

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to offer congratulations on your recent confirmation and share a list of bipartisan priorities for the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues that we hope to collaborate on during the 119th Congress.

One of our main requests is that the United States continue to build off the strategic partnership agreement signed with Armenia on January 15, 2025. That agreement reflects the efforts made by a broad bipartisan coalition of Members of Congress who have cultivated this important bilateral relationship across several Administrations. It demonstrates the growth and significant reforms the Armenian government has made since the Velvet Revolution in 2018. It also shows the promise the nation has as a reliable American partner in the South Caucasus. Most importantly, the strategic partnership opens the door for closer bilateral ties between our countries, unlocks further American investments in the economic future of Armenia, and creates an overall stronger bond between our people.

Armenia faces many geographic and political challenges as a landlocked country blockaded by Turkey and Azerbaijan. These obstacles have long hindered its economic potential. The United States has an incredible opportunity to shape the future of the region by advancing Armenia's energy security and economic resilience aligned with its "Crossroads of Peace" vision for sustainable peace. Investing in this transition will allow Armenia to fulfill its goal of diversifying its energy production and pivoting away from Russian energy and trade dependence. Specifically, we ask the State Department to accelerate negotiations already underway on a civil nuclear cooperation agreement, or a 123 Agreement, which will provide Armenia with a strong platform for enhanced energy cooperation with our country. Moving ahead with such an agreement in an expeditious timeframe will translate to substantial American trade and business prospects in the region, while providing Armenia with independent, secure energy for the future.

We also request the State Department build on our current defense engagements with Armenia, which include the bilateral peacekeeping exercise Eagle Partner and support from State's Export Control and Border Security program and U.S. Customs and Border Protection to develop Armenia's border security capabilities. We ask you to fully consider the Armenian government's outstanding request for purely defensive equipment and training to protect its territorial integrity, including anti-aircraft and anti-drone equipment. Providing our partner with the capabilities to guard its borders is critical at a time when it faces continued threats by Azerbaijani troops stationed in its sovereign territory and violent rhetoric from President Ilham Aliyev.

We urge the United States to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its war crimes and ethnic-cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) – via enforcement of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, the application of Global Magnitsky sanctions, and the denial of EXIM Bank financing of dual-use sales to Azerbaijan. A durable and dignified peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan requires strict accountability and must be founded upon the collected and protected return of Armenians to their indigenous Nagorno-Karabakh homeland.

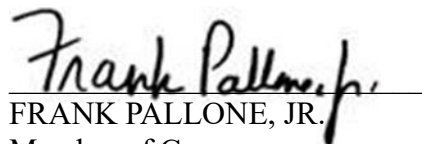
To that end, we urge the State Department to remain comprehensively engaged in the peace process and help secure guarantees for the territorial integrity of Armenia, bring an end to the forced blockade by Turkey and Azerbaijan, and facilitate better trade and transportation links in the region. A final agreement must also secure the release of all POWs and hostages, including Nagorno-Karabakh’s political leaders – who are unjustly detained in Azerbaijan – and safeguard ancient Armenian cultural sites in Nagorno-Karabakh and elsewhere in the region that are under immediate threat.

Finally, we draw your attention to the challenges facing the Armenian community in Syria and more widely in the region. Armenians and Orthodox Christians have a long and rich heritage in the region tracing back millennia, which is increasingly being challenged on several fronts.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. We appreciate your long track record of supporting peace and prosperity in the South Caucasus and the attention you have given to bolstering the Republic of Armenia’s ongoing democratic and economic reforms throughout your career. A lasting, equitable peace in the Caucasus is critical to the United States’s strategic long-term interests in the region. And there is a once-in-a-generation chance to bring peace and prosperity to a region that has seen far too much instability and bloodshed over the last several decades.


We stand ready to work with you to craft a policy in the South Caucasus region that is consistent with U.S. national security, universal principles of human rights, and our democratic values. Our hope is to further discuss these issues with you and your team at the earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

  
FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress

  
GUS M. BILIRAKIS  
Member of Congress

  
BRAD SHERMAN  
Member of Congress

  
DAVID G. VALADAO  
Member of Congress