



BRAD SHERMAN
UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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May 18, 2016

Secretary John Kerry
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I am writing to request that, pursuant to your obligations under 22 U.S. Code § 2378d (d) to seek out and evaluate credible information about human rights abuses by foreign security forces, you quickly and thoroughly investigate allegations that the Azerbaijani armed forces committed human rights abuses during the conflict with Nagorno-Karabakh from April 2 – 7.

As you know, President Ilham Aliyev's military annually receives millions of dollars in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) appropriations which are subject to Congressional oversight. To assure such assistance does not benefit human rights abusers, the "Leahy Laws", found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 section 620M and section 1204 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, require both the vetting of recipients and for procedures ensuring that the U.S. government has the necessary information to properly vet security forces.

The large-scale warfare against Nagorno-Karabakh in April represented a major escalation. Azerbaijani forces are alleged to have committed atrocities against both civilians and soldiers. I hope you are already assessing these incidents, and I would appreciate it if you could keep me apprised of the results.

Regardless of the outcome of your investigations, I encourage you to immediately suspend U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan. The Aliyev government continues to launch cross-border attacks against Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, regularly threatens to renew full-scale hostilities, and refuses U.S. and international calls to pull back snipers. Azerbaijan neither needs nor deserves American military aid.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad Sherman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress