stamps Accused of Spreading Anti-Armenian Propaganda," New East Digital Archive, accessed March 14, 2024, https://www.new-east-archive.org/articles/show/12442/azerbaijan-stamps-nagorno-karabakh-war-anti-armenian-propaganda.
[81] Neil Hauer, "Azerbaijan's 'Ethnic Hatred' Theme Park Draws Ire, Imperils Reconciliation," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2021, sec. Azerbaijan, https://www.rferl.org/a/azerbaijan-karabakh-theme-park-armenia-ethnic-hatred-aliyev/31217971.html.

2.5.2: Lachin Corridor Blockade

Th blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the only route connecting the ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, from December 2022 to September 2023, resulted in shortages of critical items, like "food, medicine, reproductive healthcare products, baby formula", among others. A report by the Human Rights Defenders of Armenia and of Nagorno-Karabakh demonstrated, through social media and local news content, that it had significant material and psychological impacts on the population of Nagorno-Karabakh. The shortages led to reduced capacity in hospitals and disproportionate negative impacts on sick and disabled individuals. Similarly, the constant disruptions in gas supply and loudspeaker announcements in villages further imposed stress on the daily lives of civilians.[82]

In February 2023, the ICJ formally called for provisional measures at the request of Armenia. It ordered Azerbaijan to end the blockade of the Lachin corridor, "in accordance with its obligation towards CERD".[83] This refers specifically to Article 5 of ICERD, which obliges States Parties to guarantee, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, "the right of everyone to equal treatment before the law," including the right to freedom of movement, access to public health and medical care, and the right to protection against violence or bodily harm. Thus, a state action that has a disproportionate impact on a specific ethnic group and that results in the denial of these rights would constitute a violation of CERD.

[82] "Azerbaijan."
[83] International Court of Justice, "Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia," accessed March 27, 2024, https://www.icj-cij.org/case/180.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1: Data Collection

3.1.1: Collecting Government-Sponsored Hate Speech

The first step in this project was to gather a comprehensive archive of statements from the Azerbaijani government, from September 2017 to September 2023. September 2017 represents the earliest publicly available data but also serves as an adequate starting point because Summer-Autumn 2017 is understood as a critical moment in Armenia-Azerbaijan relations, with the aftermath of the April 2016 border escalation, as well as each country's belief that the other would escalate military conflict.[84]

I conducted a scrape for all statements containing the key word "Armenia" using the *Octoparse* web crawler. The search word "Armenia" was selected because of its appropriate connection to existing literature on hate speech. Specifically, the Azerbaijani state may refer to the Republic of Armenia in potential discourse that erases Armenian presence, or frames it as illegitimate, as per Trouillot's theory of erasure. The key word "Armenia" also encompasses "Armenian".

The scrape gathered a total of 900 URLs across 71 months. These URLs were converted to PDF and .html files, downloaded, and sorted by month. To ensure navigation bars and menus

[84] "Armenia and Azerbaijan's Collision Course over Nagorno-Karabakh," openDemocracy, accessed April 17, 2025, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/armenia-and-azerbaijan-collision-course-over-nagorno-karabakh/.

did not interfere with later data analysis, I used the Beautiful Soup Python library to extract solely the article text in .html format.

3.1.2: Creating the "Event Timeline"

Next, this project gathered a comprehensive list of Azerbaijani "coercive actions" from September 2017 to September 2023, using reports from news outlets, as well as NGOs. The geographical scope of these actions is limited to the Republic of Armenia, and the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and its bordering areas. These actions were separated into three categories: military, cultural, and economic.

1. Military Action

Previous ICC, ICTY, and ICTR jurisprudence highlight how physical force – in this case, military action – may constitute part of a coercive environment that facilitates forced deportation.[85] This category was divided into three subcategories:

- "1" referring to escalations, increasing military presence on borders, and checkpoints.
- "2" referring to full scale military incursions, breaches of territorial integrity, war in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- "3" referring to escalations on the Armenian border.

2. Cultural Pressure

[85] Rome Statute, "Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court"; "Judgment | International Criminal Court."

The destruction of cultural heritage, or "cultural pressure" also serves as a relevant measure of a coercive environment. The European Parliament, in its March 2022 resolution, acknowledges that:

> "The erasure of the Armenian cultural heritage is part of a wider pattern of a systematic, state-level policy of Armenophobia, historical revisionism and hatred towards Armenians promoted by the Azerbaijani authorities, including dehumanisation, the glorification of violence and territorial claims against the Republic of Armenia which threaten peace and security in the South Caucasus,"[86]

This approach to the destruction of heritage therefore it in a broader context of coercion. For the purposes of this data collection, this thesis will exclusively consider heritage that was deliberately destroyed by Azerbaijani forces.[87]

Blockade

This timeline will not be including the 2022 blockade of the Lachin corridor. While it served as an important coercive tool, it is neither a cultural element nor a military action, meaning that the sample size of 1 will not allow for any statistical analysis. It will therefore serve as an element to consider in later holistic analysis.

Table 1: Summary of Event Types

Name	Relevance	Coding	Sources

[86] Anna Barseghyan, "European Parliament Condemns Destruction of Armenian Heritage," *EVN Report* (blog), March 21, 2022, https://evnreport.com/politics/european-parliament-condemns-destruction-of-armenian-heritage/.
[87] "Caucasus Heritage Watch Monitoring Dashboard," https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/aab447a0d64f4eba84504e213953b748.

Military Pressure	ICC Jurisprudence	"1" – Escalations at the NK border "2" – Military incursions in NK "3" – Escalations Armenian border	News reports
Cultural Pressure	European Parliament Resolution	N/A	Caucasus Heritage Watch reports

3.2: Data Analysis

3.2.1: Data Analysis Design

A key difficulty of studying hate speech remains a lack of a solid conceptual foundation . There are a number of disagreements on definitions and measurements of hate speech -- what constitutes a protected identity, a hateful behaviour and how "hatefulness" should be assessed.[88] However, this paper will consider the methods Vergani et al define in their 2023 systemic review of approaches to studying hate speech. Vergani et al consider five factors in their comparison of six hate speech measurement methods, to assess their theoretical robustness and transparency.[89] The measurement tools are :

1. Incidents reporting tools
2. Case records and open source databases
3. Quantitative survey questionnaires

[88] "Thinking About Hate-Motivated Crimes - RICHARD A. BERK, 1990," accessed March 26, 2025, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/088626090005003007.
[89] Matteo Vergani et al., "Mapping the Scientific Knowledge and Approaches to Defining and Measuring Hate Crime, Hate Speech, and Hate Incidents: A Systematic Review," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 20, no. 2 (June 2024): e1397, https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1397..

4. Manual quantitative text analysis tools
5. Qualitative interviews schedules
6. Automated or semi-automated text analysis tools
7. Qualitative text analysis tools.

The factors used to assess them are:

1. Truth – where the measurement tool is concerned with at least one of the following issues: "under-reporting, bias in data and research process, reliability, validity" ;
2. Discrimination – where the measurement tool is concerned with at least one of the following issues: "how the hate element is measured, the questions or annotation guidelines used to detect the hate element, stability in situation of no change" ;
3. Feasibility – where the measurement tool is concerned with at least one of the following issues: "replicability of the procedures, ethical issues related to the measurement process"
4. Uptake – where the measurement tool is applied in a "wide-spread" manner ;
5. Theoretical Robustness – where the measurement tool explicitly refers to a definition of hate behaviour ;
6. Transparency – where the document containing the measurement tool contains a link to raw data.

For the purposes of this research, the most important factors are truth, discrimination, and theoretical robustness. Following Vergari et al's findings, this paper will use two methods to measure hate speech. First, it will use automated or semi-automated text analysis tools, which scored highest in truth as they are concerned with reliability, and in theoretical robustness, as they

are trained on specific hate speech definitions and datasets. Next, it will use qualitative text analysis tools, as such tools are most useful with regards to discrimination and allow for a detailed understanding of the themes and motifs present in Azerbaijani government speech.

This paper will therefore follow a mixed methods approach. It will use a sequential explanatory design,[90] where it will first conduct quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. It will first use quantitative methods to broadly measure the intensity of hate speech against Armenians in the Azerbaijani government's statements and analyze major changes between 2017 and 2023. It will then use qualitative methods to analyse major spikes.

3.2.2: Quantitative Analysis

In their analysis of automated or semi-automated text analysis tools, Vergari et al consider different machine learning classifiers to measure hate speech. They measure these tools using precision, recall, and F1 scores. Precision refers to the number of instances where hate speech is accurately identified by the tool, and recall, to the tool's ability to identify all relevant content in the text. The F1 score is the mean of the precision and recall scores. Two of the three studies with the highest F1 scores use a BERT model.[91]

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[90] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th edition (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2014), p.269.

[91] Femi Emmanuel Ayo et al., "A Probabilistic Clustering Model for Hate Speech Classification in Twitter," *Expert Systems with Applications* 173 (July 1, 2021): 114762, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2021.114762; Jeewon Lee et al., "Psychiatric Sequelae of Former 'Comfort Women,' Survivors of the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery during World War II," *Psychiatry Investigation* 15, no. 4 (April 2018): 336–43, https://doi.org/10.30773/pi.2017.11.08.2; Vergani et al., "Mapping the Scientific Knowledge and Approaches to Defining and Measuring Hate Crime, Hate Speech, and Hate Incidents."

BERT, standing for Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers, is an open source model which can complete 11 natural language understanding (NLU) tasks such as text classification, sentiment analysis and word disambiguation. BERT is particularly skilled at understanding context and can address ambiguity. Its high accuracy, as well as its accessibility, makes it an ideal tool for this research.[92]

This research will use HateBERT, a pre-trained BERT model created for hate speech and abusive language detection. HateBERT was trained on RAL-E, a comprehensive dataset of over a million English-language Reddit comments from communities that have been banned for being provocative, abusive, or hostile. This training allows it to outperform a corresponding general BERT model in detecting offensive, abusive, and hateful speech – both in terms of precision and recall.[93] It is standard for HateBERT to produce binary results – meaning, it assesses text by either categorizing it as hate speech or not doing so. However, because the interest of this research largely lies in the intensity of speech and its fluctuations, I will consider logits, meaning, the level of confidence with which HateBERT can assess whether speech is hateful, to measure the severity of hate speech in government statements. This will allow for some nuance in the results, as speech will not be measured categorically as either hateful or not but will rather be measured as a continuous variable.

[92] "What Is the BERT Language Model? | Definition from TechTarget," Search Enterprise AI, accessed April 17, 2025, https://www.techtarget.com/searchenterpriseai/definition/BERT-language-model.
[93] Tommaso Caselli et al., "HateBERT: Retraining BERT for Abusive Language Detection in English," in *Proceedings of the 5th Workshop on Online Abuse and Harms (WOAH 2021)*, ed. Aida Mostafazadeh Davani et al. (WOAH 2021, Online: Association for Computational Linguistics, 2021), 17–25, https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2021.woah-1.3 p.20.

HateBERT therefore serves as a preliminary screening tool, as well as a method to detect general trends in hate speech. The logits, which I will be referring to as "hate speech intensity scores, were compared to the event timeline. For each event, the variance in hate speech intensity was calculated from one month, two months, three months and six months to detect spikes and dips in hate speech.

To evaluate how hate speech severity evolved in relation to major Azerbaijani government actions, I employed a multi-method approach combining:

1. Correlation analysis, to explore general trends and co-variation between months preceding each event, and;
2. Paired statistical testing, to assess whether hate speech intensity significantly increased in the immediate lead-up to events.

Correlation Analysis

I calculated Pearson correlation coefficients between hate speech intensity in the 1, 2, 3, and 6 months preceding each event, to assess whether intensity levels across different time intervals tended to rise and fall together, and whether certain event types were associated with more tightly linked pre-event patterns. I used correlation in an exploratory manner, with the goal of identifying linear relationships between timing and rhetorical intensity. Given the small number of events in some categories, I interpreted the results with caution, especially in cases where correlations approached ±1.000.

Paired t-tests

To test whether hate speech levels increased in the months before an event, I conducted paired t-tests to compare mean severity in the 1, 2, and 3 months before each event to a baseline level from 6 months prior. This approach treated each event as its own "subject," allowing for within-event comparisons. The hypotheses tested were:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no difference in hate speech severity between the two time points.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a difference in hate speech severity between the two time points, indicating escalation or de-escalation.

Overall, while this research incorporated quantitative elements, it did not rely on statistical significance testing in the traditional sense. Because its goal is to identify patterns in a specific historical period, rather than to generalize findings to broader populations or to make predictive claims, it considers strength, consistency, and timing were considered meaningful in their own right. Statistical significance was therefore not the primary criterion in determining analytical value.

To identify periods of interest for qualitative analysis, I used a filtering approach, considering both context and statistical change. Specifically, I noted instances where hate speech intensity demonstrated large deviations that exceeded 1.5 to 2 standard deviations from the mean in the months preceding key event types. To complement this, I calculated standardized z-scores for each temporal lag (1, 2, 3, and 6 months prior) to gauge the relative intensity of hate speech across the full dataset. These z-scores did not directly determine which events were selected for

qualitative analysis, but contextualized the identified periods and helped interpret the rhetorical build-up or decline surrounding them.

Table 2: Summary of Quantitative Tools

Tool	Function	Determines	Interpretation
Correlation	Identifying linear relationships between timing and rhetorical intensity	Whether hate speech severity at different lags move together	Pattern stability or rhetorical coherence
Paired t-test	Testing for change in hate speech between two time points	Whether mean hate speech severity at 1, 2, or 3 months before an event is different than at 6 months before	Escalation or de-escalation of hate speech intensity
Z-scores	Finding statistical outliers or high hate speech months	Whether a severity deviates significantly from the mean	Extreme or exceptional rhetoric in context

3.2.3: Qualitative Analysis

The statements from two months prior to the periods of interest were analyzed using Udo Kuckartz's approach Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). While his work specifically focuses on interviews, it may be transposed to a text-analysis context. The six steps he describes for this type of analysis are:

> "Step 1: Preparing the data, initiating text work
>
> Step 2: Forming main categories […]
>
> Step 3: Coding data with the main categories

> Step 4: Compiling text passages of the main categories and forming subcategories inductively on the material; assigning text passages to subcategories
>
> Step 5: Category-based analyses and presenting results
>
> Step 6: Reporting and documentation."[94]

Following Kuckartz's method of QCA, I will be conducting three readings of the selected statements.

1. On the first reading, main thematic categories were formed in accordance with existing literature on overt and covert hate speech, as well as international human rights instruments.
2. On the second reading, each statement was categorized according to these categories.
3. On the third reading, these categorizations were verified.

3.3: Limitations

The way hate speech might appear in government statements can vastly differ from the way it appears in social media comments. HateBERT was trained using social media comments and therefore might not have been able to produce entirely accurate results when reading covertly disseminated hate speech. This might have limited the precision of the quantitative analysis. However, this limitation was mitigated through the addition of qualitative analysis.

[94] Udo Kuckartz, "Qualitative Text Analysis: A Systematic Approach," in *Compendium for Early Career Researchers in Mathematics Education*, ed. Gabriele Kaiser and Norma Presmeg (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 181–97, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15636-7_8.

Furthermore, this project dealt with very small sample sizes, meaning that the results of its statistical tests were unlikely to reach statistical significance. This means that the findings of the these tests would not be predictive, nor causative, but are rather used solely for exploratory purposes.

Lastly, the key word “armenia” to select statements may have also limited the scope of this research. Given van Dijk’s theory of elite hate speech as covert, it is possible that some statements from the Azerbaijani government do deal with the matter of Armenians, but in a coded manner that may not involve naming the country or the people specifically.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1: Findings

4.1.1: Preliminary Data Analysis

Events

The event timeline consisted of a total of 22 events (Appendix B), containing:

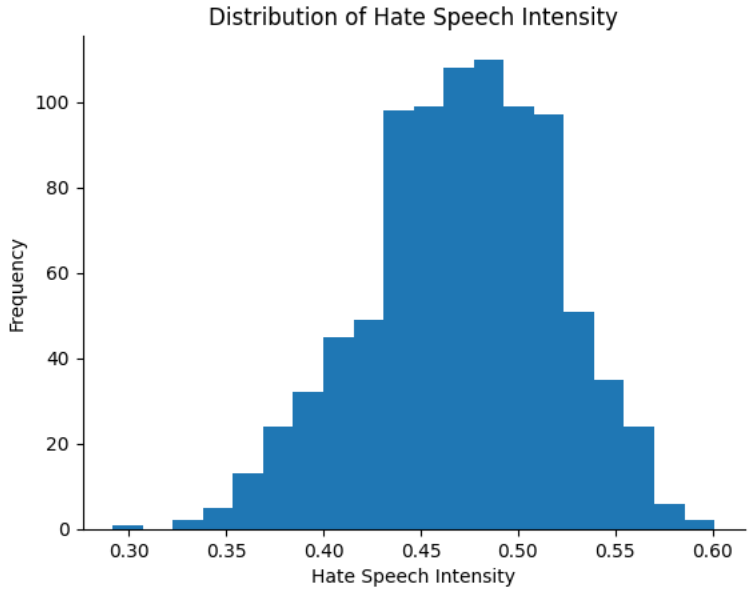
- 2 Military Action 1;
- 2 Military Action 2;
- 5 Military Action 3;
- 12 Cultural Pressure events, and;
- 1 Economic Pressure event.

HateBERT Data

On a scale of 0, indicating non hateful speech, to 1, indicating definitively hateful speech, HateBERT found a median hate speech intensity of approximately 0.473, and a mean of 0.471.

This data demonstrates that, most of the time, HateBERT was uncertain whether speech disseminated by the Azerbaijani government was entirely hateful. The scores cluster near the midpoint, suggesting that much of the language used occupied a gray area. While it was likely not overtly violent, but it may have been consistently charged, hostile, or delegitimizing.

Figure 1: Distribution of Hate Speech Intensity Found by HateBERT



Correlation

Correlation matrices were generated for each event type, comparing mean hate speech severity in the 1, 2, 3, and 6 months prior to each event (Appendix C). This preliminary correlation analysis aims to justify the selection of military actions as the sole subjects of the following t-tests.

First, because Military Action 1 and Military Action 2 each had only 2 events, artificially perfect correlations were produced. They are not statistically meaningful. Military Action 3 (n = 5) revealed moderate correlations between the 1–3 month period ($r \approx 0.63–0.71$), indicating a potential buildup of hate speech, although weaker associations were observed when comparing to the 6-month baseline. Tese results suggest that in some cases, in among military events with slightly larger sample sizes, hate speech intensity may co-vary across adjacent months. This might indicate a period of escalation in intensity.

Second, Cultural Pressure events (n = 12) exhibited weaker and more varied correlations, with a modest relationship between 3 and 6 months prior ($r = 0.52$), suggesting some consistency

in rhetorical patterns. The correlation between hate speech and destruction of Armenian cultural heritage thus remains moderate. Hate speech did not predict in any significant way the destruction of heritage in the region. This might be explained by the presence of historic Armenian cultural heritage in the region, which, by nature, disproves revisionist narratives and legitimizes the longstanding Armenian presence on the territory. It follows that it might not be in the best interest of the Azerbaijani government to highlight the destruction, and therefore, existence of Armenian cultural heritage in widely received presidential speeches.

Destruction of cultural heritage is also prohibited under international humanitarian law, under Article 4 paragraph 3 of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which states that "High Contracting Parties further undertake to prohibit, prevent and, if necessary, put a stop to any form of theft, pillage or misappropriation of, and any acts of vandalism directed against, cultural property." This fact, coupled with the European Parliament's public condemnation of this destruction, makes it seem unlikely that the Azerbaijani government had any interest in further bringing attention to themselves.

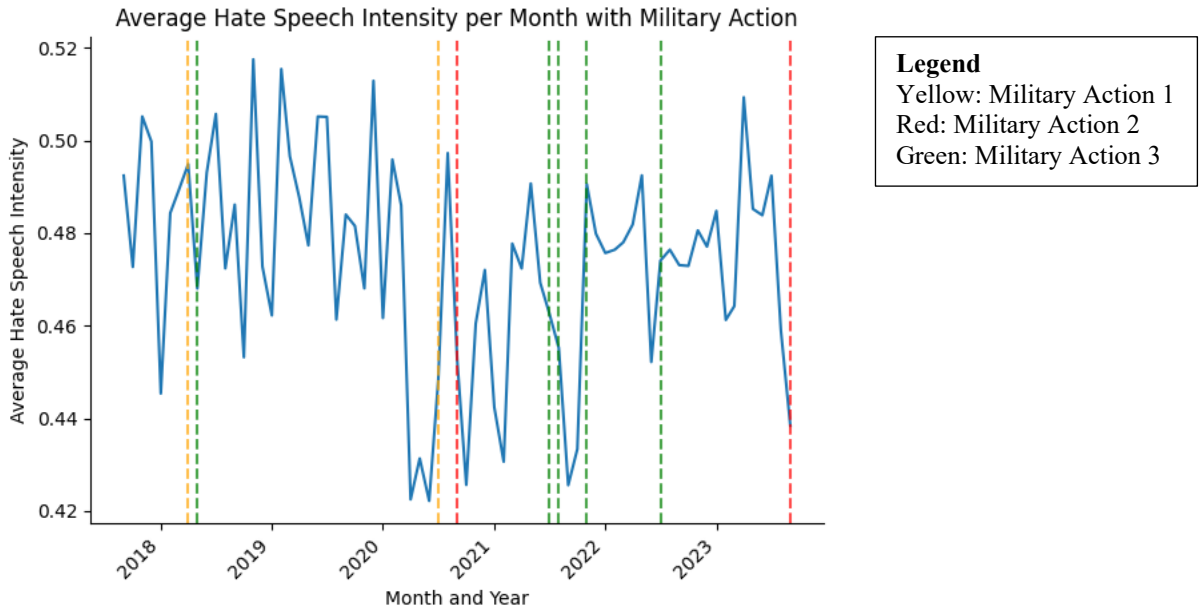
T-tests

To evaluate whether hate speech intensity increased in the months leading up to military actions, paired t-tests were conducted comparing average severity scores from 1, 2, and 3 months before each event to a baseline six months prior (Appendix D). The results did not yield statistically significant differences for any of the three military event types. For Military Action 1, the comparison between three months prior and the baseline showed a large effect ($t = -5.61$), but was not statistically significant ($p = 0.11$) due to the very small sample size ($n = 2$). Military Action 2

similarly showed no meaningful change, with comparisons returning high p-values ($p = 0.78$ and 0.91), indicating stable intensity levels. Military Action 3, which included five events, also did not show significant differences in any of the comparisons (e.g., 1m vs. 6m: $p = 0.26$). These results suggest that while there are indications of fluctuation in the visual trends and correlation patterns, the t-tests do not provide strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. In other words, they do not confirm a significant escalation in hate speech.

Because of the lack of statistical significance, definitive claims could not be made. However, the tests provided tentative support for the idea that hate speech intensity increased before certain actions, especially those involving military action. A time series visualisation (figure 2) further supported these findings, by showing the upward trend in hate speech severity leading up to the September 2020 incursion into Nagorno-Karabakh.

Figure 2: Average Hate Speech Intensity per Month with Military Actions



Qualitative Analysis

To identify periods of particular interest for further qualitative analysis, events were filtered based on statistically significant deviations in hate speech intensity. Using a z-score threshold of ±2 standard deviations, one event stood out: the Gegharkunik-Kalbajar border strikes in November 2021, associated with Military Action 3 where hate speech levels increased sharply ($z = 2.25$) prior to it. Other events, including the September 2020 and September 2023 incursions into Nagorno-Karabakh (Military Action 2), did not exceed the z-score threshold. However, they exhibited mirrored intensification and de-escalation cycles, which might suggest rhetorical patterns that may reflect discursive preparation and justification for state violence. These events were selected for further qualitative investigation.

A total of 78 statements were drawn from the two months preceding the three events. Upon a first reading of the statements, the six following themes were elaborated: historical revisionism, glorification of violence, dehumanisation, territorial integrity, victimhood narrative and delegitimization of Armenian presence, as defined below.

Table 3: Thematic Categories Elaborated for Further Analysis

Theme	**Definition**	**Example Quote**	**Connection to Existing Literature**

Historical revisionism	Rewriting or reinterpreting history to support present political claims. This includes idealizing Azerbaijani past leaders, selectively citing history, or casting Armenian presence as recent or artificial.	*10 October 2021* "Armenians were resettled in Hadrut from Iran in the 19th century… Everyone knows there were no Armenians before." [95]	Michel-Rolph Trouillot
Glorification of violence	Language that celebrates, justifies, or threatens violent action. This includes valorizing war, using military metaphors for political goals, and threatening future force.	*4 October 2021* "We will crush your head regardless of anyone"[96]	Susan Benesch ICCPR ICERD Rabat principles
Dehumanisation	The portrayal of Armenians or Armenian leaders as subhuman, morally repugnant, or existential threats. This includes metaphors of disease, filth, animals, or direct insults that strip dignity or humanity.	*4 October 2021* "This man has been known throughout his life as a thief, criminal, fraudster, traitor, and deserter.	Myanmar case study David Livingstone Smith Susan Benesch

[95] "Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with Representatives of the General Public in Khojavand District » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic", https://president.az/en/articles/view/53480.
[96] "Ilham Aliyev Raised Azerbaijan's Flag in Sugovushan Settlement, Tartar District » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic," https://president.az/en/articles/view/53313.

		There is no one in Armenia who wouldn't know of Serzhik's filching. The "war heroes" associated with him are either in prison or in hell today."[97]	
Territorial integrity	Emphasis on the sovereignty, unity, and indivisibility of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders, used to justify action against Armenian presence.	*16 July 2020* "Nagorno-Karabakh is our historical land, and the territorial integrity of our country must be restored. This is unambiguous, and no country recognizes the self-styled "Nagorno-	Susan Benesch Michel-Rolph Trouillot

[97] "Ilham Aliyev Raised Azerbaijan's Flag in Sugovushan Settlement, Tartar District » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic," https://president.az/en/articles/view/53313.

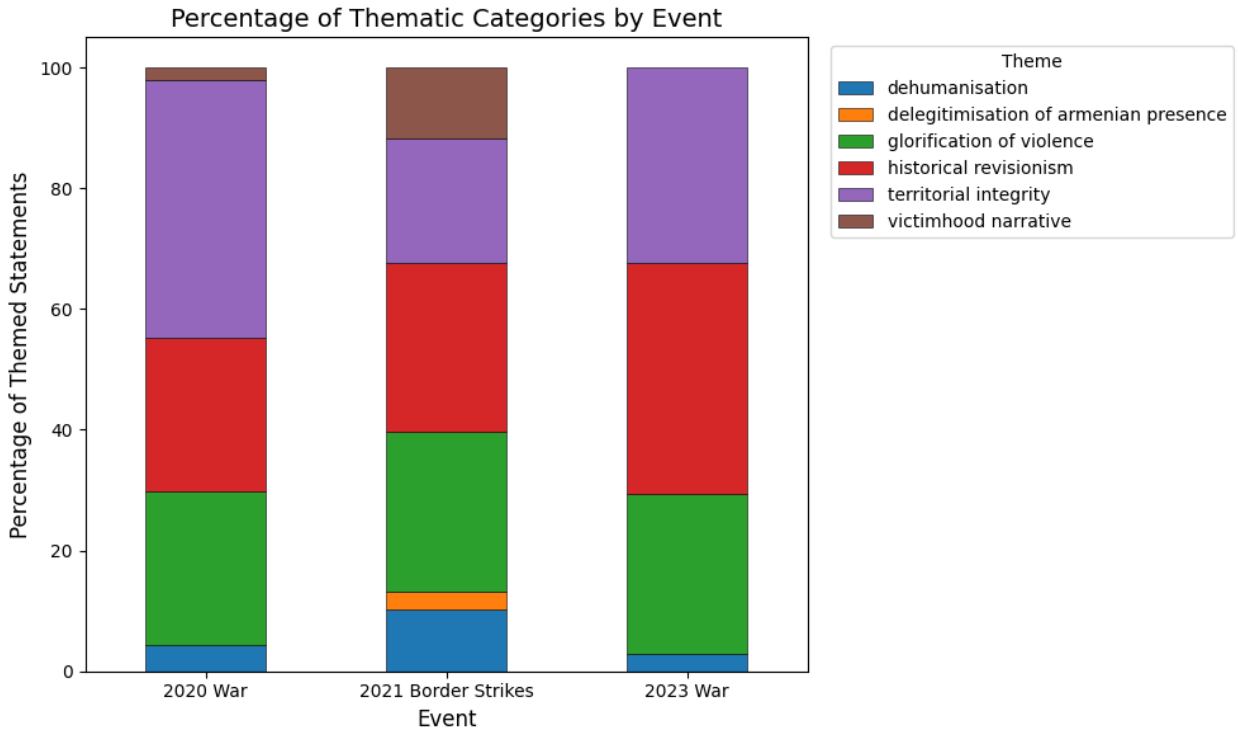
		Karabakh republic".[98]	
Victimhood narrative	Framing Azerbaijan as the primary victim of aggression, injustice, or suffering. This includes emotional appeals to loss, displacement, or destruction caused by Armenians.	*16 July 2020* "Today, the deliberate attacks and killings of children, women and the elderly along with the military have demonstrated that those who committed the Khojaly genocide are still represented in the leadership of today's Armenia."[99]	Susan Benesch Vamik Volkan
Delegitimization of Armenian presence	Language that denies the legitimacy of Armenian claims to Nagorno-Karabakh. This includes framing Armenians as invaders,	*10 October 2021* "Their history, their past, their statehood and their mythology	Myanmar case study Susan Benesch

[98] "Ilham Aliyev Received in a Video Format Jeyhun Bayramov on His Appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic," https://president.az/en/articles/view/39702.
[99] "To His Excellency Mr Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic," https://president.az/en/articles/view/39694/print.

	erasing historical ties, or rejecting any form of autonomy, identity, or status recognition.	are nothing but fake."[100]	

4.1.2: Qualitative Analysis

Figure 3: Percentage of Thematic Categories Present in Government Statements in the 2 months Leading Up to Event



[100] "Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with Representatives of the General Public in Khojavand District » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic", https://president.az/en/articles/view/53480.

Table 4: Percentage of Thematic Categories Present in Government Statements in the 2 months Leading Up to Event (%)

	Dehumanisation	**Delegitimization of Armenian presence**	**Glorification of violence**	**Historical revisionism**	**Territorial integrity**	**Victimhood narrative**
2020 War	4.26	0	25.53	25.53	42.55	2.13
2021 Border Strikes	10.29	2.94	26.47	27.94	20.59	11.76
2023 War	2.94	0	26.47	38.24	32.35	0

1. *September 2020 Military Incursion*

The first time period analyzed consists of July and August 2020, the two months preceding the September 2020 military offensive. 24 statements were made in July, and 5 in August, for a total of 29 statements in two months. The themes that dominated Azerbaijani presidential rhetoric in this period were territorial integrity, which appeared in 42.55% of the gathered statements, as well as historical revisionism and glorification of violence, each of which appear in 25.53 % of the statements.

With regards to territorial integrity, July 2020 featured multiple statements referencing the "liberation" of lands and the right to restore control. The term "our territories" was also common and claims that the territory was "under occupation" "20 percent of the territory of Azerbaijan,

including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts, have been under occupation for 30 years."[101] This framing positioned military action as the logical conclusion of a long-standing struggle to restore national sovereignty and reinforced a narrative of rightful ownership rooted in legal and historical claims.

Historical revisionism also played a central role. Statements referenced the resettlement of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh from Iran in the 19th century and portrayed Armenian presence as a relatively recent development. [102] This type of historical framing worked to marginalize Armenian claims to the region and present Azerbaijani policy as a necessary "correction" of past distortions.

Additionally, some statements relied on a victimhood narrative to justify what was framed as righteous retribution. For instance, on 16 July 2020, in a letter to the President of Uzbekistan, President Aliyev asserted that "the deliberate attacks and killings of children, women and the elderly... have demonstrated that those who committed the Khojaly genocide are still represented in the leadership of today's Armenia."[103] In the same statement, he referred to Armenia's actions as "insidious and dirty provocations," adding that they had been "resolutely suppressed and will be suppressed in the future." This appeal to both historical trauma and future strength helped portray Azerbaijani aggression not only as justified, but as morally imperative.

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[101] "To His Excellency Mr Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic."
[102] "To His Excellency Mr Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic."
[103] "To His Excellency Mr Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic."

2. *November 2021 Gegharkunik–Kalbajar Strikes (Border Crisis)*

The relevant months of analysis for the 2021 Armenia-Azerbaijan border crisis are September 2021, from which 5 statements were gathered, and October 2021, from which 18 statements were gathered, for a total of 23 statements analyzed.

While the themes of glorification of violence, historical revisionism, and territorial integrity once again dominated government discourse, of the three periods selected, this border crisis deals with territorial integrity the least. The theme is only present in 20.59% of statements, as opposed to >32% of statements discussing in other cases. This may be explained by the nature of the attack to come. The border crisis was not with Nagorno-Karabakh, but rather with the internationally recognized Republic of Armenia. It therefore follows that the Azerbaijani state would have been less inclined to frame Armenia as a threat to territorial integrity.

However, historical revisionism remained a prominent theme in this period, and this period also marks the only one where the delegitimization of Armenian presence also appeared in statements. Namely, in a speech on 10 October 2021, President Ilham Aliyev stated that "[Armenians'] history, their past, their statehood and their mythology are nothing but fake", and claimed that Armenians resettled from Iran in the 19th century, effectively denying thousands of years of documented history.[104]

Lastly, this period stands out with respect to the quantity of overt hate speech it contains. HateBERT flagged it as one of the most severe, with its mean hate speech severity score being

[104] "Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the Meeting with Representatives of the General Public in Khojavand District » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic."

2.25 standard deviations above the overall mean. The severity of this period is most visible through its dehumanising themes, which appeared in 10.29% of statements. For instance, in October 2021, statements included calling Armenian leaders “traitors” and picturing them “burning in hell”. These statements also carried glorifications of violence, with President Aliyev stating, while weaponizing the memory of the 2020 war to warn against revanchist statements, that “the iron fist is still here. Don't upset us and behave. If you behave, then you can live safely. But if there are further provocations, statements or actions against us, we will crush your head regardless of anyone. No one can protect you.” [105]

September 2023 War

The last event analysed is the September 2023 war. 19 statements were collected from July 2023, and 7 statements were collected from August 2023, for a total of 26 statements.

Marked by political delegitimization and nationalistic framing. Emphasized development in “liberated areas,” denying any need to discuss status or autonomy. Themes of territorial control, peace-as-capitulation, and glorification of reconstruction, but harsh language toward Armenians was somewhat toned down.

03_August_20231645_Address_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_NAM_Summit_in_Baku_NEWS.htmlThemes: Delegitimization, Glorification of Violence, Victimhood, Historical Revisionism

[105] “Ilham Aliyev Raised Azerbaijan’s Flag in Sugovushan Settlement, Tartar District » Official Web-Site of President of Azerbaijan Republic,” https://president.az/en/articles/view/53313.

- “Although Armenia recognized Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan, there are still remnants of Armenian armed forces… They must completely leave.”
- “Azerbaijan defeated Armenia on the battlefield… Armenia was obliged to sign a capitulation act.”
- “Azerbaijanis became refugees… Armenia committed genocide in Khojaly… Our mosques were used as stables for pigs.”
- “Victory in 2020 restored historical justice and enforced four UN Security Council resolutions.”

Statement:

05_July_20231005_Ilham_Aliyev_participated_in_Ministerial_Meeting_o_NEWS.htmlThemes: Delegitimization, Victimhood, Territorial Integrity

- “There can be no negotiations over something that doesn’t exist.”
- “Armenia continues causing transboundary environmental disaster… Our soil, rivers, and forests were destroyed.”
- “This is a matter of sovereignty and territorial integrity — and it is non-negotiable.”

4.1.3: Overall Findings

Between September 2017 and September 2023, hate speech spiked before military action, and displayed themes of ‘historical revisionism’, ‘glorification of violence’, ‘dehumanisation’, ‘territorial integrity’, ‘victimhood narrative’, and ‘delegitimization of Armenian presence’. These two facts indicate a dual function for hate speech.

(A) Government speech served to rhetorically justify war through covert hate speech, primarily through themes of territorial integrity and historical revisionism.

In each of the three periods analyzed, the historical revisionism and territorial integrity themes represented two of the three most prevalent narratives. The prominent use of these two narratives in the months leading up to military action may demonstrate an attempt to rhetorically justify such actions. This finding reinforces Susan Benesch's argument, that hate speech need not be overtly violent to contribute to harm, and that *dangerous speech* can be harmful through its covert legitimization of violence. Their consistent presence in the months leading up to military action therefore suggest an effort to justify coercive measures.

This finding echoes the discourse present in Myanmar, where government officials framed the expulsion of the Rohingya as a matter of national security and territorial sovereignty, as well as the use of historical narratives to deny the Rohingya's belonging to the land.

Last, this finding highlights a potential challenge in applying the ICCPR Article 20(2) or ICERD Article 4 thresholds to cases where state rhetoric is framed in the language of sovereignty and historical correction. As these instruments emphasize incitement as a necessary threshold, covert hate speech that operates through erasure, delegitimization, or revisionist narratives may fall outside their scope. Presidential statements that deny Armenian historic presence or assert exclusive territorial claims rarely advocate violence explicitly, but they work to justify exclusion and normalize erasure. The Rabat Plan of Action attempts to account for such nuance through its

contextual threshold test, yet even it may underestimate the cumulative impact of sustained rhetorical framing when disseminated by the state itself.

(B) At the same time, government speech helped create a coercive atmosphere through its dehumanisation and glorification of violence themes, as well is its correlation with military action.

In addition to rhetorically justifying war, Azerbaijani government speech contributed to the creation of a coercive atmosphere through its use of themes of dehumanisation and glorification of violen*ce*. This was especially evident in the consistent spikes in hate speech severity preceding Military Actions 2 and 3, which suggest a pattern of coordinated rhetorical escalation in the lead-up to physical attacks.

These findings resonate with the ICTR's Media case, which held that dehumanizing speech could amount to persecution under international human rights law, even in the absence of direct incitement. Furthermore, a creative interpretation of the *Ntaganda* Trial Chamber's reasoning—that civilians may be considered forcibly displaced if they flee in anticipation of violence based on the attackers past conduct—suggests that speech patterns themselves may form part of that anticipatory logic. Given the extreme spike in hate speech preceding the 2020 war and the atrocities that followed, it is reasonable to argue that even a comparable, albeit less intense, increase in hate speech before later attacks may have triggered a legitimate fear of renewed violence. In this sense, state speech functions not only as rhetorical groundwork but as an active mechanism of coercion.

At the same time, the presence of dehumanisation and glorification of violence in Azerbaijani presidential rhetoric suggests that certain statements may meet, or at least come close to, the thresholds outlined in international legal frameworks. Under Article 20(2) of the ICCPR, incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence is prohibited. The repeated portrayal of Armenians as subhuman, criminal, or morally degenerate, when paired with threats of physical harm, may amount to such advocacy, especially given the speaker's status as head of state. ICERD's Article 4, along with General Recommendation 35, also points to hate speech disseminated by public authorities as particularly dangerous. With regards to the content and objectives of the speech, the consistent framing of Armenians as existential threats, combined with calls to "crush their heads," arguably aligns with these criteria. Finally, the Rabat Plan of Action emphasizes context, speaker status, and the likelihood of harm. Given the history of mass violence in the region, such rhetoric cannot be viewed in isolation; rather, it exists within a context where it has a heightened risk of incitement.

4.2: Discussion

This thesis has found that presidential rhetoric that Azerbaijani presidential rhetoric preceding major escalatory events in Nagorno-Karabakh was characterized not only by dehumanising and militaristic language, but also by the systematic delegitimization of Armenian presence and identity. While some of the speech that focused on themes of glorification of violence dehumanising insults, may appear to align with legal definitions of hate speech, much of the rhetoric was more subtle, and rather aligns with "covert", or "elite" hate speech, as it rather focused on erasure of history in accordance with Trouillot, or on spreading a victimhood narrative, in accordance with Volkan. They are often presented as appeals to territorial integrity or national

restoration. These findings expose a shortcoming in international human rights law, where it is unable to adequately capture or respond to hate speech that functions covertly, through sustained discursive exclusion by state actors.

While some of the rhetoric qualifies as overt hate speech, much of it took the form of covert or elite hate speech. These subtler forms of rhetorical exclusion align with Susan Benesch's concept of dangerous speech, which considers violence as the outcome of a preparatory discursive process. This view is further supported by the *Media case*, where the ICTR found that hate speech, even absent direct incitement to violence, could constitute persecution when used to promote discriminatory exclusion. Azerbaijani rhetoric similarly worked over time, to normalize state violence and position Armenians as inherently threatening or illegitimate.

These findings raise questions about the adequacy of current international legal standards in addressing this type of rhetoric. As shown in Chapter 2, the ICCPR**,** ICERD**,** and Rabat Plan of Action each reflect different conceptual approaches to defining hate speech. Both the ICCPR and Rabat adopt a consequentialist logic, focusing on the likelihood that speech will result in imminent harm. ICERD, while partially consequentialist, is more teleological as it seeks to eliminate systemic racial discrimination. However, none of these instruments really account for the cumulative, structural, and coercive nature of elite hate speech when used by state actors. The Rabat threshold test, in particular, centers on likelihood and imminence, which may fail to capture the gradual impact of sustained covert hate speech.

What this thesis reveals, then, is a gap in international human rights law, where it remains ill-equipped to address covert, state-sponsored hate speech. If human rights law is to remain an effective tool for preventing mass atrocities, it ought to evolve to deal with state-led, sustained,

and discursively coercive forms of exclusion. Building on Benesch's framework, international bodies may need to adopt preventative standards that deal with her conception of dangerous speech.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis dealt with Armenia's allegation that the Azerbaijani government violated its obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by allowing, and in fact disseminating, anti-Armenian hate speech. From that allegation, it considered the September 2023 exodus of Armenians from Nagorno

This paper conducted mixed methods research, combining output from the Natural Language Processing tool HateBERT, with statistical analysis to produce a quantitative analysis of the intensity of hate speech across the selected period, as well as its potential associations with selected "events" which have been determined by a number of scholars as playing a role in the "coercive" atmosphere prior to the September 2023 exodus. This quantitative analysis facilitated the holistic selection of three events. Government statements from the two months preceding each of the three events were then qualitatively analyzed using thematic categories.

Overall, this thesis found two ways Azerbaijani government speech facilitated forced deportation. First, through its overt speech, as well as through the increases in severity, hate speech contributed to creating a coercive atmosphere that pushed Armenians to leave. However, through covert hate speech found after thematic analysis, the Azerbaijani government It also found that the Azerbaijani government used themes of historical revisionism, delegitimization of Armenian presence, and appeals to territorial integrity worked to undermine Armenian claims to Nagorno-Karabakh.

This study ultimately argues that international human rights law remains ill-equipped to address hate speech when it is sustained, state-sponsored, and covert. The thresholds in the ICCPR, ICERD, and Rabat Plan of Action deal with imminence, direct incitement, and formal indicators of intent, and leave a gap where rhetorical exclusion and historical erasure operate over time. For international legal frameworks to respond meaningfully to covert hate speech, they must reconceptualize it as not only as a trigger for violence but as a tool of coercion which may ultimately lead to forced displacement.

To end this paper, I would like to go back 110 years, to April 1915, which marked the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. The forced deportation and extermination of over 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman authorities was met with impunity, because at the time, international legal mechanisms to ensure accountability and secure justice for victims did not yet exist.

Today, such mechanisms do exist. International courts, treaty bodies, and investigative tools can hold perpetrators accountable. The challenge, however, is in definition. If we have the institutional means to prosecute forced deportation, our legal definitions must be equipped to recognize how this violence is born. This project has shown that hate speech does not always arrive as incitement; it may be slow, cumulative, and state-sponsored.

Appendix

A. Event Timeline

Action	Type	Date
Increased Azerbaijani military presence along NK border	Military action 1	Apr-18
Clashes on the Armenia–Nakhchivan border 1	Military action 3	May-18
July 2020 Border Clashes	Military action 1	Jul-20
Large scale military incursion in NK	Military action 2	Sep-20
Ghazanchetsots Cathedral Shelling	Cultural pressure	Oct-20
Church of Zoravor Surb Astvatsatsin (Mother of God) in Mekhakavan	Cultural pressure	Mar-21
Aygek mosque	Cultural pressure	Apr-21
Metz T'agher Cemetary	Cultural pressure	May-21
Sghnak Cemetary	Cultural pressure	Jun-21
Fine Arts Museum sculpture garden	Cultural pressure	Jun-21
Clashes on the Armenia–Nakhchivan border 2	Military action 3	Jul-21
Makun bridge	Cultural pressure	Jul-21
School	Cultural pressure	Jul-21
Syunik Blockade	Military action 3	Aug-21
Gegharkunik-Kalbajar Strikes	Military action 3	Nov-21
Kanach Zham or S. Hovhannes Mkrtich	Cultural pressure	Apr-22
Armenia - Azerbaijan Border Escalation	Military action 3	Jul-22
Surb Sarkis church in Hadrut region	Cultural pressure	Jul-22
Halevor bridge	Cultural pressure	Jul-22
Blockade of the Lachin corridor	Economic pressure	Dec-22
Kohak church	Cultural pressure	Mar-23
Large scale military incursion in NK	Military action 2	Sep-23

B. Correlation Matrices

Event Type: Military action 1
1 Month Prior: 1.0000
2 Months Prior: 1.0000
3 Months Prior: -1.0000
6 Months Prior: -1.0000

Event Type: Military action 2
1 Month Prior: 1.0000
2 Months Prior: -1.0000
3 Months Prior: -1.0000
6 Months Prior: 1.0000

Event Type: Military action 3
1 Month Prior: 0.7798
2 Months Prior: 0.4048
3 Months Prior: 0.3774
6 Months Prior: 0.3274

Event Type: Cultural pressure
1 Month Prior: 0.1623
2 Months Prior: -0.1983
3 Months Prior: -0.3057
6 Months Prior: -0.3321

C. Paired T-test results

Event Type	Comparison	N	T-Statistic	P-Value
Military Action 1	1m vs 6m	2	−0.41	0.75
	2m vs 6m	2	−0.44	0.73
	3m vs 6m	2	−5.61	0.11
Military Action 2	1m vs 6m	2	0.36	0.78
	2m vs 6m	2	−0.14	0.91
	3m vs 6m	2	−0.52	0.68
Military Action 3	1m vs 6m	5	−1.31	0.26
	2m vs 6m	5	0.25	0.81
	3m vs 6m	5	-0.30	0.78

D. Coded Statements for Qualitative Analysis

Date	File Name	Themes
720	31_July_20201605_Afghan_President_Mohammad_Ashraf_Ghani_phoned_Pres_NEWS.html	['territorial integrity']
720	31_July_20201240_Ilham_Aliyev_phoned_first_President_of_Kazakhstan__NEWS.html	[]
720	31_July_20200940_Ilham_Aliyev_phoned_Turkish_President_Recep_Tayyip_NEWS.html	[]
720	29_July_20201900_Ilham_Aliyev_attended_opening_of_newly_renovated_A_NEWS.html	[]
720	29_July_20201530_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_opening_of_Balakan_r_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
720	24_July_20201715_First_Vice-President_of_the_Republic_of_Azerbaijan_I_VICE-PRESIDENT.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'victimhood narrative', 'territorial integrity']
720	24_July_20201545_To_His_Excellency_Mr._Šefik_Džaferović,_Chairman_o_DOCUMENTS.html	['territorial integrity']
720	22_July_20202040_United_Nations_Secretary-General_Antonio_Guterres__NEWS.html	[]
720	21_July_20201445_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_ceremony_to_give_out_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of

		violence', 'territorial integrity']
720	21_July_20201430_Ceremony_to_give_out_apartments_and_cars_to_famili_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
720	20_July_20201710_Mehriban_Aliyeva_The_duty_of_each_of_us_is_to_prot_I_VICE-PRESIDENT.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
720	18_July_20201625_From_Sefik_Dzaferovic,_Chairman_of_the_Presidency__DOCUMENTS.html	[]
720	16_July_20201600_Ilham_Aliyev_received_in_a_video_format_Jeyhun_Bay_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'territorial integrity']
720	16_July_20201540_To_His_Excellency_Mr_Shavkat_Mirziyoyev,_President_DOCUMENTS.html	['territorial integrity']
720	15_July_20202126_To_Secretary_General_of_the_Cooperation_Council_of_DOCUMENTS.html	['territorial integrity']
720	15_July_20202125_To_Secretary_General_of_the_Organization_of_Islami_DOCUMENTS.html	['territorial integrity']
720	15_July_20202115_To_President_of_the_Islamic_Republic_of_Pakistan_H_DOCUMENTS.html	['glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
720	15_July_20201600_Closing_speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_Cabinet_meet_NEWS.html	[]
720	15_July_20201545_Opening_speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_Cabinet_meet_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
720	15_July_20201535_Ilham_Aliyev_chaired_Cabinet_meeting_on_results_of_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'dehumanisation', 'territorial integrity']
720	13_July_20201245_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_meeting_of_Security__NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
720	13_July_20201225_Ilham_Aliyev_chaired_meeting_of_Security_Council_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
720	06_July_20201340_Ilham_Aliyev_attended_the_inauguration_of_modular__NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'dehumanisation', 'territorial integrity']
720	03_July_20201610_To_President_of_the_United_States_of_America_His_E_DOCUMENTS.html	['territorial integrity']
820	24_August_20201235_Ilham_Aliyev_received_in_a_video_format_Faig_Qurba_NEWS.html	['glorification of violence']
820	18_August_20201125_Ilham_Aliyev_received_credentials_of_incoming_Uzbe_NEWS.html	['territorial integrity']
820	13_August_20201635_Ilham_Aliyev_received_delegation_led_by_Turkish_Mi_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'territorial integrity']
820	13_August_20201100_Ilham_Aliyev_made_a_phone_call_to_Russian_Presiden_NEWS.html	['glorification of violence']
820	07_August_20201345_Serbian_President_Aleksandar_Vucic_initiated_a_pho_NEWS.html	[]
921	28_September_20211545_Ilham_Aliyev_was_interviewed_by_France_24_TV_chann_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
921	28_September_20211200_Ilham_Aliyev's_interview_with_Turkish_Anadolu_Agen_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']

921	27_September_20211020_Victorious_Commander-in-Chief,_President_Ilham_Ali_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'dehumanisation', 'territorial integrity']
921	24_September_20211210_Ilham_Aliyev`s_interview_with_Russian_influential__NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'victimhood narrative', 'territorial integrity']
921	24_September_20210150_Speech_of_President_of_Azerbaijan_Ilham_Aliyev_in__NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'victimhood narrative', 'territorial integrity']
1021	26_October_20212000_Presidents_of_Azerbaijan_and_Turkey_made_joint_pre_PRESIDENT.html	['historical revisionism']
1021	26_October_20212000_Joint_press_statements_of_Presidents_of_Azerbaijan_DOCUMENTS.html	['historical revisionism']
1021	26_October_20211500_Azerbaijani,_Turkish_presidents_laid_foundation_st_NEWS.html	[]
1021	21_October_20211150_Ilham_Aliyev_met_with_members_of_Zangilan_general__NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
1021	18_October_20211145_Ilham_Aliyev_met_with_members_of_general_public_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'victimhood narrative', 'territorial integrity']
1021	18_October_20211130_Address_to_the_people_of_Azerbaijan_on_the_occasio_DOCUMENTS.html	['historical revisionism', 'territorial integrity']
1021	15_October_20211220_Ilham_Aliyev_attended_CIS_Heads_of_State_Council's_NEWS.html	['glorification of violence', 'dehumanisation', 'territorial integrity', 'historical revisionism', 'victimhood narrative']
1021	13_October_20211310_Ilham_Aliyev_was_interviewed_by_Italian_La_Repubbl_NEWS.html	['glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
1021	11_October_20211320_Ilham_Aliyev_made_speech_at_High-Level_Commemorati_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
1021	10_October_20211140_Ilham_Aliyev_met_with_members_of_Khojavand_general_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'dehumanisation']
1021	10_October_20211140_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_meeting_with_represe_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'dehumanisation']
1021	06_October_20210000_Ilham_Aliyev_received_credentials_of_new_head_of_E_NEWS.html	[]
1021	05_October_20211146_Ilham_Aliyev_met_with_representatives_of_general_p_NEWS.html	['glorification of violence', 'dehumanisation', 'territorial integrity', 'historical revisionism', 'victimhood narrative']

1021	05_October_20211145_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_meeting_with_represe_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'victimhood narrative', 'territorial integrity']
1021	04_October_20211144_Ilham_Aliyev_viewed_a_new_house_built_on_the_site__NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'dehumanisation']
1021	04_October_20211135_Ilham_Aliyev_raised_Azerbaijan's_flag_in_Sugovusha_NEWS.html	['delegitimisation of armenian presence', 'historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'victimhood narrative']
1021	04_October_20211130_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_in_Sugovushan_settlement,_T_NEWS.html	['delegitimisation of armenian presence', 'historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'victimhood narrative']
1021	02_October_20210800_Ilham_Aliyev's_interview_with_Spanish_EFE_news_age_NEWS.html	['glorification of violence', 'dehumanisation', 'territorial integrity']
723	30_July_20231725_U.S._Secretary_of_State_Antony_Blinken_made_a_phon_NEWS.html	[]
723	29_July_20231235_To_the_family_of_Thomas_Goltz_DOCUMENTS.html	['historical revisionism']
723	24_July_20231500_Ilham_Aliyev_was_interviewed_by_China_Media_Group__NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'territorial integrity']
723	21_July_20231540_Opening_Ceremony_of_Global_Media_Forum_was_held_in_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
723	17_July_20231955_Ilham_Aliyev_received_delegation_of_Foreign_Affair_NEWS.html	['dehumanisation']
723	15_July_20231901_Working_visit_of_Ilham_Aliyev_to_Brussels_NEWS.html	[]
723	15_July_20231505_Ilham_Aliyev_held_trilateral_meeting_with_Presiden_NEWS.html	[]
723	14_July_20231900_Ilham_Aliyev_held_meeting_with_President_of_Europe_NEWS.html	[]
723	13_July_20231135_U.S._Secretary_of_State_Antony_Blinken_made_a_phon_NEWS.html	[]
723	11_July_20231610_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_meeting_on_the_resul_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
723	11_July_20231605_Ilham_Aliyev_has_chaired_a_meeting_dedicated_to_th_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
723	11_July_20231035_Ilham_Aliyev_received_Minister_of_State_at_Federal_NEWS.html	[]
723	07_July_20231251_Joint_press_statements_of_Presidents_of_Azerbaijan_DOCUMENTS.html	['historical revisionism', 'territorial integrity']
723	07_July_20231250_Presidents_of_Azerbaijan_and_Albania_made_press_st_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'territorial integrity']
723	06_July_20231100_Ilham_Aliyev_received_Director-General_of_UN_Offic_NEWS.html	[]
723	05_July_20231205_Ilham_Aliyev_received_Foreign_Minister_of_Türkiye_NEWS.html	[]
723	05_July_20231006_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_Ministerial_Meeting__NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
723	05_July_20231005_Ilham_Aliyev_participated_in_Ministerial_Meeting_o_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism',

		'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
723	04_July_20231100_To_His_Excellency_Mr._Joseph_Biden,_President_of_t_DOCUMENTS.html	[]
823	29_August_20232110_President_of_the_French_Republic_Emmanuel_Macron_m_NEWS.html	[]
823	26_August_20231346_Speech_by_Ilham_Aliyev_at_the_“Lachin_City_Day”_fe_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
823	26_August_20231345_Ilham_Aliyev_and_First_Lady_Mehriban_Aliyeva_parti_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']
823	26_August_20231030_Ilham_Aliyev_and_First_Lady_Mehriban_Aliyeva_got_f_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence']
823	10_August_20230945_Ilham_Aliyev_received_credentials_of_incoming_amba_NEWS.html	[]
823	03_August_20231850_Ilham_Aliyev_has_received_U.S._Department_of_State_NEWS.html	[]
823	02_August_20231000_Ilham_Aliyev_was_interviewed_by_Euronews_TV_channe_NEWS.html	['historical revisionism', 'glorification of violence', 'territorial integrity']

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