

Video: Azerbaijan-Armenia War: Counter-offensive in the South and the “Iranian Factor”

By [South Front](#)

Global Research, October 22, 2020

[South Front](#) 21 October 2020

Region: [Asia](#), [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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On the evening of October 20, the Armenian Defense Ministry declared that they had launched a large-scale counter-offensive against the advancing Azerbaijani forces in the Khudaferin Reservoir area, in the southern part of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Armenian sources claimed that the attack had caused heavy losses for the ‘enemy’ and had pushed Azerbaijani troops into retreat. Pro-Armenian sources also said that the town of Zangilan had become a ‘trap’ for Azerbaijani troops and that a large group of the ‘enemy forces’ was now being eliminated there.

On October 20, the Armenian Defense Ministry also released photos of a Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 combat drone downed in the Nagorno-Karabakh combat zone. This is the second time, that the Armenian side appeared to be able to confirm that the Azerbaijani-Turkish bloc had lost a Bayraktar TB2. On October 19, Armenian sources showed a part of a Bayraktar TB2 optic system claiming that a drone had been downed. These drones are allegedly operated by the Azerbaijani military, but military sources say that drone operations are run with direct help from Turkish specialists.

The claims of Armenian successes in the south were immediately denied by the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry. As of October 21, the situation on the ground demonstrates that the Armenian side has not yet been able to really retake initiative in the area.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/21.10.20_IMR_Armenia.mp4

Just before the Armenian counter-attack, Azerbaijani forces captured the town of Zangilan, and 25 villages in the districts of Zangilan, Jabrayil, and Fuzuli. The total number of various settlements captured by Azerbaijan since the start of the war on September 27 has reached 75.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev also made an address to the nation de-facto claiming that the Armenian military had been devastated and that his country was on the brink of a military victory in Karabakh. According to him, Azerbaijani forces destroyed 241 battle tanks, 50 armoured vehicles, 215 pieces of artillery, 74 multiple launch rocket systems, 58 mortars, 53 anti-tank weapons, 12 air defense systems, including 4 S-300s and 3 TORs, 8 electronic warfare systems, 3 tactical ballistic missiles and 198 trucks, as well as capturing numerous weapons and equipment from the Armenian side.

Indeed, if Armenian forces prove to be unable to organize an active defense, Azerbaijan has every chance of retaking the entire southern part of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and even reaching the Armenian border there in the nearest future.

An Israeli-made IAI Harop combat drone belonging to the Azerbaijani Armed Forces was shot down near the city of Parsabad in northern Iran on October 20. The Azerbaijani military uses IAI Harops to target the positions and the equipment of Armenian forces. This is not the first cross-border incident with Iran caused by the ongoing military hostilities in Karabakh. Earlier, Iranian forces already shot down several Azerbaijani drones and reported shells falling inside Iranian territory.

On October 21, the Iranian Army and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) launched large-scale air defense drills, codenamed Modafe'an-e Aseman-e Velayat 99 (Guardians of Velayat Sky 99). The drills involve the Iranian Army's air defense units and the Air Force along with the IRGC's Aerospace Force. Just a few days earlier, the Iranian military deployed additional artillery pieces near to the border with Azerbaijan.

Taking into account that the main direction of the current Azerbaijani advance in Karabakh is along the border with Iran, even a limited Iranian military response to regular 'accidental' attacks on its territory and violations of its airspace could create difficulties for Azerbaijani forces. For example, the Iranian decision to shoot down combat drones operating too close to the border could undermine Azerbaijani air dominance in this particular chunk of the frontline.

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