

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Condemning the Government of 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 the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh have continually sought to exercise their right of self-determination and established a government separate from Azerbaijan;

Whereas, on December 12, 2022, the Government of 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, the Government of 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 the Government of 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 to Armenia 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 that continues to undermine efforts to build a durable and dignified peace;

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 Azerbaijan has a responsibility to protect ethnic Armenian cultural heritage sites in Nagorno-Karabakh, including churches, monasteries, cemeteries, and other cultural monuments and should support UNESCO to assess and catalog the region's many culturally significant sites;

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 Government of Armenia, 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 the Government of Azerbaijan, including Davit Manukyan, Davit Babayan, Levon Mnatsakanyan, Arkadi Ghukasyan, Bako Sahakyan, Arayik Harutyunyan, Davit Ishkhanyan, and Ruben Vardanyan, should be afforded due process in accordance with the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Azerbaijan is a party;

Whereas there are still thousands missing from the over 30-year conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh;

Whereas the Government of 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, because of the country's limited resources, they face difficulties accessing housing, food security, employment, and health care;

Whereas the United States Government has announced more than \$10,700,000 in urgent humanitarian assistance to respond to the crisis, but much more is needed;

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 the Government of Azerbaijan to provide for the safe, unimpeded, and expeditious return of Armenian refugees who wish to return to their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh;

Whereas, in 2024, Freedom House, in partnership with Armenian and international human rights organizations, issued a report that they hope will contribute to the finding that the Azerbaijani authorities have engaged in a systematic and deliberate campaign aimed at the ethnic cleansing of the Armenian population from Nagorno-Karabakh, thereby committing egregious violations of human rights and international law;

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 Government “will not tolerate” any Azerbaijani attack on Nagorno-Karabakh;

Whereas the United States Government 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 the Government of Azerbaijan accountable for ethnic cleansing emboldens Azerbaijan’s leaders to engage in further anti-Armenian aggression;

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

Whereas the Government of Azerbaijan illegally occupies approximately 200 square kilometers of Armenia’s internationally recognized territory, including approximately 150 square kilometers captured during the aggressive military actions from 2020 to 2023;

Whereas the United States Government has a special interest in ensuring that Armenia’s security is not jeopardized because of its embrace of democracy and rejection of Vladimir Putin’s murderous regime;

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

Whereas the Government of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia continue to engage in talks that have yet to finalize a peace agreement, leaving many concerned about potential for future violence: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

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

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

1 (3) affirms the fundamental right of displaced
2 Armenians to return to their homes in Nagorno-
3 Karabakh with strong protections in place to ensure
4 their security; and

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

7 (A) impose targeted sanctions on Azer-
8 baijani government officials complicit in human
9 rights abuses;

10 (B) restrict United States military aid to
11 Azerbaijan consistent with 907 of the FREE-
12 DOM Support Act (Public Law 102–511; 22
13 U.S.C. 5812 note) ;

14 (C) reaffirm the findings of the 2024 Free-
15 dom House report which documented a delib-
16 erate campaign by the Government of Azer-
17 baijan to ethnically cleanse the Armenian popu-
18 lation from Nagorno-Karabakh and recognizes
19 that these actions against the Armenian popu-
20 lation of Nagorno-Karabakh constitute ethnic
21 cleansing;

22 (D) provide robust humanitarian assist-
23 ance to respond to the refugee crisis in Armenia
24 and rally the international community to do the
25 same;

1 (E) continue to strengthen the United
2 States-Armenia security partnership as the
3 Government of Armenia bolsters its ties to
4 Western allies; and

5 (F) facilitate diplomacy to achieve a just
6 and lasting peace in the South Caucasus that
7 provides for the release of all Armenians un-
8 justly imprisoned by the Government of Azer-
9 baijan, establishes a right of return and secu-
10 rity guarantees for the displaced Armenians of
11 Nagorno-Karabakh, and preserves the Arme-
12 nian cultural heritage of Nagorno-Karabakh.