LETTER TO US COMMISION FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (USCIRF)

Posted on October 18, 2020 by Keghart

Category: Opinions

Dear reader,
The AAHR (Armenian Americans for Human Rights) respectfully encourages readers – wherever they live – to ask the USCIRF (U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom) to:

(1) condemn aggression against Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) by Azerbaijan, Turkey, and jihadi terrorists.
(2) ask all countries to cease supplying weapons to Turkey and Azerbaijan.
Please also ask USCIRF to relay its statement to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

You may use the two USCIRF email addresses below (and request that your message be forwarded to all USCIRF Commissioners and Staff).
media@uscirf.gov
esingshinsuk@uscirf.gov (Ms. Erin D. Singshinsuk, Executive Director)

PRESS RELEASE, 12 October 2020

THE *ARMENIAN AMERICANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS* (AAHR) ASKS THE OFFICIAL *UNITED STATES COMMISSION FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM* (USCIRF) IN WASHINGTON, DC TO CONDEMN AZERBAIJAN'S AGGRESSION AGAINST ARMENIANS

AAHR sent the following letter on October 9, 2020 to the USCIRF's Commissioners and Staff.

Dear USCIRF Chair Manchin, Vice-Chairs Perkins and Bhargava, Honorable Commissioners, and Staff:

I am the Chair of the *Armenian Americans for Human Rights (AAHR).*

Armenian Americans, Armenia, and the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) have **not** characterized the ongoing conflict with Azerbaijan as religious in nature.

However, given the deliberate attack (September 27, 2020) by Azerbaijan, Turkey (using Turkish military personnel and American-supplied F-16s), and their explicitly anti-Christian jihadi/terrorist allies, those parties clearly intend religion to be a major factor in their war against Armenians.

- Jihadis/terrorists have come from Syria and elsewhere specifically to attack *Christian*

ISIS is also present: https://www.christianpost.com/news/turkey-sends-isis-commander-syrian-rebels-to-azerbaijan.html.
This is no surprise. Azerbaijan used Mujahedin and similar jihadists against Armenians in the early 1990s: https://www.csmonitor.com/1993/1116/16071.html.

- On October 8, 2020, Azerbaijan deliberately targeted and severely damaged the well-known Saviour of All Cathedral (aka Ghazanchetsots Cathedral) in Shushi, Artsakh:

https://massispost.com/2020/10/azerbaijani-rocket-attacks-destroy-historic-ghazanchetsots-church-in-shushi/.

- Over the years, Azerbaijan's army used pickaxes and dump trucks to destroy the 9th century Armenian Christian cemetery in the Azerbaijani territory of Nakhichevan (formerly Armenian, but cleansed of Armenians over the course of the 20th century). Please see this live video, "New Tears of the Araxes": NEW TEARS OF ARAXES.

Given the above, AAHR finds it perplexing that USCIRF has apparently issued no statement condemning the current religiously motivated attacks on Armenia and Artsakh.

AAHR is aware that USCIRF has in the past criticized human rights and religious discrimination in Azerbaijan. That is not the point. Instead, we are directing your attention principally to the war that began on September 27.

AAHR notes that USCIRF Commissioners have spoken about jihadist attacks on Christians in the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts. Why USCIRF has not spoken about the jihadist attacks on Armenia and Artsakh now is inexplicable, or perhaps USCIRF has decided to play politics in this instance. I don't need to go into details.

AAHR hopes that Commissioner Rev. Johnnie Moore Is not again trying to squelch criticism of Azerbaijan.

Rev. Moore is now defaming Armenia in the international press using such non-sequiturs as Armenia's relations with Iran.

The fact is that Azerbaijan's and Turkey's trade and other relations with Iran are vastly greater than Armenia's.

Moore is now also unfairly tarring Armenia using the Russian bogeyman. Who else would Armenia find a measure of security with, genocidal Turkey?

Some USCIRF Commissioners also have their own strongly Christian organizations.

It is possible that I missed it, but I have seen nothing — not even news — on some of their websites about the attacks on Armenia and Artsakh.

This contrasts with these Christian organizations' frequently speaking out against jihadist/terrorist attacks in the Syrian and other conflicts. For some reason, Armenians now deserve hardly a mention. Again, no need to go into the motives.

I won't belabor things. AAHR's intention is to inform and encourage.

The USCIRF needs to speak up.

The credibility of the USCIRF and its Commissioners is a valuable commodity that should be guided by truth and principle.

Sincerely,
David Boyajian
Chair, AAHR

aahumanrights@yahoo.com

Comments

Nora Kassabian – 2020-10-19 19:10:06
- I demand that the USCIRF condemn aggression against Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) by Azerbaijan, Turkey, and jihadi terrorists.... - And that all countries cease supplying weapons to Turkey and Azerbaijan. - And request USCIRF to relay its statement to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo... - and that this message be forwarded to all USCIRF Commissioners and Staff.

Shoshana Shahbazian – 2020-10-19 18:49:35
We will never give up !