



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: A Resolution Demanding the Immediate Release of Armenian Hostages by Azerbaijan.

1. Resolution Demanding the Immediate Release of Armenian Hostages by Azerbaijan

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action Item

Approved for October 22, 2024 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Glendale condemns violence, torture, and inhumane treatment based on ethnic identity and calls for justice and accountability for those responsible. Azerbaijan's long-standing anti-Armenian policies led to the 2020 war against Artsakh, resulting in the ethnic cleansing of over 70% of its territory. This culminated in the 2023 forced depopulation of Artsakh's Indigenous Armenian population, the destruction of cultural monuments, and an ongoing humanitarian crisis. A blockade lasting over eight months isolated 120,000 Armenians from basic necessities, and a large-scale assault in September 2023 displaced more than 120,000 Armenians.

On February 6, 2024, the Glendale City Council recognized Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing and genocide in Artsakh. In February 2024, the California State Legislature introduced SJR 11, urging President Biden to address the illegal detention of Armenian prisoners of war and civilians by Azerbaijan. Glendale, home to the largest Armenian diaspora outside Armenia, stands in solidarity with its community and Sister Cities in Armenia, including Kapan, Gyumri, and Martuni (Artsakh).

RECOMMENDATION

That City Council consider the adoption of a resolution to condemn the Azerbaijani government's illegal detention of Armenians and demand a release of all hostages including civilians and prisoners of war.

ANALYSIS

On December 7, 2023, Azerbaijan released 32 prisoners of war (POWs) who had been held captive since 2020 and Armenia released two Azerbaijani soldiers held since April 2023, signaling that a peace agreement between the two countries would finally be reached. However, at least 36 Armenian prisoners remain in Azerbaijani custody, with over 80 Armenian soldiers and civilians still missing. Additionally, Azerbaijan has held eight former military and political leaders of Artsakh captive as political prisoners since September 2023. Azerbaijan's actions, including its failure to release all detainees, violate the Third Geneva Convention and international agreements. Despite Azerbaijan's international legal obligations and a November 2020 ceasefire agreement, they have not released all detainees and instead continue to detain new POWs, hostages, and captured civilians.

On January 9, 2024, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a motion, to stand in solidarity with the Armenian people of Los Angeles and beyond.

On February 6, 2024, the Glendale City Council recognized via resolution that the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan engaged in ethnic cleansing and genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh under Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention by “[d]eliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction,” and the City of Glendale is home to the largest Armenian-American population in the United States.

On May 10, 2024, the United Nations Committee Against Torture released its Concluding Observations following its fifth periodic review of Azerbaijan. The Committee's findings confirm the fact of official hatred in Azerbaijan against ethnic Armenians, which manifests itself in torture and impunity for torture. This establishes at the highest international level that once or if the displaced residents of Nagorno-Karabakh return to the territory, they cannot be directly subject to Azerbaijan's authority.

The City of Glendale stands in solidarity with its Armenian American community and all residents of Glendale of good conscience, recognizes the ongoing humanitarian crisis involving Armenian hostages held by the government of Azerbaijan. The City of Glendale proudly maintains Sister City relationships with Armenian cities Kapan, Gyumri, and Martuni (Artsakh), as well as a friendship city with Yerevan's Kentron District. Glendale is committed to supporting their efforts to assist displaced Indigenous Armenian people and families from Artsakh and stands in strong solidarity with these communities in their time of need.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

Not applicable.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: The City Council may amend the proposed resolution.

Alternative 2: The City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted by:

Elena Bolbolian, Chief Innovation Officer

Prepared by:

Stephanie Mkhlian, Legislative Affairs and Communication Manager

Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS
