

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 5683

To protect and provide humanitarian assistance to Armenians in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh impacted by actions taken by the Government of Azerbaijan, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

Mr. PALLONE (for himself, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. SCHIFF) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## A BILL

To protect and provide humanitarian assistance to Armenians in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh impacted by actions taken by the Government of Azerbaijan, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Armenians  
5 Against Azerbaijani Aggression Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1           (1) In September 2020, Azerbaijan invaded  
2 Nagorno-Karabakh, resulting in conflict in which  
3 more than 6,500 people in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and  
4 Nagorno-Karabakh were killed.

5           (2) According to the United Nations High Com-  
6 missioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Azerbaijan’s  
7 2020 invasion resulted in the displacement of more  
8 than 91,000 individuals from Nagorno-Karabakh,  
9 with the vast majority, primarily women and chil-  
10 dren, living in a “refugee-like” situation in the war’s  
11 aftermath.

12           (3) People displaced by Azerbaijan’s invasion of  
13 Nagorno-Karabakh continue to have acute humani-  
14 tarian needs, including access to drinking water and  
15 health care.

16           (4) The COVID–19 pandemic compounded  
17 many of the challenges faced by Armenians dis-  
18 placed from Nagorno-Karabakh.

19           (5) Human Rights Watch found that Azer-  
20 baijani forces indiscriminately used cluster muni-  
21 tions and artillery rockets against civilian targets  
22 and destroyed civilian infrastructure, including hos-  
23 pitals and schools during the 2020 war.

24           (6) In September 2022, Azerbaijan unleashed  
25 another assault on Armenian territory, including the

1 cities of Vardenis, Sotk, Artanish, Ishkhanasar,  
2 Goris, and Kapan, which killed almost 400 military  
3 personnel.

4 (7) Azerbaijani forces shelled Armenian commu-  
5 nities in September 2022, killing at least 4 civilians,  
6 injuring 14, and displacing at least 7,600 people, in-  
7 cluding almost 1,500 children and 100 people with  
8 disabilities.

9 (8) In December 2022, Azerbaijan imposed a  
10 blockade of the Lachin Corridor, a road by which 90  
11 percent of food consumed by residents of Nagorno-  
12 Karabakh previously entered the enclave.

13 (9) Representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh re-  
14 port that shortages of electricity and gas have  
15 caused 20 percent of the region's businesses to close,  
16 led hospitals to ration power, prevented rural resi-  
17 dents from traveling to hospitals in the capital city  
18 of Stepanakert, and resulted in children missing  
19 school.

20 (10) The International Committee of the Red  
21 Cross (ICRC) has evacuated 196 patients from  
22 Nagorno-Karabakh through the Lachin Corridor for  
23 medical treatment since the blockade's beginning  
24 and has helped 422 people to overcome family sepa-  
25 rations resulting from the blockade.

1           (11) The International Court of Justice ordered  
2           Azerbaijan in February 2023 to “ensure unimpeded  
3           movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo along the  
4           Lachin Corridor in both directions,” a ruling with  
5           which it has failed to comply.

6           (12) Azerbaijan’s installation of a military  
7           checkpoint in the Lachin Corridor in April 2023 fur-  
8           ther threatens the supply of urgent humanitarian  
9           goods to Nagorno-Karabakh.

10          (13) On August 6, 2023, the Armenian  
11          Ombudsperson reported that no humanitarian aid  
12          had entered Nagorno-Karabakh since June 15, and  
13          that miscarriages had tripled.

14          (14) On August 7, 2023, a United Nations  
15          group of experts stated that Azerbaijan’s ongoing  
16          blockade of the Lachin Corridor “is a humanitarian  
17          emergency that has created severe shortages of es-  
18          sential food staples” and threatens medical reserves.  
19          They further noted that Azerbaijan’s lifting of the  
20          blockade could alleviate the suffering of thousands  
21          and is “essential to ensure the safety, dignity, and  
22          well-being of all individuals during this critical  
23          time”.

24          (15) In certain instances, Azerbaijani authori-  
25          ties have detained residents of Nagorno-Karabakh

1 traveling to Armenia through the Lachin Corridor,  
2 leaving ethnic Armenians who choose to depart for  
3 Armenia to avoid starvation to wonder if they can  
4 depart safely.

5 (16) According to the International Committee  
6 of the Red Cross, residents of Nagorno-Karabakh  
7 lack life-saving medication, hygiene products, and  
8 baby formula, and basic foodstuffs are increasingly  
9 scarce.

10 (17) The United States Commission on Inter-  
11 national Religious Freedom’s 2023 Annual Report  
12 noted the documented destruction of Armenian her-  
13 itage sites in Nagorno-Karabakh, including St.  
14 Sargis Church, while the European Parliament in  
15 March 2023 condemned an Azerbaijani policy to  
16 “erase and deny Armenian cultural heritage in and  
17 around Nagorno-Karabakh”.

18 (18) In a September 2022 report, the United  
19 Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial  
20 Discrimination expressed deep concern in Azerbaijan  
21 regarding “[i]ncitement to racial hatred and the  
22 propagation of racist stereotypes against persons of  
23 Armenian national or ethnic origin, including on the  
24 internet and social media, as well as by public fig-  
25 ures and government officials, and the lack of de-

1       tailed information on investigations, prosecutions,  
2       convictions, and sanctions for such acts”.

3               (19) Azerbaijan could open the Lachin Corridor  
4       and allow lifesaving provisions to reach the popu-  
5       lation inside, but is choosing not to.

6               (20) Any peace agreement between Armenia  
7       and Azerbaijan will only be sustainable if its in-  
8       cludes protections for the Armenian population of  
9       Nagorno-Karabakh.

10              (21) On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan  
11       launched an assault on Nagorno-Karabakh, attack-  
12       ing civilian infrastructure and killing numerous civil-  
13       ians, including children.

14       **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

15       It is the sense of Congress that—

16              (1) Azerbaijan is conducting a campaign of eth-  
17       nic cleansing against Armenians living in Nagorno-  
18       Karabakh and the United States and the inter-  
19       national community have a responsibility to provide  
20       immediate humanitarian support;

21              (2) Azerbaijan’s blockade of the Lachin Cor-  
22       ridor threatens the lives and wellbeing of all people  
23       inside Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Government of  
24       Azerbaijan must immediately open the humanitarian  
25       corridor to allow for the flow of goods;

1           (3) the Government of Azerbaijan must imme-  
2           diately cease actions that undermine the mission of  
3           the International Committee of the Red Cross and  
4           restore unfettered humanitarian access to the region,  
5           including by facilitating the transfer of food, fuel,  
6           medicine, and hygiene products; and

7           (4) the Government of Azerbaijan should imme-  
8           diately release all Armenian prisoners of war.

9   **SEC. 4. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR ARMENIANS IN**  
10                                   **ARMENIA AND NAGORNO-KARABAKH.**

11           There is authorized to be appropriated to the United  
12           States Agency for International Development, for fiscal  
13           year 2024, \$30,000,000 to provide humanitarian assist-  
14           ance to groups in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh im-  
15           pacted by the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, Azerbaijan’s  
16           September 2022 attack on Armenia, and Azerbaijan’s  
17           blockade of the Lachin Corridor.

18   **SEC. 5. FREEDOM SUPPORT ACT SECTION 907 WAIVER RE-**  
19                                   **PEAL.**

20           Title II of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing,  
21           and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2002 (Public  
22           Law 107–115) (22 U.S.C. 5812 note) is amended, under  
23           the heading “ASSISTANCE FOR THE INDEPENDENT  
24           STATES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION”, by striking  
25           paragraphs (2) through (6) of subsection (g).

1 **SEC. 6. FOREIGN MILITARY FINANCING.**

2 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized to be ap-  
3 propriated \$10,000,000 for the Department of State for  
4 fiscal year 2024 for Foreign Military Financing program  
5 assistance for the Republic of Armenia.

6 (b) PURPOSES.—The Foreign Military Financing  
7 program assistance authorized by subsection (a) shall be  
8 used to—

9 (1) support Armenia’s sovereign independence;

10 (2) support joint training and exercises with the  
11 United States;

12 (3) enhance United States-Armenia interoper-  
13 ability; and

14 (4) train Armenian forces for future inter-  
15 national peacekeeping operations.

16 **SEC. 7. STRATEGY TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE IN**  
17 **NAGORNO-KARABAKH.**

18 (a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days  
19 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
20 of State shall submit to the appropriate congressional  
21 committees a detailed strategy to ensure the durable secu-  
22 rity for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

23 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required by subsection  
24 (a) shall include—

25 (1) incorporating the rights and security of the  
26 people in Nagorno-Karabakh into any and all efforts

1 to facilitate peace talks between Armenia and Azer-  
2 baijan; and

3 (2) a plan to work with leaders of Nagorno-  
4 Karabakh and the international community to en-  
5 sure—

6 (A) the establishment of accountability  
7 measures to ensure the rights and security of  
8 the population of Nagorno-Karabakh in the  
9 event that the Governments of Armenia and  
10 Azerbaijan reach a peace agreement;

11 (B) support for the protection of Armenian  
12 cultural heritage sites in Nagorno-Karabakh;  
13 and

14 (C) Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh are  
15 able maintain their right to study according to  
16 a curriculum designed by local representatives,  
17 worship according to their chosen religious be-  
18 liefs, and speak their preferred language.

19 **SEC. 8. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALLEGED AZERBAIJANI**  
20 **ATROCITIES DURING SEPTEMBER 2022 AT-**  
21 **TACK ON ARMENIA.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the  
23 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State  
24 shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees  
25 a detailed report regarding alleged Azerbaijani atrocities

1 during its attacks on Armenia in September 2022 and on  
2 Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023.

3 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under sub-  
4 section (a) shall include the following elements:

5 (1) A description of the status of efforts to in-  
6 vestigate, verify, and promote accountability for al-  
7 leged atrocities, including war crimes and crimes  
8 against humanity that Azerbaijani forces committed  
9 during the course of Azerbaijan’s attacks on Arme-  
10 nia in September 2022 and on Nagorno-Karabakh in  
11 September 2023, and a description any the docu-  
12 mented atrocities to date.

13 (2) A description of United States support for  
14 efforts to investigate, verify, and promote account-  
15 ability for alleged atrocities, including war crimes  
16 and crimes against humanity that Azerbaijani forces  
17 committed during the course of Azerbaijan’s attacks  
18 on Armenia in September 2022 and on Nagorno-  
19 Karabakh in September 2023.

20 (3) A description of efforts to promote justice  
21 for victims of alleged atrocities.

22 (4) A strategy for diplomatic engagement to  
23 build support for widespread accountability for these  
24 atrocities, including multilateral engagements, eco-  
25 nomic sanctions, and visa restrictions.

1           (5) Plans to deter future Azerbaijani attacks  
2           against Armenia.

3 **SEC. 9. ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT THE ENERGY SECTOR OF**  
4 **THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA.**

5           (a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary of State and the Ad-  
6 ministrator of the United States Agency for International  
7 Development are authorized to implement activities identi-  
8 fied in the January 2021 “Action Plan to Ensure Imple-  
9 mentation of the Republic of Armenia Energy Sector De-  
10 velopment Strategic Program—Market Liberalization and  
11 Electricity Trade (MLET) program” produced by the  
12 Government of the Republic of Armenia and USAID to  
13 improve the Republic of Armenia’s energy security and en-  
14 hance Armenia’s domestic energy production.

15           (b) **TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR GRID SYNCHRONI-**  
16 **ZATION.**—

17           (1) **COOPERATION.**—The Secretary and the Ad-  
18 ministrator shall work with the Republic of Armenia  
19 and the Republic of Georgia, as requested by the  
20 governments of those countries, to cooperate on the  
21 synchronization of electrical grids and broker ar-  
22 rangements to allow for the purchase and trans-  
23 mission of electricity between the Republic of Arme-  
24 nia and the Republic of Georgia.



1 research, innovation, or technology laboratories,  
2 proving grounds, test facilities, or centers of excel-  
3 lence operated by the Department of Agriculture,  
4 the Department of Transportation, or the Depart-  
5 ment of Commerce that specialize in facilitating col-  
6 laboration on the development of new applied  
7 science, research and technologies in the fields of  
8 transportation, agriculture, and food production, or  
9 telecommunications and information technology.

10 (b) IDENTIFICATION OF PARTNERS.—The Secretary  
11 of State shall identify private sector entities that will con-  
12 tribute resources to the initiatives and projects developed  
13 through partnerships under this section.

14 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
15 authorized to be appropriated \$50,000,000 for each of fis-  
16 cal years 2024 through 2028 for activities under this sec-  
17 tion.

18 **SEC. 11. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO OF-**  
19 **FICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF AZER-**  
20 **BAIJAN RELATED TO ETHNIC CLEANSING IN**  
21 **NAGORNO-KARABAKH.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the  
23 date of the enactment of this Act, and after making the  
24 determination required by subsection (c), the President

1 shall impose sanctions described in subsection (d) with re-  
2 spect to each official of the Government of Azerbaijan—

3 (1) specified in subsection (b); or

4 (2) determined by the President under sub-  
5 section (c) to have directed an attack or the block-  
6 ade described in that subsection.

7 (b) OFFICIALS SPECIFIED.—The officials specified in  
8 this subsection are the following:

9 (1) The President of Azerbaijan.

10 (2) The Minister of Defense of Azerbaijan.

11 (3) The Minister of Defense Industry of Azer-  
12 baijan.

13 (4) The Chief of the State Border Service of  
14 Azerbaijan.

15 (5) The Chief of the State Security Service of  
16 Azerbaijan.

17 (6) The Chief of the Foreign Intelligence Serv-  
18 ice of Azerbaijan.

19 (c) IDENTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICIALS.—  
20 Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment  
21 of this Act, the President shall determine whether any offi-  
22 cials of the Government of Azerbaijan, in addition to the  
23 officials specified in subsection (b), directed—

24 (1) operations that instigated the 2020  
25 Nagorno-Karabakh War;

1 (2) attacks on Armenia in September 2022;

2 (3) the blockade of the Lachin Corridor begin-  
3 ning in December 2022; or

4 (4) attacks on Nagorno-Karabakh in September  
5 2023.

6 (d) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions to be  
7 imposed under subsection (a) with respect to an official  
8 described in that subsection include any of the sanctions  
9 authorized under the International Emergency Economic  
10 Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) or any other provi-  
11 sion of law.

12 (e) NATIONAL SECURITY WAIVER.—The President  
13 may waive the imposition of sanctions under this section  
14 with respect to an official described in subsection (a) if  
15 the President—

16 (1) determines that such a waiver is in the na-  
17 tional security interests of the United States; and

18 (2) submits to the appropriate congressional  
19 committees a notification of the waiver and the rea-  
20 sons for the waiver.

21 **SEC. 12. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-**  
22 **FINED.**

23 In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional com-  
24 mittees” means—

1           (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations and  
2           the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

3           (2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the  
4           Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-  
5           resentatives.

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