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Armenia: Past practices of the Soviet Committee for State Security (*Komitet Gosurdarstvennoi Besopasnosti* - KGB), including recruitment practices pre-1991, and current treatment of former officers of the KGB in Armenia

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According to the book *KGB: Death and Rebirth*, the Soviet secret service, which is commonly known as the KGB, has undergone many changes in name and administration both during the Soviet regime and after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 (Ebon 1994). Prior to 1991, the KGB was a Soviet-wide organization with regional offices in the fourteen non-Russian republics (FAS 1997a). Although the KGB was officially disbanded in 1991, the book *KGB: Death and Rebirth* argues that "virtually every former Soviet republic has retained a KGB or a KGB-like apparatus for its own national purposes." (Ebon 1994). Information on the post-independence name of the Armenian secret service was not found in the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The KGB and its successor organizations were apparently involved in espionage activities, domestic and international surveillance, infiltration of political groups and suppression of free speech prior to 1991 (*Armenian Forum* 16 Apr. 2001; Alexander 1990; Ebon 1994).

According to the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), before the break-up of the USSR, "the KGB was tasked with ferreting out potential threats to the state and preventing the development of unorthodox political and social attitudes among the population." (FAS 1997b). Concerning KGB activities in Armenia, FAS states that "at the republic level, KGB organization was probably similar to that of the central KGB" (ibid).

Regarding specific examples of activities, FAS reports that:

Other special KGB troops were intended for counterterrorist and counterinsurgency operations. Such troops were reportedly employed ... to suppress public protests and disperse demonstrations, such as that of the Crimean Tatars in July 1987 and those in the republics of Armenia and Azerbaydzhan in March 1988. Special KGB troops also were trained for sabotage and diversionary missions abroad (ibid. 1997c).

Two sources suggest that the Armenian KGB began to support nationalist goals even before the dissolution of the USSR (*Armenian Forum* 16 Apr. 2001; Ebon 1994).