

Tehran – Baku: a new round of tension?

ARVAK center's comment, 10.02.2024

On 02.08.2024, the Iranian news agency *Tasnim*, citing sources in the Iranian security agencies, reported that the country's special services detained a group of people preparing sabotage on Iranian territory. According to the publication, the detained group entered the country with the aim of carrying out operations and sabotage aimed at undermining the national security of the Islamic Republic. *Tasnim* also reported that the command center that led the sabotage group is located on the territory of Azerbaijan.

Iranian security authorities, however, did not specify when exactly the operation of the saboteurs' detention was carried out. This inevitably leads to the conclusion that the detention took place at least a few days before the publication, which was specially postponed until the day when I. Aliyev began to receive congratulations from international leaders on his next re-election to the office.

It seems that Tehran wanted to spoil Aliyev's holiday with a "fly in the ointment", and at the same time to balance with "bitterness" to the Aliyev's congratulatory message from Iranian President M. Raisi, drawn up, in line with the international traditions and diplomatic protocol, in a positive and friendly manner.

And, apparently, Baku did not like the core message of the Iranian side. First of all, this is evidenced by the fact that not a single Azerbaijani news agency, at least as of February 8, 2024, considered it necessary to confirm or deny the scandalous news about the saboteurs. Apparently, the scale of the brewing scandal compels Baku to take his time with the respond and carefully weigh all options for overcoming the difficult situation. Even more so if, in connection with the saboteurs' detentions, Tehran has attained data undeclared yet, which allows them to truck the threads leading from AzR to some other country.