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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. _____

Condemning Azerbaijan for perpetrating an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. ESHOO submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Condemning Azerbaijan for perpetrating an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Whereas Nagorno-Karabakh is part of the traditional homeland of the Armenian people and has been a center of Armenian life and culture for millennia;

Whereas, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh established a de facto independent republic, known as the Republic of Artsakh, to exercise self-determination in their homeland;

Whereas, on December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan initiated a grueling blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh that deprived the

region's population of food, medicine, fuel, and other necessities for nearly 10 months;

Whereas, on September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan launched a full-scale military offensive against the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh that took the lives of hundreds of soldiers and dozens of civilians;

Whereas Azerbaijan used the threat of further violence to coerce the Armenian leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh to surrender their autonomy and dissolve their governing institutions;

Whereas over 100,000 Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, facing the threat of further ethnic violence, fled the territory as refugees within 2 weeks of Azerbaijan's assault;

Whereas the rhetoric of President Ilham Aliyev and other Azerbaijani officials demonstrates a clear ethnic animus motivating their anti-Armenian aggression;

Whereas international legal experts, including former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Luis Moreno Ocampo and former United Nations genocide expert Juan Mendez, have determined that Azerbaijan's blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh violated the United Nations Genocide Convention;

Whereas Azerbaijani forces have systemically destroyed Armenian cultural heritage sites in Nagorno-Karabakh, including churches, monasteries, cemeteries, and other cultural monuments;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom recommends that Azerbaijan be designated as a country of particular concern, in part because of the destruction of Christian religious sites in Nagorno-Karabakh;

Whereas, according to the Armenian Government, dozens of Armenian prisoners of war, civilian captives, and members of the political leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh are now unjustly imprisoned in Azerbaijan on politically motivated charges or no charges at all;

Whereas the political leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh now imprisoned by Azerbaijan include Davit Manukyan, Davit Babayan, Levon Mnatsakanyan, Arkadi Ghukasyan, Bako Sahakyan, Arayik Harutyunyan, Davit Ishkhanyan, and Ruben Vardanyan;

Whereas the true number of Armenians held captive by Azerbaijan is likely higher than the Armenian Government's count given the many individuals who are still missing and the lack of transparency surrounding Azerbaijan's detention practices;

Whereas Azerbaijan has a well-documented record of subjecting Armenian prisoners to torture, humiliation, and other violations of fundamental rights afforded by the Geneva Conventions;

Whereas, as a result of Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing campaign, over 100,000 displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh now seek refuge in Armenia where they face difficulties accessing housing, food security, employment, and health care;

Whereas the United States has provided a vastly insufficient amount of humanitarian aid to respond to the refugee crisis in Armenia;

Whereas international law provides for a right of return for populations displaced from their country of origin, including under the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the European Convention on Human Rights to which Azerbaijan is a party;

Whereas the International Court of Justice issued a binding provisional measure in November 2023 requiring Azerbaijan to provide for the safe, unimpeded, and expeditious return of Armenian refugees who wish to return to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh;

Whereas, prior to the Azerbaijani assault on Nagorno-Karabakh, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia Yuri Kim testified before Congress that the United States “will not tolerate” any Azerbaijani attack on Nagorno-Karabakh;

Whereas the United States has yet to impose meaningful accountability measures on Azerbaijan for perpetrating an inhumane blockade and campaign of ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh;

Whereas failing to hold Azerbaijan accountable for ethnic cleansing emboldens Azerbaijan’s leaders to engage in further anti-Armenian aggression;

Whereas, in recent years, Armenia has sought to deepen its ties to the United States and other liberal democracies and to distance itself from Russia;

Whereas the United States has a special responsibility to ensure that Armenia’s security is not jeopardized because of its embrace of democracy and rejection of Vladimir Putin’s murderous regime;

Whereas Azerbaijan illegally occupies 83 square miles of Armenia’s internationally recognized territory that it captured in an unprovoked assault on Armenia in September 2022;

Whereas Azerbaijan continues to demand unilateral territorial concessions from Armenia through the threat of force, often referring to portions of sovereign Armenian territory as “western Azerbaijan”;

Whereas the United States has taken a direct role in facilitating a durable conflict-resolution process between Armenia and Azerbaijan; and

Whereas Azerbaijan’s ongoing aggression against the Republic of Armenia and its refusal to adhere to international law undermine efforts to achieve a just peace in the region: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) condemns, in the strongest possible terms,
3 the atrocities perpetrated by Azerbaijan against the
4 Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh;

5 (2) recognizes that Azerbaijan’s blockade and
6 subsequent military offensive against the Armenian
7 population of Nagorno-Karabakh constitute acts of
8 ethnic cleansing;

9 (3) affirms the fundamental right of displaced
10 Armenians to return to their homes in Nagorno-
11 Karabakh with strong protections in place to ensure
12 their security; and

13 (4) calls on the President and the relevant Fed-
14 eral agencies to take immediate action to—

1 (A) impose targeted sanctions on Azer-
2 bajani Government officials complicit in human
3 rights abuses;

4 (B) prohibit the provision of United States
5 military aid to Azerbaijan pursuant to section
6 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act;

7 (C) make a public determination as to
8 whether the atrocities committed by Azerbaijan
9 against the Armenian population of Nagorno-
10 Karabakh constitute ethnic cleansing;

11 (D) provide robust humanitarian assist-
12 ance to respond to the refugee crisis in Armenia
13 and rally the international community to do the
14 same;

15 (E) strengthen the United States-Armenia
16 security partnership through the provision of
17 military aid, joint military exercises, and intel-
18 ligence and logistical support; and

19 (F) facilitate diplomacy to achieve a just
20 and lasting peace in the South Caucasus that
21 provides for the release of all Armenians un-
22 justly imprisoned by Azerbaijan, establishes a
23 right of return and security guarantees for the
24 displaced Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, and

1 preserves the Armenian cultural heritage of
2 Nagorno-Karabakh.