



If we do not maintain justice,  
justice will not maintain us

*Francis Bacon*



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# Khojaly

## Khojaly district

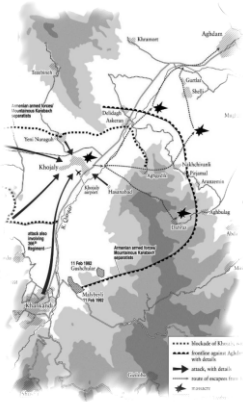
Khojaly is a highland district in southwest Azerbaijan. It was established on the basis of Asgaran district when the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region was dissolved in 1991. Khojali's majestic Gizgala and Girkhgiz peaks rise over 2,800 meters above sea level. Alpine meadows, grassland and forests of oak, hazel, birch and maple cover much of the district. Conditions are right for keeping bees, growing grapes and raising cattle.

## History of Khojaly

Barrows and other graves dating back to the Bronze and Iron Ages have been found near the town of Khojaly. The burial mounds contained ceramic utensils, weapons, jewelry and bronze tools from the 13th–7th centuries BCE. Two millennia later, in 1787, Ibrahim Khalil Khan built Asgaran Castle to protect the Karabakh Khanate from enemy attack. The castle is considered one of the last examples of traditional Azerbaijani fortifications.

## Why Khojaly

Khojaly lies in a strategic location in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan on the main road from Shusha and Khankendi to Aghdam, and is close to the regional airport. Therefore, the Armed Forces of Armenia saw Khojaly as both a key target and an opportunity to intimidate the civilian population of Karabakh and crush resistance to the occupation.



## Khojaly Tragedy

During the night of 25-26 February 1992, the Armed Forces of Armenia, backed by the 366<sup>th</sup> Motor-Rifle Regiment of the former Soviet Union, launched a massive attack on the town. As the residents fled across the mountains, they came under fire from Armenian Armed Forces. The attacks were especially brutal. Some people were shot in the face, others in the back of the head. Bodies were mutilated. A total of 613 people lost their lives that night; 106 were women, 70 were elderly people, and 63 were children. 1275 were taken hostage, while the fate of another 150 people remains unknown. Eight families were completely wiped out; 130 children lost one parent; and 25 children lost both parents.



## Dispersed People

At the result of occupation of Khojaly in 1992 by Armenian Armed Forces inhabitants of the region became IDPs and took temporary refuge in 48 districts in Azerbaijan.

## Khojaly in international media

"As we swooped low over the snow-covered hills of Nagorno-Karabakh we saw the scattered corpses. Apparently, the refugees had been shot as they ran," journalist Anatol Lieven wrote in *The Times* newspaper.

On March 3, 1992 *the New York Times* reported that, "Fresh evidence emerged today of a massacre of civilians by Armenian militants in Nagorno-Karabakh".

Human Rights Watch recalls: "In February 1992, Karabakh Armenian forces—reportedly backed by soldiers from the 366<sup>th</sup> Motor Rifle Regiment of the Russian Army—seized the Azeri-populated town of Khojaly.... More than 200 civilians were killed in the attack, the largest massacre to date in the conflict".

## Armenian confession

Serzh Sarkisian, former president of Armenia, told British journalist Thomas de Waal: "Before Khojaly, the Azerbaijanis thought that they were joking with us, they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We were able to break that [stereotype]". (*Black Garden*, 2003, p.172)

## Justice for Khojaly

The Justice for Khojaly campaign, launched in 2008 at the initiative by the Vice-President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Leyla Aliyeva, aims to raise international public awareness of the Khojaly Genocide and the root causes and consequences of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Under the Justice for Khojaly campaign the monuments for the memories of the Khojaly victims were erected in The Hague, Netherland; Berlin, Germany; Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Mexico City, Mexico; and Ankara, Turkey.



## Hope for restoration of a new life after the cold winter

The glorious army of Azerbaijan restored territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and brought an end to the long-lasting occupation as the result of the Patriotic War. Deliberately attacking on civilian population during the 44 days military operations by ballistic scud missiles and cluster rockets in Tartar, Ganja, Barda and Mingachevir, the Armed Forces of Armenia once again disclosed its terroristic nature, which they had already demonstrated in Khojaly in 1992.



The almond tree will blossom again  
**IN KHOJALY**