

# Azerbaijan lambasts CSI in UN general debate

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, March 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Azerbaijani delegation to the United Nations in Geneva verbally attacked Christian Solidarity International (CSI) in a general debate at the Human Rights Council on March 21, after the latter [called](#) for the over 150,000 ethnically cleansed Armenian Christians of Nagorno Karabakh to be allowed to return to their homeland.

In [response](#), the Azerbaijani delegation asserted that Azerbaijan is home to a “large Christian community” which would be “appalled by such pseudo-Christian position of this NGO. Religion should not be associated with conflict.”

“If the said NGO is interested in the life of our Christian community,” the Azerbaijani representative concluded, “they can visit Azerbaijan and see it firsthand.”

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CSI will not visit Azerbaijan until the Armenian Christians of Nagorno Karabakh are able to safely return to their homeland and exercise their right to self-determination”

*Dr. John Eibner*

CSI International President Dr. John Eibner stated in response: “CSI will not visit Azerbaijan until the Armenian Christians of Nagorno Karabakh are able to safely return to their homeland and exercise their right to self-determination.”

Six months ago, Azerbaijan attacked and conquered Nagorno Karabakh, which had existed as an independent republic for over 30 years, after declaring independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. More than 100,000

Armenian Christians – virtually the entire population – were forced to flee their homeland in just a few days. 50,000 had already been displaced in Azerbaijan’s 2020 war against Nagorno Karabakh.



The 55th Session of the UN Human Rights Council runs until April 5, 2024

According to the Pew Research Center, there are around 280,000 Christians in Azerbaijan, or about 3% of the population. They belong mostly to the Russian and Georgian Orthodox churches. Like all religious communities in Azerbaijan, their activities are subject to tight government controls. Religious liberty is restricted, and Christian converts face harassment from the authorities. Over 350,000 Armenian Christians were driven out of Azerbaijan in 1988-1991 by state-sanctioned pogroms.

The Azerbaijani delegation also condemned Switzerland for financing unnamed “corrupt NGOs whose sole intention is to tarnish the image of Azerbaijan.” While the delegation did not mention CSI specifically in this context, CSI’s international headquarters are in Zurich, Switzerland.

“CSI does not receive funding of any kind from any government,” commented Simon Brechbühl, the CEO of CSI-Switzerland. “All of our funding, in Switzerland and elsewhere, comes from churches and individuals who share our mission to help and advocate for the persecuted. We are an authentically non-governmental organization.”

CSI’s [intervention](#) at the Human Rights Council called for both Armenia and Azerbaijan to cooperate with the Committee for the Defense of the Fundamental Rights of the Artsakh People, appointed by the National Assembly of Artsakh and led by former Armenian foreign minister Vartan Oskanian, to allow Karabakh Armenians to safely and peacefully return to their homeland, with international guarantees.

CSI will continue to stand in solidarity with the Armenians as they continue to face threats from Turkey and Azerbaijan in their homeland.

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