

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 320

Recognizing the Republic of Artsakh's independence and condemning Azerbaijan's continued aggression against Armenia and Artsakh.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2023

Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Mr. PALLONE, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Republic of Artsakh's independence and condemning Azerbaijan's continued aggression against Armenia and Artsakh.

Whereas the right to self-determination is enshrined in several articles of international law to which the United States is a party, including Article I of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states, "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.";

Whereas the United States has historically supported the right to self-determination for persecuted populations, including but not limited to the cases of Timor-Leste, Kosovo, and South Sudan;

Whereas Armenians have been historically recognized as the indigenous population of Artsakh (Soviet name: Nagorno Karabakh), an integral part of the Armenian homeland and a major center of Armenian cultural life, with Christian holy sites dating back to the 1st century;

Whereas Soviet Azerbaijan engaged in the systematic persecution and discrimination of the region's indigenous Armenians, which comprised over 80 percent of Artsakh's population;

Whereas the Republic of Artsakh declared its independence in 1991, consistent with their rights under the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States (1970) in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, following Azerbaijan's deprivation of the fundamental rights of the region's Armenian population and use of force, including the pogroms of Sumgait, Baku, and Kirovobad that resulted in hundreds of deaths and the forced displacement of over 400,000 Armenians from Azerbaijan;

Whereas the Armenians of Artsakh voted with near-unanimous consent to declare their independence from Azerbaijan by referendum on December 10, 1991;

Whereas Azerbaijan in response launched a full-scale war that saw the widespread perpetration of war crimes and human rights abuses, including the bombing and blockade of cities, the targeting of civilian populations, and the recruitment of foreign terrorists from Chechnya and Afghanistan;

Whereas the First Karabakh War ended in 1994 with a cease-fire brokered by the Russian Federation that en-

sured Artsakh's de facto independence from Azerbaijan and initiated a multilateral conflict resolution process under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) "Minsk Group" co-chaired by Russia, the United States, and France;

Whereas the OSCE Minsk Group process determined to ensure a final resolution to the conflict based on the Helsinki Final Act (1975) principles of non-use of force, territorial integrity, and self-determination;

Whereas despite these efforts Azerbaijan's aggression against Artsakh continued unabated and culminated in its full-scale assault on the territory in September 2020 with the support of Turkey that resulted in thousands of deaths, the capture of territory by force, the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians, the systematic perpetration of war crimes and human rights abuses, and the ongoing detention of hundreds of prisoners of war;

Whereas Azerbaijan continues to demonstrate its inability and unwillingness to ensure the fundamental rights of the region's Armenian population, seen in remarks by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on January 11, 2023, regarding ethnic Armenians in Artsakh stating, "Whoever does not want to become our citizen, the road is not closed", just one of his recent comments that raise concerns about ethnic cleansing and a new genocide in Artsakh;

Whereas Azerbaijani Armed Forces continue to carry out unprovoked attacks on Armenian territory, including opening fire on Armenian soldiers carrying out engineering works in the Tegh Community on April 11, 2023, killing four Armenian soldiers and wounding six;

Whereas, on March 26, 2023, Azerbaijani troops crossed the line of contact to launch an operation to cut off a dirt road that was providing some relief from the blockade of the Lachin Corridor, in violation of the 2020 cease-fire statement;

Whereas, on March 5, 2023, Azerbaijani troops attacked a Nagorno-Karabakh police car, killing three police officers;

Whereas these are only the most recent escalations by Azerbaijan, as in September 2022, Azerbaijan launched its latest, unprovoked assault on sovereign Armenian territory, with intensive shelling and UAV attacks on the villages of Karmir Shuka and Taghavard in Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh), and the Armenian border cities of Vardenis, Jermuk, Goris, and Tatev reportedly resulting in the deaths of at least 49 soldiers;

Whereas, since December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan has created a humanitarian crisis by blockading the Lachin Corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, depriving some 120,000 innocent civilians of their essential rights, including the right to freedom of movement;

Whereas the humanitarian crisis in Artsakh has grown more dire by the day, with widespread shortages of food, medicine, and other necessities and rolling blackouts, all with the complicity of the Azerbaijani Government;

Whereas despite Azerbaijan's flagrant violation of Armenia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, international law, and the November 2020 tripartite statement signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia to end the Nagorno-Karabakh War, the Department of State waived section 907 of the Freedom Support Act to provide assistance to Azerbaijan, despite the recent publication of a Govern-

ment Accountability Office report (22–104619), which confirmed the Department of State and Department of Defense have failed to meet statutory reporting requirements to Congress on the impact of United States assistance on the peace process and the military balance between Armenia and Azerbaijan;

Whereas section 907 of the Freedom Support Act is intended to prevent United States military assistance to Azerbaijan unless the President certifies Azerbaijan “is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh”; and

Whereas peace, stability, and democracy in the Caucasus region are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States and are matters of international concern: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) recognizes the independence of the Republic  
3       of Artsakh, consistent with the right to self-deter-  
4       mination enshrined in various United Nations in-  
5       struments and the people of Artsakh’s 1991 vote  
6       and decision to declare their independence from  
7       Azerbaijan;

8               (2) urges the United States to engage  
9       proactively in supporting international recognition of  
10       the status of the Republic of Artsakh;

11              (3) condemns the ongoing blockade of the  
12       Lachin Corridor and unprovoked attacks by the Az-

1       zerbaijani forces on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh,  
2       and calls for Azerbaijan to immediately cease its  
3       blockade and aggressions against Armenia and  
4       Artsakh without conditions;

5           (4) calls for all United States foreign and mili-  
6       tary assistance to Azerbaijan to be immediately  
7       ceased pursuant to the section 907 of the Freedom  
8       Support Act and for the Administration to make  
9       clear to the Government of Azerbaijan that further  
10      attacks on Armenia and Artsakh will result in sanc-  
11      tions and other measures;

12          (5) stands firmly in support of our democratic  
13      partner Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integ-  
14      rity, and against Azerbaijan's military aggression  
15      and blatant violations of international laws and  
16      norms; and

17          (6) supports the United States and inter-  
18      national humanitarian assistance programs to meet  
19      the urgent needs of victims of Azerbaijani aggression  
20      in both Armenia and Artsakh.

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