PROTESTERS DEMAND POW RELEASE, TURKISH AMBASSADOR SILENCED

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Category: Opinions

CMM, Ontario, Canada 19 March 2021

Click the following link for Concordia University Event Cancellation

Human rights activists held silent demonstrations on March 19 in front of the Azerbaijani and Russian embassies in Ottawa calling upon Azerbaijan to release more than 300 Armenian prisoners of war and for Moscow to force Baku to fulfill its obligations under international law.

Several months after the November 10, 2020 trilateral ceasefire agreement among Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, the latter has not fulfilled its obligations. While the agreement said "the Parties shall exchange prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons, and dead bodies," Azerbaijan refuses to return Armenian POWs. Azerbaijan is also not cooperating with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the formal mediator. ICRC has repeatedly stressed the importance and urgency of the situation, urging for compliance with international law.



Afterward the protest at the Azeri embassy, the human rights activists walked to the Russian Embassy and called upon Russia to force Azerbaijan to respect the terms of the ceasefire agreement and release all Armenian POWs. The demonstrators carried signs protesting Azerbaijan's breach of the ceasefire agreement and the inhumane treatment of Armenian POWs and hostages.

The war crimes of Azerbaijani armed forces, including beheading and killing POWs are documented by international organizations. Human Rights Watch documented several cases where Azerbaijani forces violently detained civilians and subjected them to torture and inhuman and degrading detention conditions. Two detainees died in captivity--one likely the victim of extrajudicial execution. Human Rights Watch also urged Azerbaijani forces to "promptly free and repatriate all civilians who are in their custody.

The demonstrations were a repeat of protests held in Russia in mid-January. Similar demonstrations will take place in major cities around the world.

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Arusyak Karapetyan, Ontario, 20 March 2021

Armenian Students Deny Podium to Turk Ambassador

An anti-Armenia and pro-Azerbaijan/Turkey online gathering scheduled for March 19 and organized by Concordia University's Strategic & Diplomatic Society (SDS) and International Relations Society (IRS) was cancelled due to concerns raised by the Canadian and Armenian Student Associations (ASA). The event was to feature Kerim Uras, Turkey's ambassador to Canada.

The ASA said while raising awareness of the Artsakh conflict is commendable it should not be launched by the aggressor responsible for ethnic cleansing in Artsakh. In a statement published on horizonweekly.ca the group said: "The ASAs remind their audience that the Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) conflict is not a matter of controversy or contention; rather, it is a matter of human rights violations, a denial of inalienable right to self-determination, and cultural genocide. By choosing to provide a free platform to a representative of a State with an official policy of #ArmenianGenocide denial, and invite them to speak about the Artsakh conflict, the IRS and SDS failed to evaluate the harmful and offensive consequences of the "perspective" of the Turkish official."

A joint Statement issued by the university's Strategic & Diplomatic Society and International Relations Society said: "In light of recent friction regarding our event, the Nagorno-Karabakh event has been cancelled. Over the past several days, many have voiced their disapproval of this event. Given the controversy and delicate nature of the conflict, we would like to clarify that this event was not meant as an endorsement of any State or political actor. The Ambassador was contacted in order to learn more about the details surrounding their role regarding involvement in the conflict. We had planned to take student questions during the question and answer period of the event. It is important to note that the opinions of any actor is not representative of the opinions held by the IRS and SDS. We would like to reiterate that the objective of the IRS and the SDS is to bring to light contentious issues in international affairs, and encourage further independent research."

Comments



Lusine Nalbandyan – 2021-03-24 05:50:12
Dear International Committee of Red Cross: you possess a VERY powerful humanitarian mandate! "Urging for compliance with international law" is not enough, we are talking bandits and criminals here, so MOVE, take serious steps, raise the global community, demand from your member states to get involved, impose sanctions and penalties, press charges, call for action, DO SOMETHING!