

# Senators Markey and Cassidy Introduce Resolution Asserting Congressional Oversight over U.S. Military Aid to Azerbaijan

*Over 25 civil society organizations urge passage of 502B(c) resolution on Azerbaijan*

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Washington, DC – Senators Ed Markey (D-MA) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) have introduced a bipartisan resolution ([S.Res.540](#)) requesting a report on Azerbaijan’s human rights practices pursuant to Section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act. The resolution requests information from the State Department on Azerbaijan’s human rights abuses both within the country, as well as during its sustained military assault against Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) that last year resulted in the ethnic cleansing of its entire indigenous Armenian population. Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Gary Peters (D-MI), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Peter Welch (D-VT) and John Fetterman (D-PA) have joined as original cosponsors.

“The need to hold Azerbaijan’s government accountable and forge a peaceful path forward is long overdue,” [said Senator Markey](#). “Military action has never been the solution to peace and stability in Nagorno-Karabakh. This resolution puts pressure on Azerbaijan’s government to uphold human rights and stop committing crimes against ethnic Armenians in the region. We must protect the will, the rights, and the bedrock freedoms of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.”

“Azerbaijan has already been bulldozing holy sites and starving Armenian communities. This is the type of country the Biden administration wants supplying LNG to Europe instead of Louisiana natural gas?” said Dr. Cassidy.

A House version of the 502B(c) request on Azerbaijan – H.Res.735 – was introduced by Rep.



**COALITION PARTNERS ENDORSE RESOLUTION URGING 502B(c) REPORT ON AZERBAIJAN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

The image displays a grid of logos for various endorsing organizations, including: CENTER FOR CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT, CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, Freedom House, Human Rights Foundation, QUINCY INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE STATECRAFT, FOREIGN POLICY FOR AMERICA, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Arms Control Association, fidh International Federation for Human Rights, COMMON DEFENSE, Peace Action, ACTION CORPS, W<sup>2</sup>T<sup>2</sup>, THE CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE, DAWN, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, ARMENIAN CHURCH OF THE SACRAMENTS OF FAITH, NCC, CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE, Anglican Office for Government & International Affairs, OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIZATION, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, IDC IN DEFENSE OF CHRISTIANS, HALC HELLENIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER, NIAC ACTION, and AMERICAN FRIENDS OF KURDISTAN. A small disclaimer at the bottom left states: "Signatories have various mandates that may not cover the full scope of the resolution's provisions." The URL ANCA.ORG/502B is located at the bottom right.

A coalition of over 25 civil society organizations have joined the ANCA in calling for passage of the Markey-Cassidy 502B(c) resolution on Azerbaijan

Adam Schiff (D-CA) during Azerbaijan's blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh last year. "The Administration's continuing support for the Aliyev regime, which regularly commits atrocities and human rights violations, simply isn't in line with our values as Americans. Given Azerbaijan's egregious military action against Artsakh on September 19, it is imperative that President Biden and Secretary Blinken reconsider our aid policies," said Representative Schiff. "As a country that champions human rights, we must ensure our foreign aid reflects our commitment to core values and does not contribute to further violence against the Armenian people in Artsakh."



Armenian National Committee of America

"Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing of Artsakh's entire indigenous Armenian population last year was a modern-day genocide the U.S. had every opportunity to prevent – but instead enabled through the reckless provision of effectively unconditioned military assistance to Baku's authoritarian regime," said Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Executive Director, Aram Hamparian. "The ANCA joins with coalition partners in welcoming the leadership

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ANCA joins with coalition partners in welcoming the leadership of Senators Markey and Cassidy to restore Congressional oversight of U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan through enforcement of Section 502B”

*Aram Hamparian, Executive Director, Armenian National Committee of America*

of Senators Markey and Cassidy in restoring much-needed Congressional oversight of U.S. military assistance through the enforcement of Section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act – an underutilized statute that can help reassert human rights to its rightful place at the center of U.S. foreign policy." The ANCA has launched a [nationwide action campaign](#) urging Senators to cosponsor and support passage of the measure.

Over 25 civil society organizations have joined the ANCA in welcoming Senator Markey and Cassidy's introduction of a 502B(c) request in Azerbaijan's human rights practices, including: Amnesty International USA, Freedom House, Human Rights Foundation (HRF), the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), National Council of

Churches (NCC), the Arms Control Association (ACA), Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), Center for International Policy (CIP), Peace Action,

Common Defense, Action Corps, Foreign Policy for America (FP4A), Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN), National Iranian American Council (NIAC) Action, Women for Weapons Trade Transparency, Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding & Policy, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), the Hellenic American Leadership Council (HALC), In Defense of Christians (IDC), American Friends of Kurdistan (AFK), and the Anglican Office for Government & International Affairs.

The Markey-Cassidy resolution will require the Department of State to provide a detailed description of widely documented human rights abuses perpetrated by Azerbaijan, including unlawful or arbitrary killings, torture of detainees, the displacement of ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, and the destruction of religious and cultural sites – in addition to violations of internationally recognized human rights including freedom of speech, assembly, political participation, and religious freedom.

The introduction of the Markey-Cassidy resolution comes just months after Azerbaijan launched a military assault on Nagorno-Karabakh that resulted in the ethnic cleansing of the region's entire Armenian population of 150,000 people. This mass displacement of civilians followed a 10-month humanitarian blockade imposed by Azerbaijan along the Lachin Corridor – the only humanitarian lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian-majority population with the Republic of Armenia – that deprived the region of food, fuel, medicine, and humanitarian access, and had devastating implications on water and energy security.

The Markey-Cassidy 502B(c) resolution on Azerbaijan will build on ongoing efforts to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its human rights violations – including the recent unanimous passage of S.3000, led by Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), which would prohibit the executive branch from exercising its waiver authority over existing restrictions on military assistance to Azerbaijan pursuant to Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act.

Section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act is a long-standing yet underutilized statute that prohibits U.S. security assistance to “any country the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violation of internationally recognized human rights.” If the Markey-Cassidy resolution passes, it will mark the first time that Congress has requested a report under Section 502B(c) since 1976.

Section 502B(c) is a potent tool to reassert long-overdue Congressional oversight and human rights standards on U.S. military assistance. As a privileged measure, Senators have the ability to discharge a 502B(c) report and force a vote on the Senate floor. Upon passage of the resolution, the State Department must provide a report within 30 days detailing a country's human rights practices and the steps taken by the U.S. to prevent these abuses or security assistance will automatically be suspended until such a statement is transmitted. Upon review of the State Department report, Congress may vote to terminate or restrict security assistance through a joint resolution of disapproval.

\*The signatories have various mandates that may not cover the full scope of the resolution's provisions.

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