

Does Anyone Respect the Administrative Division of Azerbaijan?

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Does the Azerbaijani government itself adhere to its own demand that *everyone should refer to its administrative division*? The government insists that everyone – all persons and states – should refer to the current administrative division of the Republic of Azerbaijan when expressing their views on Karabakh. For example, the term Nagorno-Karabakh is either not used in the local press or written in quotation marks to indicate that it is not the news organization's speech; when foreign countries use this term, the government [responds](#) that “there is no administrative territorial unit called Nagorno-Karabakh in the territory of Azerbaijan.” However, it is clear that the government itself does not follow its own demand. Let us look at two facts.

First, there is really no territorial unit called Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan because the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was abolished on November 26, 1991, by [decision](#) of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Azerbaijan. However, the documents signed during the negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict regularly use the term Nagorno-Karabakh. Why? The government does not clarify this. [The Trilateral Statement](#) signed on November 10, 2020, among Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia also refers to the conflict zone as Nagorno-Karabakh. As I stated in my [previous article](#), Nagorno-Karabakh did not exist as an administrative territorial unit in Azerbaijan on November 10, 2020, when the Trilateral Statement was signed, “so it remains unclear why then in this document the conflict territory is named as *Nagorno-Karabakh*? If this expression consisting of two words is so irritating for Azerbaijan, why then did it allow this terminology in the

Trilateral Statement which it signed?"

Second, the government and its media do not speak about the Aghdara district and insist that the Kalbajar and Aghdam districts have been liberated from occupation. However, according to the current administrative division of Azerbaijan, both Kalbajar and Aghdam districts, as well as part of the Tartar district are under occupation or not under Azerbaijani control. That is because on 25 August, 1992, the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan [gave](#) some villages of the Aghdara district to Tartar. Later, on October 13, 1992, Aghdara district was abolished by [decision](#) of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan. In accordance with the latter decision, eight villages of the district were given to Aghdam, 23 villages to Kalbajar, and other territories, including Aghdara city itself, were given to Tartar. Articles 2 and 6, respectively, of the Trilateral Statement state that Aghdam district must be returned to Azerbaijan by November 20, 2020, and Kalbajar region by November 15, 2020. However, when the document mentions Aghdam and Kalbajar districts, it refers to the administrative division of Azerbaijan *before August 25, 1992*. Thus, the villages of Aghdara given to Kalbajar and Aghdam were not returned to Azerbaijan. That is, according to the current administrative division, some villages in the Kalbajar and Aghdam districts are still under occupation or not under Azerbaijani control. However, Azerbaijan claims that the Kalbajar and Aghdam districts have been completely liberated from occupation. By claiming this, the government itself is not referring to its current administrative division.

These two examples – the naming of the disputed area in official documents as Nagorno-Karabakh and de-facto acceptance of the existence of a district called Aghdara – show that the Azerbaijani government itself does not comply with its own demand that *everyone should refer to its administrative division*. Why does the government not comply with its own demand regarding the naming of its territories? How reasonable and fair is it for the government to expect others to comply

with a demand that it does not? These are open questions.