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THE MANIFESTATIONS OF SUNNI RADICALISM IN AZERBAIJAN*

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Islamic radicalization is relatively new phenomenon for the Republic of Azerbaijan, since its first signs appeared only in the early years of independence. Even though its expressions do not amount to an inextricable issue for state security, throughout last thirty years Azerbaijan saw worrisome trends that have borne risks not only for the domestic order but also to the regional and interregional stability. Drawing on the results of desk research of secondary and some primary data and interview, the article aims to trace the roots and manifestations of Sunni radicalization in Azerbaijan and reveals the implications of radicalization on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The article sheds light on some of the possible recruitment and radicalization social mechanisms and the factors that condition ideological militarization, challenging the traditionally accepted “root causes”, instead focusing on networks as predominant path of recruitment into militarized armed groups. Additionally, the article attempts to explain why the Azerbaijani ideologically radicalized groups have refrained/have been kept away from activating in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The article suggests that people from these circles largely do not perceive the conflict as a part of their ideological strife. In addition to that, militarization and autonomy of these groups contradicts Baku’s interest, therefore it aims to prevent the engagement of such groups in the conflict.

Key words: *Islamic radicalization, Azerbaijani terrorists, Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Salafism, terrorist groups, irregular armed forces, terrorist networks.*

Sandwiched between the Middle East and the North Caucasus, two regions widely perceived as strongholds of Islamic extremism and insurgency, the South Caucasus has remained mostly unconcerned in this regard. If the reason how Armenia and Georgia (to a lesser extent) were kept unaffected is more obvious and can be credited to the diverging religious affiliation, then in the case of Muslim Azerbaijan the answer is not straightforward. Arguing that this post-Soviet country is immune to religious violent extremism would be an underestimation of the risks, however it is also not a stronghold of such groups. With the rise of militarized crises in Syria and Iraq there has been a growing influx of Azeri foreign fighters into the theatre of war, joining the global jihad of ISIS and other extremist organizations. Even though, fighting against the Christian Armenians and gaining back control over the lost territories (or even further) might seem, from the first sight, a more obvious and direct target of these Azeri fighters, members sharing this ideology don’t tend to choose Nagorno Karabakh (NK) as their primary

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battleground and it seems that not much academic work has been done to shed light on this phenomenon. This paper will a) provide background of Salafi extremism in Azerbaijan with its internal and external implications b) analyse the motivation-opportunity logic behind trends of this paradigm and c) explain why this extremism has not been directed to seemingly more obvious target – towards the Armenians and NK. First, we should put the terms straight. Salafism is a conservative stream of Sunni Islam, advocating for the purification of Islam, more specifically, a return to the practices of first three generations of Islam. Though sometimes used interchangeably with Salafism, Wahhabism is rather an ultra-conservative sect within the Salafi movement¹⁰⁵⁸. Violent Salafists restore to arms to fight against the enemies of Islam and are called jihadists – those fighting for jihad.¹⁰⁵⁹

Radical Islam in Azerbaijan and the Radicalized Azerbaijanis Fighting Abroad

Turning to Azerbaijan, we shall explore how Salafism and particularly its violent form have been expressed here. Being a predominantly Shite country, the Azerbaijanis have widely practiced a more secular way of life, which can be attributed to the anti-clerical influencers of Azerbaijani identity roughly a century ago¹⁰⁶⁰ and due to the Soviet legacy of state atheism. Even though, the demise of the USSR and the ideological vacuum opened the door of opportunities for political Islam to fill the void, nationalism has outstripped Islam as a determining factor of the Azerbaijani identity, the former bearing a more ethnic/nationalistic rather than purely religious significance¹⁰⁶¹. In this context, Azerbaijan does not seem a fertile ground for religious extremism to rise, however several factors have contributed to its introduction here. Among these factors, external ones enjoy primary importance. Since 1990s the main importers of Salafism to the country were the missionaries and funds from Arab Gulf countries, Iran, Chechnya and Dagestan¹⁰⁶², followed by the spill over influx from the North Caucasus after the Second Chechen war¹⁰⁶³. Even though it was an imported phenomenon, Salafism underwent radicalization domestically.¹⁰⁶⁴ Among other reasons, it did so due to the backlash from the perceived secular deterioration of traditional values. Alike, the radicalization was facilitated by the absence of alternative political ideology to oppose the regime and radical Salafism being perceived as a channel of political expression. The process of radicalization has

¹⁰⁵⁸ **Horst F.** Salafist Jihadism in Germany ICT 2011, <http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Articlsid/887/currentpage/1/Default.aspx>. 03.01.2019. In the early eighteenth century AD, Wahhabism is an Islamic doctrine proposed by Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab in 18th century which envisages a return to original Islam for the restoration of Islam's Golden and bans all kinds of intermediaries, “for the benefit of knowing the Prophet Muhammad. According to Wahhabism, the Muslim community’s last goal is to become the living embodiment of God's laws on earth”, **Ungureanu D.** “Wahhabism, Salafism and the Expansion of Islamic Fundamentalist Ideology” (this study was funded by CNCIS–UEFISCSU, project number PNII–IDEI 1993/2006, “A.I. Cuza” University of Iasi (Romania), 1993/2006), accessed 20.05.2019, http://www.fssp.uaic.ro/argumentum/Numarul%2010/11_Ungureanu_tehno.pdf.

¹⁰⁵⁹ “The Oxford Dictionary of Islam” defines jihad as “an exertion to convert unbelievers, or a struggle for the moral betterment of the Islamic community” <https://web.archive.org/web/20140903062853/http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1199> accessed on 20.05.2019, for various interpretations of jihad see **Cook, D.** (2005). *Understanding Jihad*. University of California Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppjtw>.

¹⁰⁶⁰ **Souleimanov E. Ehrmann M.** *The Rise of Militant Salafism in Azerbaijan and its Regional Implications, Middle East Policy*, Vol. XX, No. 3, 2003 page 113.

¹⁰⁶¹ *Ibidem*

¹⁰⁶² **Taarnby M.** *The Mujahedin in Nagorno-Karabakh: A Case Study in the Evolution of Global Jihad*, WP, 2008, page 12.

¹⁰⁶³ **Valiyev A.** *Terror Attacks against US and British Embassies Thwarted in Azerbaijan*, *Terrorism Focus*, vol 4, issue no 36, 2007.

¹⁰⁶⁴ **Souleimanov E. Ehrmann M.** *op. cit.* page 114..

been further fuelled by the suppressive crackdown on all Salafists regardless of their belonging to violent groups and by the exaggeration of the insurgency threat due to political motivations of the ruling elites. Initially, fearing the reaction of foreign clergy, the authorities have tolerated the activities of Salafis. However, “fearing the emergence of a militant ideology with the potential to destabilize the country”, Azerbaijani authorities restored to brutal crackdown on the Salafi community, which arguably only fuelled more radicalization¹⁰⁶⁵.

The synthesis of this home-grown radicalization of the exported Salafi waves has had two main implications – internal and external. Though closely connected by overlapping networks and actors, the practical objectives of these two elements do not necessarily flow in the same direction. Internally, there have been several attempts and incidents of terrorist attacks in Azerbaijan. One of the first and most tragic acts was registered in March 1994 in Baku, when a remote-controlled bomb was activated when the metro car was entering the “20 January” station killing 14. This was followed by a July explosion between “28 May” and “Ganjlik” metro stations killing another 13¹⁰⁶⁶. Though Baku accused Armenian special services for plotting the terrorist acts, Sadval Lezghin movement was named as responsible as well¹⁰⁶⁷. Another terrorist act registered in Azerbaijan was the 2008 attack on Abu Bakr mosque in Baku, this one having more accentuated religious context. Built in 1997 by Azerbaijani branch of the Kuwaiti Revival of Islamic Heritage society, the mosque is the largest Sunni Salafi mosque of the country. It is also known for attracting large numbers of followers in contrast to other mosques, as well as perceived as a recruitment ground for foreign fighters destined to fight in North Caucasus. The cause of the incident was identified as the disagreement between the leadership of the mosque headed by Imam Suleymanov and those who disagreed with their policy of cooperating with the government and remaining apolitical¹⁰⁶⁸. Nevertheless, probably the most prominent terror act concerned the faxes sent from Baku to the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya an hour before their bombings, in addition to 60 tracked phone calls by Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan to Baku¹⁰⁶⁹.

There have also been reports on the presence of Iranian radical groups in Azerbaijan¹⁰⁷⁰. The motivations in this case are either the true belief in the creation of an Islamic state or narrow political – to overthrow the ruling regime, and/or a form of political activity to overcome marginalization. Such opportunities are created by transnational networks, by charity organizations, and sometimes by collecting resources through minor criminal activities in urban centres accompanied with the ability, or the perception of it, to surpass state surveillance and succeed. This path is also the narrowed down and seemingly the last resort opportunity as other means of political opposition and meaningful participation of marginalized groups who are denied such opportunity, or simply put, for some, this is a mode of political expression because nothing else can be.

Regarding the external implications of Islamic radicalization, the engagement of Azerbaijani citizens in external conflicts as foreign fighters and particularly in the ones with religious accent along the “Muslim vs non-Muslim” jihadi lines is noteworthy. This kind of activities traces back to the Second Chechen war, and geographically extends to

¹⁰⁶⁵ **Souleimanov E. Ehrmann M.** *The Rise of Militant Salafism in Azerbaijan and its Regional Implications*, Middle East Policy, Vol. XX, No. 3, 2003 pp. 116-117.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Acts of terrorism in Metro in other countries, 2004, https://web.archive.org/web/20100814183730/http://english.pravda.ru/world/20/91/365/11994_terrorism.html, 11.11.2018.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Sadval (union) Movement, <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/sadval-union-movement>

¹⁰⁶⁸ **Valiyev A.** Who is Behind the Bombing of the Salafi Mosque in Baku?, Terrorism Focus vol 5, Issue 31, 2008, <https://jamestown.org/program/who-is-behind-the-bombing-of-the-salafi-mosque-in-baku/>, 07.12.2018.

¹⁰⁶⁹ **Yunusov A.** *Islam in Azerbaijan*, Institute for Peace and Democracy, Baku, Azerbaijan, 2004, pp. 245-247.

¹⁰⁷⁰ **Valiyev A.** Foreign Terrorist Groups and Rise of Home-grown Radicalism in Azerbaijan, HUMSEC Journal, Issue 2, 2008, page 98.

Afghanistan and even Pakistan¹⁰⁷¹. The most recent involvement of the Azerbaijani foreign fighters overseas took place in the stage of the Syrian crisis. The first concrete reports that Azerbaijani citizens were involved in the Syrian civil war came in the fall of 2012 with a death toll rising up to around 100 by the end of the year, to 250 by the spring of 2014 and to around 300 being reported as of late 2017¹⁰⁷². The total number of the Azerbaijani nationals fighting in Syria reportedly reached to 900¹⁰⁷³.

Who joins the radical military groups and why?

For the purposes of this article, among the leadership of the combatants it is interesting to mention the involvement of veterans from Afghanistan and Chechnya. These are known as the “Karabakh Partisans” who had planned to launch a jihadi campaign in NK but were detained and imprisoned in 2004. However, they were released in 2010 without much publicity¹⁰⁷⁴. The fighters come from regions that had had history of active engagement in Chechnya and Afghanistan, in addition to fighters from the north, Baku and Sumgayit. Departing from the experience of the Sumgait pogroms and the engagement of the Karabakh internally displaced people in the city, could possibly lead to an assumption of Karabakh IDPs being more prone to radicalize based on the logic of grievances as a root cause¹⁰⁷⁶. However, the proportional numbers among the Azerbaijani foreign fighters do not indicate to such a correlation. This case demonstrates how the root causes argument behind radicalization yet another time fails to explain the realities on the ground. Even though the root causes of radicalization are insightful to explore and apply, and sometimes indicate the correct causative relation, most of those (poverty, education, level of urbanization, grievances etc.) are limited to a descriptive significance and have little explanatory value.

Some fighters are motivated by the strong belief in the ideology and the rightness of the war in the Middle East, which explains why some fighters return from warfare discouraged by distorted morals and misbehaviour of other fighters. There are also cases of recruitment by attractive promises of high salaries, which also usually end up in a disappointment.

The network of older fighters also has an important role for the recruitment. To our belief, the networks seem to be the biggest single catalyst for joining radically violent groups, as many join such groups with the encouragement of relatives or based on ethnic kin. Only after the recruitment these group of people adopt to the ideology of the group. This factor also incorporates people coming from different backgrounds and transcends the above mentioned root causes.

Some, who feel threatened by the government crackdown on Salafists, albeit those radicalized, may find it safer to move to the Islamic Caliphate, where their worldview would match that of the community. The opportunity is given by an easily accessible route to Syria, via Georgia, then through Turkey as cheap as \$96 on a bus from Baku to cities near the Turkish-

¹⁰⁷¹ Azerbaijani Foreign Fighters in Syria, <http://jihadology.net/2014/01/28/guest-post-azerbaijani-foreign-fighters-in-syria/>, 24.10.2018.

¹⁰⁷² 300 Azerbaijani Citizens Killed in Syria, Iraq. <https://www.azernews.az/nation/126228.html>, 04.10.2018.

¹⁰⁷³ State Security Officer: More Than 900 Azerbaijanis in the Ranks of ISIS. <https://www.meydan.tv/en/site/news/21656/>, 12.01.2019.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Radicalism and Jihadism in Azerbaijan, <http://hrwf.eu/radicalism-and-jihadism-in-azerbaijan/>, 10.01.2019.

¹⁰⁷⁵ The Clear Banner: The Forgotten Fighters: Azerbaijani Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq, <http://jihadology.net/2015/02/02/the-clear-banner-azerbaijani-foreign-fighters-in-2014/>, 10.01.2019.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Exporting Jihad: Foreign Fighters from the North Caucasus and Central Asia and the Civil War in Syria, Chatham House, The Royal Institute for International Affairs, 2015, page 3.

Syrian border. The practice in post-Soviet countries shows, that the governments do not care much about the foreign fighters and let them go, assuming that the danger leaves and probably will die before deciding to return. This stands in contrast to a more cooperative approach of the European states, who try to follow through the possible repercussions¹⁰⁷⁷. This also creates a favourable opportunity for those who are motivated to leave to proceed with their decision.

Why not fighting in Nagorno Karabakh?

No matter how opportune the war in Syria is for the Azerbaijanis, it seems that the costs to fight in the line of contact with Armenia and NK are less, as transportation costs are minimal and intuitively the motivation should be higher in the general environment of widespread hatred and demonization of the enemy, in addition to the real grievances and continuing human losses. Nevertheless, such a trend has not been identified for almost two decades and a logical question rises – why?

Before discussing the possible answers to this question, first we should note that radical Islamists have indeed fought on the frontline during the war in the early 90s before the ceasefire agreement was reached between the sides in 1994. According to Thomas de Waal, Azerbaijan recruited between 1500 and 2500 Mujahedeen from Afghanistan to engage in warfare against Armenians in Karabakh¹⁰⁷⁸. Even though, one can object that this state regulated recruitment¹⁰⁷⁹ cannot be counted as a voluntary radicalization and inflow of foreign fighters, this act certainly contained a threat of inciting an inflow of ideologically (or else) motivated radical Muslims to join the fight. This can be deduced from the Armenian complaints to both UN and Afghan leadership concerning the mercenaries. In contrast to the issue of the fighters with that identity, Armenian concerns regarding the Russian or Ukrainian mercenaries has been less vocal, from whom a similar threat of an ideological radicalization and recruitment was absent. The danger of such a spill over for the domestic affairs of Azerbaijan was later also realised by the Azerbaijani leadership when the mujahedeen were becoming a threat to the social order in major cities¹⁰⁸⁰.

It is also misleading to put the NK conflict along the lines of religious strife, as the sides found themselves fighting over territory. It can be better characterized as a territorial conflict fuelled by ethnic, nationalistic strife, instead. Even if the foreign fighters came for ideological reasons, they soon found out that is not their war and the state of Azerbaijan did not share their cause. The divergence of the political objectives and the comprehension of issues between the state and the ideologically motivated foreign fighters is exemplified by the disrespectful attitude of the Mujahedeen towards the Azerbaijani soldiers as to only nominally Muslims¹⁰⁸¹. That has also been illustrated in views of the infamous Shamil Basayev that the fighting had little to do with Jihad and was rather carried on nationalist tones¹⁰⁸². This finding gives us one of the explanations why since the end of the war Islamist insurgency was absent from Karabakh. The ascendancy of nationalism over Islam, has downgraded the purely Salafist motivation to engage on the frontline. This long passivity of Jihadists was interrupted by the April war in 2016, when there were unverified reports of some 50-70 Azerbaijani ISIS fighters returning from Syria to

¹⁰⁷⁷ **Mironova V. Sergatskova E. Alhamad K.** *The Lives of Foreign Fighters Who Left ISIS 'Why They Escaped and Where They Are Now*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2017-10-27/lives-foreign-fighters-who-left-isis>, 2017.

¹⁰⁷⁸ As quoted in **Taarnby M.** *The Mujahedin in Nagorno-Karabakh: A Case Study in the Evolution of Global Jihad* 9/5/2008 WP 20/2008, page 5.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, page 6.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Interview with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary **Shahnazaryan Davit**.

¹⁰⁸¹ **Sneider D.** *Afghan Fighters Joined Azeri-Armenia*, *Christian Science Monitor*, 1993.

¹⁰⁸² As quoted in **Taarnby M.** *op. cit.* page 9.

fight in NK¹⁰⁸³. If true, then the event suggests that, this radical waves may erupt in the case of escalation and the restoration of intense military activities, though they are less likely during the more usual 'no war-no peace' phases. Another reason for non-engagement of Salafists may be the conflict with the Shite government, which is the official state representative of the conflicting side. And even though there is not considerable Sunni-Shia political cleavage in Azerbaijan, the government-led oppression of these groups may have created or intensified the differences¹⁰⁸⁴. This type of (de)motivation is well illustrated by the several occasions when, for example Lezgis (Sunni-majority) have refused to fight against the Armenians¹⁰⁸⁵. Lezgis among other ethnic minorities, themselves have occasionally raised a question of self-determination. This bears at least two implications regarding the position of the ideologically radicalized elements among them. First, some elements within these groups have shared sympathy to the struggle of the Karabakh Armenians. Second, the indiscriminate attacks by the state against the population in the Lezgi territories (which overlaps with the representation of the Sunni population), not only discourage them from participating in the "government's struggle" but also may have an intensifying effect on their secessionist (or irredentist, considering the ethnic kin over the Russian border) aspirations. This study suggests two more structural reasons why extremists do not engage on the line of contact with Nagorno Karabakh or the border with Armenia that are conditioned by the status of the patrolling defence forces. First, the situation on the border now differs a great deal from the times of war when Azerbaijan lacked organized armed units and carried out chaotic warfare. It is hard to imagine how insurgents can bypass the regular forces and engage in fights against Nagorno Karabakh army. This scenario is also highly undesirable by the state, which however, was both imaginable and encouraged during the early 90s. Nowadays, such unchecked engagement of irregular forces of ideologically radicalized background will have dangerous consequences for several reasons. For the Armenians it would then be impossible to differentiate an unbidden offensive from across the line of contact by the insurgents from a state-initiated military action and would be interpreted as an open aggression with equivalent military and diplomatic responses. Besides that, the radicals may have already joined the army and are serving on the border as regular soldiers, as this seems to be the only possible way to take active part in the conflict. Nevertheless, by no means this research has the capacity to investigate such cases. This option, though, is also limited since arming these radical elements poses potential danger to the domestic security of the state and the ruling elite; therefore the government has all the good reasons to minimize their entry into the army. Even though, it is hard to state with great confidence that Azerbaijan finds itself in a great danger posed by Salafi extremism, there have been some worrying trends. Such trends include the Azerbaijanis joining ISIS, and as the Caliphate seems to be on the way to its demise, the returnees may contribute to the recruitment at home. The return of the veteran foreign fighters increases the likelihood of instability and radical mobilization. These fighters may use their skills and ideological views in criminal activities or to the (re)emergence of jihadist movements. Having this prospective potential, it is reasonable to expect a growing interest of trans-national Salafi networks in Azerbaijan, and the state security agencies should closely monitor these trends. These networks do represent as the primary source of radicalization, and concentration on solely the conservative religious groups seems to be a less effective and somewhat belated measure, as they are rather the product, than the source of the ideological and network

1083 Azerbaijani ISIS Members Return from Syria to Fight in Karabakh – report, <https://southfront.org/60-azerbaijani-isis-members-return-from-syria-to-fight-in-karabakh-report/> '60, 14.01.2018.

1084 For more on the relation between the radical Islamic groups and the authoritarian regime in Azerbaijan see Geybullayeva A. "Is Azerbaijan Becoming a Hub of Radical Islam?"

1085 Demirdjian A. Azerbaijan's Achilles's Hill Affliction, http://noravank.am/eng/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=16368, 2015.

distribution. Harsh government attitude towards even peaceful Salafi communities may only play a catalytic role.

Conclusions

The Republic of Azerbaijan has through years dealt with the issue of Islamic radicalization. These occasions included terrorist attacks, radicalization and recruitment of segments of population, Azerbaijanis leaving for jihad as foreign fighters. The state has had to address also the issue of radical Islamic networks. Regarding the implications of the Islamic radicalism on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the study argues that as long as the 'no war, no peace' situation continues in the line of contact between NK and Azerbaijan, it is very unlikely that extremist groups would have the chance to engage applying guerrilla tactics, which is deemed impossible in the presence of regular army, unless the army/state itself does not encourage such actions. In addition to this, as most of the extremist groups come from ethnic and/or religious minorities which are under state pressure themselves, these groups will further be demotivated to invest their efforts into the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, instead feel more motivated to use them against the government as a recovery from political marginalization.

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ՆԱՐԵԿ ՍՈՒՔԻԱՅԱՆ

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հարաբերությունների ֆակուլտետի մագիստրանտ,
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Իսլամական արմատականացումը համեմատաբար նոր երևույթ է Ադրբեջանի Հանրապետության համար, քանի որ առաջին նշանները ի հայտ են եկել անկախության առաջին տարիներին: Թեև դրա արտահայտումները պետական անվտանգության համար անլուծելի խնդիր չեն, վերջին երեսուն տարիների ընթացքում Ադրբեջանը ականատես է եղել անհանգստացնող միտումների, որոնք պարունակել են ռիսկեր ոչ միայն ներքին կարգի, այլև տարածաշրջանային ու միջտարածաշրջանային կայունության համար: Հիմնվելով երկրորդական ու որոշ առաջնային տվյալների ու հարցազրույցի վրա՝ հոդվածը նպատակ է հետապնդում մատնանշել Ադրբեջանում սուննիական արմատականացման արմատները և բացահայտել, թե ինչ առնչություններ ունի արմատականացումը Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի հակամարտության հետ: Հոդվածը պարզաբանում է հավաքագրման ու արմատականացման հնարավոր սոցիալական մեխանիզմները և գաղափարախոսական միլիտարիզացումը պայմանավորող գործոնները՝ վիճարկելով ավանդաբար ընդունված «արմատային պատճառները»՝ փոխարենը կենտրոնանալով ցանցերի՝ որպես զինված խմբավորումների հավաքագրման հիմնական միջոցի վրա: Ավելին, հոդվածը փորձում է բացատրել, թե ինչու են Ադրբեջանի՝ գաղափարական արմատական խմբերը գերծ մնացել (հեռու պահվել) Լեռնային Ղարաբաղում գործունեություն ծավալելուց: Հոդվածում պնդում ենք, որ այդ շրջանակներում ընդկզրված մարդիկ չեն ընկալում հակամարտությունը որպես իրենց գաղափարական պայքարի մաս: Բացի այդ, այս խմբավորումների միլիտարիզացիան ու ինքնավարությունը հակասում է Բաքվի շահերին, հետևաբար այն նպատակ է հետապնդում կանխելու կոնֆլիկտում նման խմբավորումների ներգրավումը:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Իսլամական արմատականացում, ադրբեջանական ահաբեկչություն, Լեռնային Ղարաբաղի հակամարտություն, Սալաֆիզմ, ահաբեկչական խմբավորումներ, անկանոն զինված ուժեր, ահաբեկչական ցանցեր:*

ПРОЯВЛЕНИЯ СУННИТСКОГО РАДИКАЛИЗМА В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНЕ

НАРЕК СУКИАСЯН

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Исламская радикализация является относительно новым явлением для Азербайджанской Республики, поскольку первые признаки радикализации появились только в первые годы независимости. Несмотря на то, что ее проявления не являются неразрешимым вопросом для государственной безопасности, на протяжении последних тридцати лет в Азербайджане наблюдались тревожные тенденции, порождающие риски не только для внутреннего порядка, но и для региональной и межрегиональной стабильности. Опираясь на результаты исследования вторичных и некоторых первичных данных и интервью, статья ставит целью проследить корни и проявления суннитской радикализации в Азербайджане и раскрыть последствия радикализации для Нагорно-Карабахского конфликта. Статья проливает свет на некоторые из возможных социальных механизмов набора новобранцев и радикализации, и на факторы, обуславливающие идеологическую милитаризацию, оспаривая традиционно принятые "коренные причины", вместо этого сосредотачивая внимание на социальных сетях как главенствующем способе вербовки в милитаризованные вооруженные группы. Кроме того, в статье делается попытка объяснить, почему азербайджанские идеологически радикальные группы не стремятся/воздерживаются развивать какую-либо деятельность в Нагорном Карабахе. В статье говорится о том, что люди из этих кругов в основном не воспринимают конфликт как часть своей идеологической борьбы. Кроме того, милитаризация и автономия этих группировок противоречит интересам Баку, следовательно, он стремится предотвращать вовлечение подобных группировок в конфликт.

Ключевые слова: *исламская радикализация, азербайджанские террористы, Нагорно-Карабахский конфликт, салафизм, террористические группы, нерегулярные вооруженные силы, террористические сети.*