



# Armenian National Committee of America

1711 N Street NW | Washington DC 20036 | Tel: (202) 775-1918 | Fax: (202) 775-1918 [anca@anca.org](mailto:anca@anca.org) | [www.anca.org](http://www.anca.org)

## Armenian American Community Priorities

In 2023, Azerbaijan launched a military assault on Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) that resulted in the genocidal ethnic cleansing of the region's entire indigenous Armenian population. This act followed a 10-month blockade, where Artsakh's 150,000 Armenians were deprived access to food, fuel, medicine, electricity and humanitarian goods.

Despite ongoing peace efforts, Azerbaijan's human rights violations and aggression against Armenia continues unabated to this day. Following a series of military incursions in 2021 and 2022, Azerbaijan continues to occupy sovereign Armenian territory – endangering the lives of Armenian civilians, and heightening the risk of renewed aggression. Azerbaijan also continues to unlawfully detain, torture and abuse at least 23 known Armenian prisoners of war and civilian hostages, engage in the destruction of millennia-old Armenian Christian heritage sites and the demolition of civilian property; and obstruct the right of Artsakh's forcibly displaced Armenians to return to their homes with their safety and security guaranteed.

Amid ongoing peace talks, the ANCA is urging Congressional leaders to support efforts to ensure a durable and dignified peace in the South Caucasus predicated on accountability, justice, and respect for the fundamental rights of Nagorno-Karabakh's forcibly displaced Armenian population. Furthermore, amid the growing threat facing Armenian and other Christian minorities throughout the region – the ANCA is urging the U.S. take tangible steps to promote and uphold the rights of vulnerable minority communities across the Middle East.

### **1. Prohibiting U.S. Military Assistance to Azerbaijan and Supporting Armenia's Security**

Under Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, the U.S. is prohibited from providing military assistance to Azerbaijan. This measure was adopted by Congress in response to Azerbaijan's assault and blockade against Armenia and Artsakh during the First Nagorno-Karabakh war (1988-1994) following the collapse of the USSR.

In 2002, Congress amended Section 907, providing the President with the authority to waive Section 907 on an annual basis, citing national security interests and the need for cooperation in the Global War on Terror. Since then, every successive administration has exercised this waiver authority, allowing military and other forms of assistance to Azerbaijan in the absence of Congressional oversight.

Following Azerbaijan's blockade and ethnic cleansing of Artsakh in 2023, and in response to considerable bipartisan Congressional pressure, the Biden Administration enforced Section 907 in 2024 – the first time Section 907 had been enforced since the adoption of the waiver authority 2002. Despite this, President Trump reauthorized the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act in 2025 – paving the way for renewed U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan, and granting impunity for its war crimes against Armenia and Artsakh.

**ANCA Request:** Co-sponsor **H.R.6840 – the ARMENIA Security Partnership Act** – a bipartisan bill that would strengthen U.S.-Armenia security ties, and prohibit U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan until it has taken steps to release unjustly detained Armenian prisoners, withdraw its military forces from sovereign Armenian territory, and recognize the fundamental right for Nagorno-Karabakh's forcibly displaced Armenians to return to their homes.

### **2. Accountability for Azerbaijani Human Rights Violations & War Crimes**

During and since the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, Azerbaijan perpetrated grave human rights violations including the torture of POWs and civilian captives, the extrajudicial killing of civilians, the summary execution of unarmed Armenian service member, the genocidal forced displacement of Artsakh's entire population and other war crimes. To date, Azerbaijan has faced no repercussions for its violations of international law.

**The Global Magnitsky Act** authorizes the President to impose economic sanctions and deny entry into the United States to any foreign person responsible for severe human rights abuses and corruption; and is a critical tool at the President's disposal to hold individuals accountable for war crimes and other atrocities.

The Armenian Legal Center for Justice and Human Rights (ALC-JHR), in collaboration with its partners at the International Comparative Law Center in Armenia, has filed comprehensive reports with the Departments of State and Treasury documenting the war crimes perpetrated by Azerbaijan. The report includes a list of over 40 Azerbaijani officials, including senior officials in Azerbaijan's ministries of justice and defense, military officials, unit leaders responsible for carrying out war crimes, and judicial officials responsible for the prolonged and arbitrary detention of Armenian captives.

**ANCA Request:** Co-sponsor **H.R.5369 – the Azerbaijan Sanctions Review Act of 2025** – a bill that would direct the Departments of State and Treasury to conduct an assessment of the applicability of targeted Global Magnitsky Act sanctions against Azerbaijani officials responsible for war crimes perpetrated against Armenians during the 2020 Artsakh War and the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh in 2023.

### **3. Promoting Education on the Armenian Genocide**

In 2019, the U.S. House and Senate formally recognized the Armenian Genocide with near unanimous support, overcoming decades of Turkey's efforts to silence honest remembrance and recognition of this crime against humanity. This resolution, in addition to recognizing historic truth of genocide, called for the promotion of genocide education – with an understanding that genocide prevention can only begin through education.

**ANCA Request:** Co-sponsor **H.R.2585 – the Armenian Genocide Education Act of 2025** – which would seek to allocate funding through the Library of Congress to support education on the Armenian Genocide in schools across the United States through teacher education and training, and the development of curricula materials.

### **4. Ensuring the Release of Unjustly Detained Armenian POWs and Political Prisoners**

Azerbaijan continues to arbitrarily detain at least 23 known Armenian prisoners of war – including Armenian service members detained during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, civilians abducted and detained during the Artsakh blockade, and former Artsakh political leaders captured during the ethnic cleansing of the region in 2023.

International rights groups have noted that Armenian POWs and political prisoners have faced severe torture and psychological abuse in detention. Furthermore, Azerbaijan has **expelled** the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) – the only organization authorized to visit detainees – gravely endangering the lives of Armenian captives. And in a grave miscarriage of justice, Azerbaijan continues to proceed with sham trials against Armenian detainees, depriving detainees of their fundamental legal rights as guaranteed under international law.

**ANCA Request:** The ANCA urges members to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Armenian prisoners of war and civilian captives – and engage with the Administration to ensure the release of Armenian POWs is prioritized in all engagements with Azerbaijan.

### **5. Guaranteeing the Right of Return for Forcibly Displaced Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) Armenians**

Under international law, the 150,000 Armenians forcibly displaced from Artsakh by Azerbaijan during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War and the genocidal ethnic cleansing of the region in September 2023 have the right to return to their homes under safe and secure conditions free from the threat of persecution. Several U.S. government officials and foreign governments have publicly affirmed the right of Armenians to return to Artsakh.

The failure to facilitate a secure right of return will not only consolidate Azerbaijan's act of ethnic cleansing, but create a long-term refugee and statelessness crisis for the 150,000 Nagorno-Karabakh residents displaced and living in Armenia who currently face severe challenges when it comes to housing, employment, social services, healthcare and other basic needs.

**ANCA Request:** The ANCA calls on Congressional leaders to urge the Administration promote the right of Armenians to return to Nagorno-Karabakh under international protection. The ANCA also encourages members to hold Azerbaijan accountable for efforts to violate the right of return – including the destruction of civilian property and infrastructure, and the desecration of millennia-old Armenian Christian cultural heritage sites.

## **6. Defending the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem**

The Armenian Quarter is an integral part of the Old City of Jerusalem, with its Armenian presence dating back to the 4th century, when Armenia became the first nation to adopt Christianity. The Armenian Quarter has long been a place of pilgrimage and refuge, particularly in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide.

Since 2024, land developers and settlers have launched armed attacks to seize the Armenian Quarter from its local residents to construct luxury hotels and other buildings that would result in the eviction and displacement of Armenian Christian families that have lived in the Old City for centuries. Additionally, municipal authorities have placed additional pressure on the Armenian Patriarchate by initiating foreclosure proceedings against the Patriarchate's properties, threatening Jerusalem's ancient Christian presence.

**ANCA Request:** The ANCA urges the U.S. to protect Jerusalem's Armenian Christian Quarter from mounting legal, political, and physical threats. The ANCA also urges U.S. officials to press the Israeli government to uphold fair and transparent legal proceedings concerning the Armenian Patriarchate's property rights; to condemn violent attacks targeting Armenian institutions; to oppose unilateral actions that disrupt the cultural and religious balance of the Old City; and to engage diplomatically to ensure the survival of this historic Christian community.

## **7. Safeguarding the Rights of Vulnerable Minority Communities in Syria**

Following the fall of the Assad regime at the hands of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), it is imperative the U.S. takes measures to safeguard the rights of vulnerable minority groups in Syria. This includes Armenians, Alawites, Druze, Yezidis, Kurds, and historic Christian communities (including Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian, and Melkite peoples) among others, integral to the cultural lineage of Syria.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has reported that HTS – a designated terrorist organization led by former Al Qaeda and ISIS militants – committed grave and widespread violations of religious freedom and human rights against religious minorities during the Syrian Civil War, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and executions.

**ANCA Request:** Given the credible threat HTS poses to Syria's religious minorities, the ANCA urges members to promote efforts to guarantee the rights of Syria's vulnerable communities, particularly during the transition period. The ANCA also calls on members to demand the removal of Turkish forces occupying Northern Syria, and hold Turkey accountable for its assault on Kurdish populations, and harboring of terrorist forces in Syria.

## **8. Delivering Robust Humanitarian Assistance to Armenian Refugees**

Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh displaced over 120,000 Armenians, who are now refugees in the Republic of Armenia. Artsakh Armenians have faced challenges in access to housing, employment, social services, medical and psychological care and other basic needs.

Since the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, the U.S. has provided a meager amount of humanitarian assistance to displaced Artsakh Armenians – approximately \$21 million, or roughly \$175 per displaced person. The assistance provided by the U.S. to date does not come close to meeting the needs of Artsakh's refugees. USAID-funded needs assessments identified the humanitarian response to the Artsakh refugee crisis would require up to \$2 billion in assistance.

**ANCA Request:** The ANCA continues to urge members to prioritize humanitarian aid to Artsakh refugees in its foreign assistance to Armenia, and allocate robust assistance to help meet the basic needs of the 150,000 forcibly displaced Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians who still require urgent humanitarian support.