



ARMENIAN CHURCHES TOGETHER
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 2, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,
N.W. Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We, the spiritual leaders of the American Christians of Armenian heritage, write to you with urgency regarding Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The failure to act by global leaders emboldened Azerbaijani Dictator Ilham Aliyev to violate international agreements, numerous cease-fire agreements, and two orders from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Aliyev has ignored all calls by your administration to refrain from using military force against the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The imposition of the so-called "cease-fire," agreement and "integration" of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians under the rule of Azerbaijani dictator Ilham Aliyev was and is illegitimate, counter to international law and a rebuke of your administration's statements calling for a negotiated settlement.

Condemnations not to use brute force never stopped the Aliyev regime from continuing their ethnic cleansing campaign against Nagorno-Karabakh. This military campaign left the vulnerable Armenian population with no alternative but to be forcibly removed from their ancestral lands, millennia-aged monasteries and cemeteries. Aliyev was never interested in heeding any call to guarantee any rights and security for Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians.

Credible reports indicate that large-scale atrocities akin to the Bucha massacre have occurred, involving the deaths of an estimated 1,000 civilians. These reports include horrific instances of children being beheaded in front of their parents. Captures from Azerbaijani social media have been found to offer bounties for decapitated heads and ears of Armenian children in a number of settlements in Nagorno Karabakh—areas where no local or international actor has access. These grave acts contributed to an acute humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh, resulting from aggressive military actions by Azerbaijan.

This brutal military campaign has resulted in the gut-wrenching exodus of most of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, creating an even more acute humanitarian crisis for more than 100,000 people and counting as of the latest report today.

Azerbaijan's Intent to Eliminate Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. Over a century of evidence has documented harassment, discrimination, ethnic cleansing, violence, cultural and religious desecration and genocide by Azerbaijan against Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan's recent military offensive against the region of Nagorno-Karabakh aligns with this regime's clear attempts to eradicate the Armenian presence, including its history, religion and culture. This cruel military assault against Nagorno-Karabakh is consistent with its historical actions to eliminate Armenians and all traces of its history and culture.

Aliyev has disregarded both decisions from the ICJ and repeated appeals from the United States, the European Union, Canada, Australia, international organizations, and other global leaders to forgo violence, hatred, and blockades. In defiance of international and global appeals, Aliyev used violence and military solutions to impose Azerbaijani rule over the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh for the first time in history.

Founding International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo has repeatedly called Azerbaijan's actions Genocide.

In her September 14 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Ambassador Yuri Kim said, "the United States will not countenance any action or effort—short-term or long-term—to ethnically cleanse or commit other atrocities against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh."

EU High Representative Joseph Borrell declared: "Azerbaijan bears the responsibility to ensure the rights and security of the Karabakh Armenians, including their right to live in their homes without intimidation and discrimination. Forced displacement of the civilian population through military or other means will be met with a strong response by the EU."

Years-long propaganda campaigns of the Azerbaijani regime inciting hatred, violence, and destruction against the Armenian people worldwide make it clear that under no circumstances can the Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh live safely and freely under the rule of Azerbaijan. Their flight to territory of the Republic of Armenia in recent days is living proof of such awareness.

The violence undertaken by Azerbaijan threatens to engulf the entire South Caucasus region in conflict. Aliyev and Turkish President Erdogan continue threatening the Republic of Armenia with more violence and destabilization. Armenia's existence as a democratic, pluralistic society is at risk without decisive action by international leaders. Under Article I of the Genocide convention, there is a duty to prevent this genocide.

Azerbaijan is also violative of Article II c) of the Convention by "inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction." Any acceptance of or inaction against Azerbaijan's and Russia's actions will make states complicit in this genocide.

We urge the following actions be undertaken immediately:

- Coordinated humanitarian relief operations, including a comprehensive humanitarian needs assessment, to allow unimpeded access to Nagorno- Karabakh under a UN-mandate to ensure that humanitarian aid organizations can deliver aid fast and effectively.

- Condemnation and punishment of all acts of violence by Azerbaijan against Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh
- Requesting the UN Secretary-General appoint, in consultation with the Security Council, a Special Representative to control the implementation of the international civil presence to deter renewed hostilities, maintaining and where necessary enforcing a ceasefire
- Establishing a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can eventually return home in safety and that the international civil presence can operate and humanitarian aid can be delivered
- Ensuring the protection and freedom of movement through the Lachin Corridor in accordance with the ICJ Orders
- Strong support for S. 2900 and its companion measures in the House of Representatives H.R.5683 (Rep. Frank Pallone) and H.R. 5686 (Rep. Chris Smith)
- Sweeping world-wide sanctions against Azerbaijan, including the government, individuals and private companies who have violated international humanitarian and human rights laws
- Unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Azerbaijani security forces and military installations from the Republic of Armenia
- Unconditional and immediate release of all Armenian POWs and civilians from Azerbaijani custody
- Emergency economic and security assistance to Armenia including declaring the unacceptability of any military incursion into the Syunik region or any other part of the Republic of Armenia.

Sincerely,



Archb. Hovnan Derderian
Primate, Western Diocese



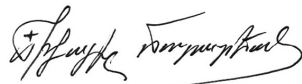
Very Rev. Fr. Mesrop Mesropyan
Primate, Eastern Diocese



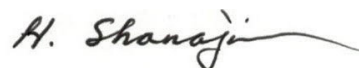
Archb. Anoushavan Tanielian
Prelate, Eastern Prelacy



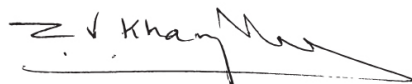
Bishop Torkom Donoyan
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Bishop Mikhael Mouradian
Eparch, Arm. Catholic Eparchy



Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian
Minister, Arm. Evangelical Union



Zaven Khanjian
Executive Director, AMAA