

CSI calls on IOC to #BanAzerbaijan, create transparent criteria for responding to atrocities

Christian Solidarity International president writes to Volker Türk and Thomas Bach, calling for consistency in the IOC's human rights promotion

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, July 18, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, as the opening of the Paris Olympics approaches, Christian Solidarity International is renewing its call to the International Olympic Committee to exclude Azerbaijan's national team from the games, with Azerbaijani athletes allowed to compete as neutrals, in response to ethnic cleansing of the Armenian Christians of Nagorno Karabakh.



IOC president Thomas Bach with Ilham Aliyev, 2014

In a pair of letters sent yesterday to Dr. [Thomas Bach](#), the president of the IOC, and Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, CSI furthermore called on the IOC to work with the UNOHCHR to establish transparent criteria for punitive measures against countries that commit atrocity crimes.

In the letters, CSI's international president, Dr. John Eibner, pointed out that the president of Azerbaijan's National Olympic Committee, Ilham Aliyev, is also the "dictatorial president of the Republic of Azerbaijan itself," who "order[ed] a military invasion" of Nagorno Karabakh "after imposing a devastating nine-month blockade of its Armenian Christian population."

Eibner pointed to a recent report from Freedom House which concluded that "the Azerbaijani state acted upon a comprehensive, methodically implemented strategy to empty Nagorno-Karabakh of its ethnic Armenian population."

"There is no doubt," Eibner said. "The intent was Genocide, and the racist president of Azerbaijan and its Olympic Committee fulfilled his regime's intent."

Eibner noted that it was with the support of the G7 that, two years ago, the IOC decided to exclude the Russian and Belarussian national teams from the 2024 Olympics, after Russia invaded Ukraine.

“Ilham Aliyev’s Azerbaijan is no less deserving of such punitive measures,” Eibner said. “To do otherwise sends powerful messages to Olympian dictators, like Ilham Aliyev, that they can commit atrocity crimes with impunity unless the G7 consortium finds them unacceptable.”

CSI previously called on the IOC to exclude Azerbaijan from the Paris Games at the UN Human Rights Council, at a [panel discussion](#) on July 1 at which Bach and Türk were present. The title of the panel was “Promoting Human Rights Through Sport and the Olympic Ideal.”

Supporters of CSI’s campaign to #BanAzerbaijan can send letters to their own countries’ Olympic committees through the CSI [website](#).

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