



Armenian National Committee of America

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ANCA Policy Brief: COP29 in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan will host the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties—also known as COP29—in November, the UN’s premier summit on tackling climate change. Azerbaijan is among the most fossil-fuel-dependent economies in the world, and in hosting the conference, it will seek to use the global platform as a vehicle for ‘greenwashing’ its environmental and human rights record.

Request: Sign the Pallone-Markey Letter on Azerbaijan Hosting the COP29 UN Climate Summit

Sen. Markey (D-MA) and Rep. Pallone (D-NJ) are leading bicameral Congressional letter to the Department of State addressing Azerbaijan’s human rights record ahead of the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP29), which will be hosted in Baku in November. The letter addresses concerns over Azerbaijan hosting the summit in light of its ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh, its ongoing aggression against Armenia, and its crackdowns on freedom of assembly, expression, and the press.

To sign, contact James Johnson (james.johnson@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Pallone’s office, or Hannah Vogel (hannah_vogel@markey.senate.gov) in Sen. Markey’s office. **The deadline for the letter is September 25th.**

Background

- Azerbaijan secured the privilege of hosting COP29 after Armenia dropped its veto in exchange for the release of 32 prisoners of war who were arbitrarily detained and abused in custody since the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.
- At COP28 in Dubai, Azerbaijan's booth displayed [materials](#) that read, “Karabakh is the first region in Azerbaijan to achieve ‘net zero’” – just a month after Azerbaijan's military operation resulted in the ethnic cleansing of the region's entire Armenian population of 120,000 people.
- Azerbaijan has consistently signaled its intent to use the COP29 summit to solicit investments in renewable energy infrastructure development in territories captured by force and genocidal ethnic cleansing. In May, Azerbaijan submitted a proposal – shared by the U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan – [mapping](#) the viability of wind and solar energy production in regions that were ethnically cleansed.
- Azerbaijan has claimed that COP29 will be the "COP of Peace", despite its continued detention and abuse of dozens of Armenian prisoners of war – who have been denied regular and open communication with family and lawyers. Recent reports indicate that Nagorno-Karabakh's political leaders, detained by Azerbaijan during the forced displacement of Armenians in September 2023, have been subject to [torture and abuse](#). Additionally, independent monitors have noted a [pattern of destruction](#) of Armenian cultural heritage in territories captured by force.
- Ahead of the COP29 summit, Azerbaijan has escalated its crackdowns against domestic critics. In recent weeks, prominent anti-war activists and strong critics of the Azerbaijani regime were [detained](#) in Baku on charges of “treason”. They join the close to 200 opposition figures, journalists, and critics who have been arbitrarily detained for criticizing Azerbaijan’s regime.
- [Reports](#) indicate Azerbaijan has denied journalists entry ahead of the COP29 summit, as it seeks to crack down on press coverage of the country’s egregious environmental and human rights record.
- In September, Azerbaijan [announced](#) it would deny several members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) entry to Azerbaijan for COP29 due to criticisms of Azerbaijan’s domestic human rights violations and authoritarian regime.

Request: The ANCA is urging Members of Congress to use the COP29 summit as an opportunity to draw attention to Azerbaijan's human rights and environmental abuses – including through public statements, media appearances, Congressional letters, and through attending COP29 to scrutinize Azerbaijan's human rights record. Specifically, the ANCA calls on Congressional leaders to urge the Administration to:

1. Demand the Release of Prisoners of War, Civilian Captives and Political Prisoners

Azerbaijan's regime continues to arbitrarily detain over 23 Armenian prisoners of war (POWs), who have been subject to abuse and torture and denied a right to legal representation, fair trial, and access to their families. Azerbaijan also detains over 250 Azerbaijani civil society activists, including journalists, academics, and opposition activists – also subject to the deprivation of fundamental rights and subject to abuse in custody. Azerbaijan has routinely used Armenian POWs as bargaining chips, refusing to comply with their obligations under international law to ensure their immediate and unconditional release to extract concessions from Armenia in the ongoing peace process. Participating delegates must reject Azerbaijan's hostage diplomacy and call for Azerbaijan to uphold its obligations under international law by demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all Armenian prisoners of war and civilian captives and all Azerbaijani political prisoners and prisoners of conscience ahead of COP29.

2. Demand Action on Azerbaijan Human Rights Abuses

Azerbaijan has engaged in a consistent pattern of human rights abuses at home and abroad, including during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War and the recent humanitarian blockade and ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023. We call on participating governments to investigate widely documented abuses of international law, including the abuse and torture of prisoners of war, the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure, the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, the denial of humanitarian access to the 120,000 Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh from December 2023 to September 2023, and the forced displacement of Nagorno-Karabakh's entire Armenian population in September 2023. COP delegates must demand action to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its abuses and suspend all forms of military assistance and cooperation with Azerbaijan.

3. Call for the Right of Return for Armenians Forcibly Displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh

Following the forced displacement of Nagorno-Karabakh's indigenous Armenian population last year, participating governments must ensure the return of the region's Armenian population under safe and secure conditions as required under international law by a provisional ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – and take tangible steps to establish a global mechanism to support the return of Armenian residents that would guarantee their fundamental right to self-determination.

4. Urge Participating Governments Not to Visit Territories Captured by Force

Participating governments must not allow COP29 to be used as an opportunity to greenwash and legitimize Azerbaijan's forced displacement from areas captured by force in Azerbaijan's military operations against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 and following its subjugation of the region in September 2023. We condemn efforts to use COP29 to normalize the ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh and urge delegates not to visit territories in Nagorno-Karabakh inhabited by Armenians until Azerbaijan's 2023 military operation.

5. Publicly Repudiate Azerbaijan's Greenwashing

International governments and energy stakeholders participating in COP29 negotiations must make meaningful and material commitments at COP29 to phase out all fossil fuels, fossil fuel subsidies, and new investments in fossil-fuel production in Azerbaijan and beyond. Additionally, delegates must forcefully reject Azerbaijan's efforts to use new investments in renewable energy as a vehicle to consolidate its military subjugation of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the development of new infrastructure in depopulated territories.

