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## **ARMENIA 'REMOVES' AZERBAIJAN'S TRACES IN UPPER KARABAKH**

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Armenia is removing the traces belonging to Azerbaijan from the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh territory, the head of Azerbaijani Community of the Nagorno Karabakh region said in the capital Ankara on Monday.

"Armenian troops are currently trying to legitimize the results and consequences of the occupation, and that's why they are removing the traces belonging to Azerbaijan," Tural Ganjaliyev said in a panel -- titled Encountering internationally displaced persons (IDP) challenges: experience of Azerbaijan -- at Azerbaijan's embassy in Turkey.

Ganjaliyev said Azerbaijanis have witnessed through the Google Earth and different satellite programs how the homes where they used to live in Nagorno-Karabakh -- as well as the historical and cultural monuments, religious places, such as mosques and cemeteries of family members -- are being demolished or changed by the Armenian troops at the occupied territories.

"They are destroying our heritage, they are trying to alter any traces belonging to us, they are changing the monuments, historic temples and religious monuments," he said, adding that this act is not only against the international humanitarian law, but also a crime against the humanity.

He said that when Armenian troops invaded Azerbaijani lands, they not only destroyed the Azerbaijani community's livelihoods, but also everything related to Azerbaijani people in occupied territories.

Noting that Azerbaijan always respected the culture and heritage of other ethnic groups, Ganjaliyev said the government of Azerbaijan preserved and protected the Armenian church in the center of Azerbaijan's capital city of Baku.

Ganjaliyev -- who was born in the Shusha province of Azerbaijan, which was invaded by Armenian troops when he was 12 years old -- said that before the territorial claims started, Azerbaijani people embraced Armenian community in Nagorno-Karabakh for at least 150 years.

"We embraced Armenians and we lived peacefully, we cohabited peacefully, and we had good relations," he said.

He stressed that some Armenian nationalists started to put claims against Azerbaijan's territorial integrity "starting in the last days" of the Soviet Union, and with its collapse, it "freed the hands" of

the Armenian nationalists.

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