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**'SHOCKING BUT EXPECTED VERDICT': RUBEN VARDANYAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN BAKU**

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Jam News (17 February 2026)

*A military court in Baku has sentenced Ruben Vardanyan, the former state minister of the unrecognised Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, to 20 years in prison. The court handled his case separately from those of the former Karabakh leadership.*

Azerbaijani media say the court found Vardanyan guilty of serious crimes, including waging an aggressive war, financing terrorism and deporting people.

Vardanyan has long described the trial in Azerbaijan as a farce and an imitation of justice. For that reason, he instructed his lawyer not to present any arguments about his innocence in court.

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