

Freedom House Report on Azerbaijan's Ethnic Cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh

In July 2024, Freedom House released a report — “[Why Are There No Armenians In Nagorno-Karabakh? Fact-Finding Report Summary](#)” — that determined Azerbaijan’s blockade and military assault against Nagorno-Karabakh’s Armenian population constituted an act of ethnic cleansing. The report found that Azerbaijan’s ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh was intentional, noting “*the evidence demonstrates that the Azerbaijani state acted upon a comprehensive, methodically implemented strategy to empty Nagorno-Karabakh of its ethnic Armenian population and historical and cultural presence.*”

The Blockade and Humanitarian Crisis

In December 2022, Azerbaijan imposed a blockade on the Lachin Corridor – the only humanitarian lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia – restricting free movement and the flow of food, goods, medicine, and fuel to the region’s 120,000 Armenians, creating a dire humanitarian crisis. The report also found that “*the blockade was accompanied by the regular cutting of the supply of gas and electricity, as well as disrupting lines of communication, such as telephone landlines, cellular signals, and internet.*”

The Attack and Displacement of Armenians

On September 19, 2023, the Azerbaijani armed forces launched a military operation on Armenian-populated territory – resulting in the forced displacement of the region’s entire indigenous Armenian population: “*The one-day offensive resulted in 229 deaths, among them 34 civilians, 5 of whom were children. Two hundred and forty-four were wounded, including 31 civilians, 10 of whom were children.*”

Arbitrary Detention and Abuse of Prisoners of War and Civilians

Freedom House noted that following the 44-day Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020, Azerbaijan’s “*extrajudicial killings, torture, and abductions of civilians by servicemen of the Azerbaijani armed forces*” contributed to an environment of intense fear and insecurity among ethnic Armenians. The report notes that in addition to those detained during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, Azerbaijan abducted Armenian civilians as they crossed into Armenia – including from those in the ICRC’s care. Additionally, following Azerbaijan’s military assault, 17 Armenians were detained – including eight former high-ranking officials of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan’s Deliberate Ethnic Cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh

Freedom House concluded that “*an analysis of the action and rhetoric of Azerbaijani authorities in conjunction with the lived experiences of the ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh provides reasonable grounds to conclude that their forced displacement was intentional. The evidence suggests a coordinated, long-term plan aimed at ridding Nagorno-Karabakh of its ethnic Armenian population.*”

Freedom House reported the Armenian population was “*intentionally subjected to regular attacks, intimidation, deprivation of basic rights and adequate living conditions, and forced displacement,*” and that “*the Azerbaijani state imposed conditions of life designed to either bring about the destruction of the Armenian population over time, or render it impossible for them to stay and survive.*”

Since its military assault, Azerbaijan has engaged in a pattern of destruction of Armenian cultural heritage sites, which Freedom House determined was designed to “*to eliminate all traces of Armenian presence and heritage from Nagorno-Karabakh.*”



Use the QR code to access the full Freedom House report – “[Why Are There No Armenians In Nagorno-Karabakh? Fact-Finding Report Summary](#)”