



Armenian National Committee of America

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ANCA Policy Memo: Letter Urging Enforcement of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act

TO: Members of Congress / Congressional Staff
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DATE: September, 2026

In July 2026, the Trump Administration notified Congress of its intention to extend the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act – reauthorizing U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan. President Trump had previously waived Section 907 in August 2025, following a White House summit with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Since the Administration last waived Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, Azerbaijan has continued unabated in its violation of international law and hostility toward Armenia. In February 2026, Azerbaijan sentenced 16 unlawfully detained Armenian hostages to extended prison terms ranging from 15 years to life following sham trials that were widely condemned by international human rights organizations and legal experts as a grave miscarriage of justice. Armenian detainees have also suffered torture and abuse in custody – and been deprived of their fundamental legal rights. In September 2025, Azerbaijan expelled the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the only organization authorized to visit the Armenian detainees – further endangering their safety and wellbeing.

In further violation of international law, in April 2026 it was reported that Azerbaijan had destroyed two Armenian cathedrals in Nagorno-Karabakh's capital city of Stepanakert – part of an ongoing systematic campaign of Armenian Christian cultural heritage destruction since the 2020 war against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan also continues to militarily occupy approximately 100 square miles of sovereign Armenian territory – where it has maintained an entrenched presence since illegal incursions into Armenia in 2021 and 2022.

In light of Azerbaijan's ongoing hostility and sustained violations of international law, it is clear that the decision to waive Section 907 following the 2025 White House Summit has not induced Azerbaijan's good faith engagement with the peace process. Azerbaijan's ongoing detention of Armenian POWs, destruction of Armenian heritage, and occupation of Armenian territory continue to undermine trust and confidence in the prospects of a durable peace. The ANCA remains deeply concerned that the continued waiver of Section 907 will only further encourage and embolden Azerbaijan amid its destabilizing conduct that threatens to undermine efforts to ensure lasting peace in the region.

Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act is a critical tool at the disposal of the U.S. government to hold Azerbaijan accountable to the ongoing peace process with Armenia – and to compel Azerbaijan to ensure the release of unlawfully detained POWs, cease the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, and withdraw its military forces from sovereign Armenian territory. The ANCA believes that the Trump Administration should withhold U.S. security assistance to Azerbaijan until meaningful steps have been taken to resolve these ongoing human rights and security challenges – which would represent a critical confidence and security building measure in the effort to ensure a just, durable, and dignified peace in the region.

ANCA Request: Sign Letter Urging Enforcement of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act

In response to President Trump's reauthorization of the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, the ANCA is urging members to support a bicameral and bipartisan letter led by Senator Peters (D-MI) and Representative Bilirakis (R-FL) raising concern over the decision to waive Section 907 – and calling on the Administration to withhold U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan until demonstrable progress has been made toward ensuring the immediate release of all Armenian prisoners of war, the protection of Armenian cultural heritage sites from further destruction, and the expedited withdrawal of Azerbaijani military forces from sovereign Armenian territory.

For more information, please contact Sari Cureton (sari_cureton@peters.senate.gov) in Sen. Peters' office, or Nathan Stamps (nathan.stamps@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Bilirakis's office.

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September XX, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We recognize the work this administration has done to mediate peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Furthermore, we note efforts by Armenia and Azerbaijan to resolve longstanding border disputes through consistent talks. However, we are concerned that amid these positive steps Azerbaijan continues to undermine the peace process. Azerbaijan's decision to sentence the unlawfully detained Armenian prisoners of war demonstrates a willingness to upend stability. Additionally, the presence of Azerbaijani military forces in more than 200 square kilometers of Armenian territory creates asymmetry in ongoing talks.¹ This context illustrates Azerbaijan's fragile commitment to the process and emphasizes the importance of the United States remaining engaged on this issue. As Azerbaijan's conduct threatens to compromise the integrity of the peace process, we note with concern the recent decision to reauthorize the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act [U.S. Public Law No: 102-511]. Despite the issuance of the waiver, we urge your administration to withhold U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan if they continue to jeopardize the success of negotiations. The United States has a critical role in ensuring that ongoing talks yield results that advance peace and security in the region.

In February 2026, Azerbaijan sentenced 16 Armenian detainees to extended terms ranging from 15 years to life in prison. These sentences followed a series of trials that were widely rebuked by international human rights organizations, legal experts, and the European Parliament as a miscarriage of justice². The detainees consisted of political and military leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh who have been held illegally since Azerbaijan's military assault on the region in 2023. Almost three years have passed since Azerbaijan's attack on Nagorno-Karabakh forcibly displaced over 100,000 Armenian inhabitants in what has been widely characterized as an act of ethnic cleansing.³ In addition to forced displacement there continue to be reports of the destruction of Armenian Churches in Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴ The pattern of cultural erasure in the region and the decision to move forward with sentencing these individuals, calls into question Azerbaijan's genuine commitment to long term peace and stability.

On April 30, 2026, Armenia and Azerbaijan held the thirteenth meeting to discuss border delimitation. Addressing longstanding border disputes remains a critical task to ensure the stability of any future peace agreement. So far, the only practical outcome from these talks has come from Armenia's efforts to address Soviet-era territorial disputes. In May of 2024 Armenia returned four Azerbaijani enclave villages that had been under Armenian control since the first Karabakh

¹ Hayk Hovhannisyan, *Mapping the Occupation: 241 km² of Armenian Territory Remains Under Azerbaijani Control*, Civilnet (Oct. 23, 2025) (<https://civilnet.am/en/news/980654>)

² Nailia Bagirova, *Azerbaijan summons EU envoy in row over treatment of Karabakh Armenians*, Reuters (May 1, 2026) (<https://www.reuters.com/world/azerbaijan-summons-eu-envoy-row-over-treatment-karabakh-armenians-2026-05-01/>)

³ *Why Are There No Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh?*, Freedom House (2024) (https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/NO-ARMENIANS-IN-NK-DDF-FH_FACT-FINDING_REPORT_FULL_VERSION.pdf)

⁴ Amos Chapple and Mark Kurtov, *Cathedral, Church Demolished In Nagorno-Karabakh*, RadioFreeEurope RadioLiberty (Apr. 27, 2026) (<https://www.rferl.org/a/cathedral-church-demolished-nagorno-karabakh-azerbaijan-armenia-conflict/33743489.html>)

war.⁵ However, these efforts have been complicated by Azerbaijan's ongoing occupation of an estimated 241.4 sq kilometers of Armenian territory, following military encroachments into Armenia in 2021 and 2022⁶. Azerbaijan's recent encroachments and entrenched military presence within Armenia's internationally recognized borders presents a security challenge and sets the stage for asymmetric negotiations. A just outcome to these talks is imperative to maintaining the integrity of Armenian sovereignty and ensuring long-term stability in the region. We encourage the administration to use existing leverage, such as withholding military assistance, to ensure positive outcomes.

Following a White House summit with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan last year, the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act was extended.⁷ Although the summit was an important step in the right direction there is still significant work to be done to address unresolved humanitarian and security issues. It is clear, that the decision to waive Section 907 has not induced Azerbaijan's engagement on ensuring the release of POWs. As a result, we are concerned that Azerbaijan's inconsistent behavior jeopardizes the prospect of a just and long-lasting peace in the region – and that the continued waiver of Section 907 without a commitment to addressing these concerns will only further encourage destabilizing actions.

June 23rd, 2026, marked the 1000th day of unlawful detention for the Armenian hostages in Azerbaijan's custody. It is imperative that the United States applies meaningful pressure on Azerbaijan to ensure their release, as required under international law. We call on the administration to engage with Azerbaijan to secure the release of the prisoners and encourage the removal of Azerbaijani military forces from sovereign Armenian land. If meaningful steps are not taken, we urge your administration to withhold U.S. military assistance in order to demonstrate the United States' commitment to ensuring all parties take the peace process seriously.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to the opportunity to work with you on efforts to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Sincerely,

[[CLOSING]]

[[SIGNATURES]]

⁵ Sossi Tatikyan, *The Enclave Issue Between Armenia and Azerbaijan*, EVN Report (May 21, 2026) (<https://evnreport.com/politics/the-enclave-issue-between-armenia-and-azerbaijan/>)

⁶ Hayk Hovhannisyan, *Mapping the Occupation: 241 km² of Armenian Territory Remains Under Azerbaijani Control*, Civilnet (Oct. 23, 2025) (<https://civilnet.am/en/news/980654>)

⁷ *Extension of Waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act with Respect to Assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan*, Department of State (Aug. 08, 2025) (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/15/2025-15682/extension-of-waiver-of-section-907-of-the-freedom-support-act-with-respect-to-assistance-to-the>)