MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS DECRY AZERBAIJAN'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AHEAD OF COP29

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Joint Statement

COP29 is being used as a cover for ethnic cleansing

Azerbaijan has pledged that COP29 will be a "COP of peace." It points to its negotiations towards a peace agreement with Armenia as indicative of its own promotion of peace. Yet Azerbaijan's actions leading up to COP29 have been anything but peaceful. On 12 December 2022, Azerbaijan began a blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the only road between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, then populated by 120,000 ethnic-Armenian Christians. This blockade was intensified in violation of an order from the International Court of Justice on 22 February 2023, and an outcry from the international community.

After a nine-month blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan launched a military operation against Nagorno-Karabakh on 19 September 2023, leading to the forced displacement of the entire ethnic-Armenian population.

Today, the region's Armenian heritage and culture is being erased by Azerbaijan. Churches, cemeteries and entire villages have been razed to the ground. The destruction of Christian sites illustrates the threat to religious freedom and pluralism in the region posed by Azerbaijan's aggression.

Moreover, Azerbaijan is still holding 23 Armenians hostage, including civilians, soldiers and political leaders from Nagorno Karabakh whom it captured during its blockade and military campaign. They languish in prison alongside numerous Azerbaijani political detainees. Many of these individuals are imprisoned in Baku, not far from the site of the COP29 conference. Azerbaijan's well-orchestrated depopulation of Nagorno-Karabakh has been qualified by numerous authorities as ethnic cleansing. A fact-finding mission by a number of prominent human rights organizations found significant evidence that Azerbaijan committed crimes against humanity and war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and recommended the investigation and prosecution of those responsible in Azerbaijan.

We express our solidarity with the displaced peoples of Nagorno-Karabakh. We deplore the use of the UN Climate Change Conference to cover up the crimes against humanity that led to their displacement.

We call on the government of Azerbaijan to make good on its vision of a "COP of Peace" by unconditionally and immediately releasing all of the Armenian hostages and Azerbaijani political prisoners it is currently holding. We furthermore call on Azerbaijan to contribute to a lasting peace in the region, by facilitating the safe return of the ethnic-Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh to their homeland.

We also call on all states participating in COP29 to raise these issues directly with the government of

Azerbaijan.

Signatories:

Organizations:

World Evangelical Alliance
World Council of Churches
Christian Solidarity International
Law and Liberty Trust
Coptic Solidarity
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
American Islamic Congress
Ashuriena Abraham
Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA)
Armenian Bar Association
No Business With Genocide
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FIACONA
American Defenders for Persecuted Human
Churches for Middle East Peace
In Defense of Christians
International Association for Religious Freedom, US Chapter
GPF Kurdistan
Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust
Save Armenia: A Judeo Christian Alliance
Friends of Thien Am Monastery at the Edge of The Universe
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There are no comments yet.