

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2024

Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart
Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Room HT-2, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Barbara Lee
Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee:

We write to urge the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPs) to include language in your bill that holds Azerbaijani President Aliyev accountable for the ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) in September 2023 and to include robust funding to address the ensuing refugee crisis it caused. We also urge you to provide funding that will enable the Republic of Armenia to protect its territorial integrity, secure its energy independence, support further democratic reforms, and increase cooperation with the United States. These investments will strengthen American interests by supporting one of the few truly democratic countries in the region and helping it to grow as an important partner country.

Armenian Security Assistance

The United States is uniquely positioned to make important diplomatic advances in the South Caucasus. Providing significant assistance to Armenia will help make it more secure, bolster its democracy, and sustain the increase in economic development. Additional security assistance to Armenia in the form of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) is especially important as the Armenian people seek international assistance in protecting their sovereignty in the face of constant Azerbaijani expansionism and potential threats from other authoritarian regimes in the region. We are concerned that the Aliyev regime will attempt to take advantage of Russia's war in Ukraine and other conflicts in the world as well as the upcoming elections in the United States and elsewhere to incite a new war against Armenia. To deter that threat and help Armenia strengthen its borders against future attacks, we request that you include the following provisions in the FMF and IMET accounts:

Of the funds appropriated under this Act, not less than \$20,000,000 shall be made available under the heading "Foreign Military Financing" and not less than \$10,000,000 shall be made available under the heading "International Military

Education and Training” to increase defense cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Armenia.

Robust Funding for Armenian Refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh)

Azerbaijan's full-scale invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh on September 19, 2023, followed a 10-month genocidal campaign of starvation and deprivation of essential goods for 120,000 Armenians living in the region. This ethnic cleansing caused over 80 percent of the region's population to seek refuge in neighboring Armenia, creating a crisis that requires immediate, large-scale international attention. Unfortunately, assistance from the U.S. and other international actors has been wholly insufficient to meet these families' outstanding needs. Failure to secure their guaranteed right of return to their homeland also remains a black mark on the international diplomatic community. To address this catastrophe, we ask you to include the following provision in the Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA) account:

Of the funds appropriated by this Act, not less than \$200,000,000 shall be made available under the heading “Assistance for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia” to support victims from Artsakh currently residing in the Republic of Armenia, who were forced to flee their ancestral homeland by Azerbaijan’s genocidal campaign in 2023 and have the right to return to their homes under international guarantees.

Supporting Armenian Government Reforms

The current Armenian government is actively pursuing ambitious reforms in its judiciary, police, education, economy, and public administration in tandem with USAID, U.S. non-governmental organizations, and other international partners. Like U.S. investments in Armenian security assistance, enabling Armenia to establish the Rule of Law and undergo law enforcement reforms will greatly decrease its reliance on other actors in the region for internal security. For instance, the Armenian government recently signaled its intent to expel Russian border guards at the Zvartnots Airport in Yerevan. The United States can encourage further actions to support Armenian security independence by enabling the country to increase its institutional capacities. We ask that you include the following provision in the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account to assist with this transition:

Of the funds appropriated by this Act, not less than \$10,000,000 shall be made available under the heading “International Narcotics and Law Enforcement” to support ongoing law enforcement and internal security reforms in Armenia.

Additionally, Armenia requires assistance in advancing ongoing executive branch reforms, government transparency programs, reducing corruption, and supporting public administration reforms in e-governance. Such reforms will solidify its democratic institutions and give more tools to the Armenian public for government accountability. We urge you to include the following provision in USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) account:

Of the funds appropriated by this Act, not less than \$10,000,000 shall be made available under the heading "Office of Transition Initiatives" to support democratic reforms in Armenia.

Prohibition on U.S. Military Aid to Azerbaijan and Sanctions

According to a January 31, 2022, report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the State Department likely violated Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act by sending security assistance to Azerbaijan from 2014 to 2021, including over \$100 million through the Section 333 Building Partner Capacity Program in Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019. They did so by not properly consulting and communicating with Congress on what processes were used to determine if U.S. aid to Azerbaijan could be used for offensive purposes against Armenians in the region. President Aliyev has proven time and again through his genocidal actions that he is not an honest broker for peace in the region, and the United States must not reward his regime with security assistance of any kind.

Additionally, there are well documented reports on the human rights abuses committed by President Aliyev and members of his regime against Armenians in Artsakh as well as human rights and pro-democracy activists in Azerbaijan. There is also credible evidence demonstrating the rampant corruption of the Aliyev regime and how it uses these ill-gotten funds for corrupt purposes abroad. The Department of State and other international actors have failed to hold these bad actors accountable, and it is far past time that the U.S. seriously consider imposing sanctions to make them answer for these violations of international law.

We request that you include the following provision in the final legislation:

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available under this Act may be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan through U.S. military or security assistance programs. To inform the reevaluation of any future security assistance to Azerbaijan, the Secretary of State is directed to provide a report on Azerbaijan's eligibility for military assistance programs under existing statutes. Additionally, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on how the Department of State coordinates with the Department of the Treasury and other relevant Federal departments and agencies to achieve behavioral change through sanctions on individuals from the Republic of Azerbaijan that are involved in corruption, human rights abuses, anti-democratic activities, including challenges to implementation.

Again, thank you for your leadership on the Subcommittee. We appreciate your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



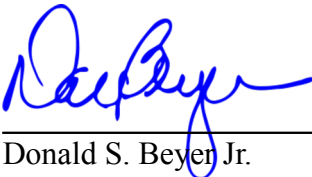
Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



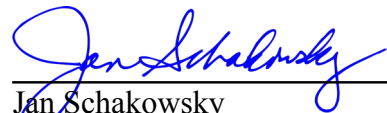
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



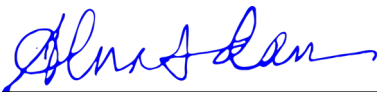
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



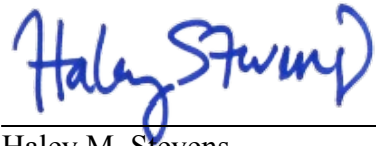
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
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James P. McGovern
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Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



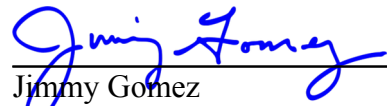
John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



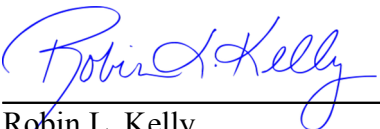
Gabe Amo
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Mike Levin
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Jimmy Gomez
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Robin L. Kelly
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Kevin Mullin
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Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



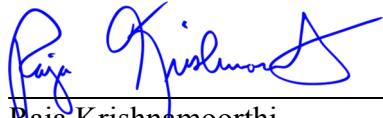
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



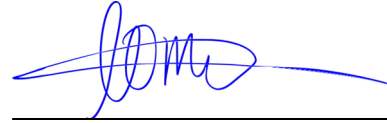
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



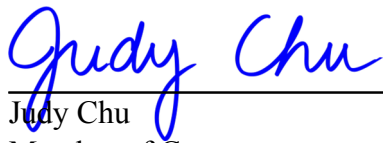
Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



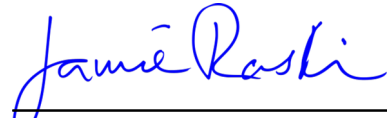
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



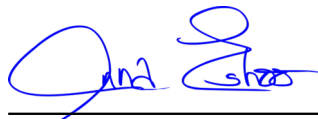
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



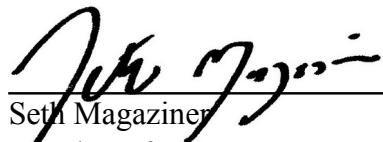
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



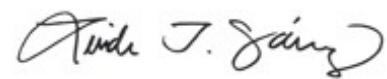
Anna G. Eshoo
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Linda T. Sánchez
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Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress



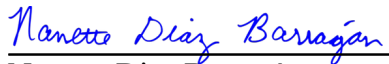
James A. Himes
Member of Congress



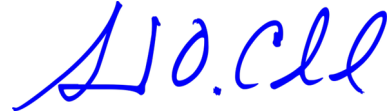
Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



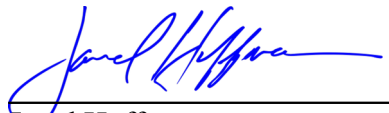
Susan Wild
Member of Congress



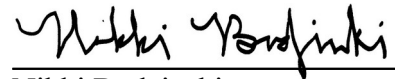
Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Jared Huffman
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Nikki Budzinski
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Bradley Scott Schneider
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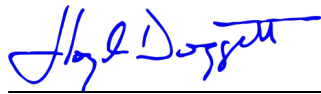
Chellie Pingree
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Brad Sherman
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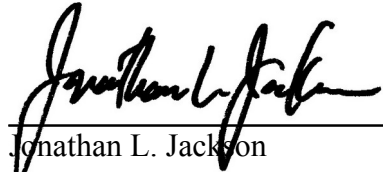
Ro Khanna
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Lloyd Doggett
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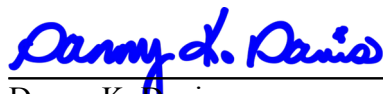
Steven Horsford
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Grace F. Napolitano
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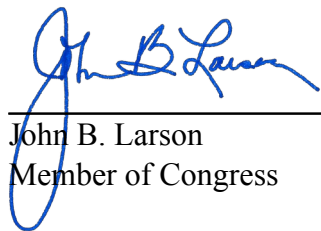
Darren Soto
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Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



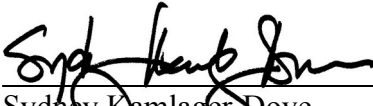
Eric Swalwell
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John B. Larson
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Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



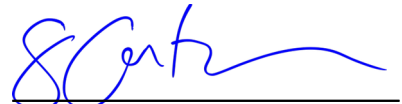
Mikie Sherrill
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Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress