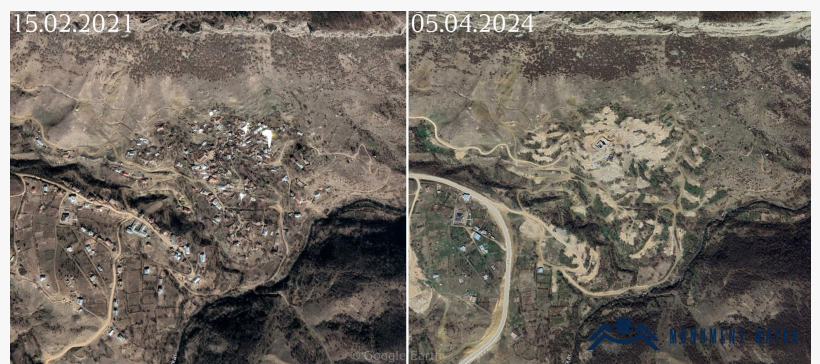


Statement from Christian Solidarity International on the First Anniversary of the Ethnic Cleansing of Nagorno Karabakh

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, September 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, one year to the day after Azerbaijan launched an armed attack on Nagorno Karabakh which resulted in the exodus of its entire Armenian population, Christian Solidarity International (CSI) has released a statement condemning the international community's complicity, reaffirming its solidarity with the Armenian Christians of Nagorno Karabakh/Artsakh currently in exile in Armenia and across the world, and calling for a true peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia, built on justice and mutual respect for human rights.



Satellite images showing the destruction of the Armenian village of Karin Tak. source: Monument Watch

The [full statement](#) can be read on CSI's website.

"Azerbaijan's attack," the human rights NGO asserted, "combined with the blockade that preceded it, was designed to empty Nagorno Karabakh of its ancient population of Armenian Christians, and it succeeded. Of the nearly 120,000 Armenian Christians who lived in Nagorno Karabakh on September 19, 2023, only 14 now remain."

"Rarely in modern history has an act of ethnic or religious cleansing been so complete," the statement noted.

Speaking of the events of September 19, 2023, CSI recalled, "Civilians hid in their cellars as bombs fell on residential neighborhoods and schools where children were attending class. Entire villages fled the onslaught. Hospitals filled with wounded people for whom, due to Azerbaijan's nine-month siege of the region, there was no medicine. Azerbaijani troops blocked the roads between villages, preventing locals from collecting their dead. Hundreds of people were killed in a fuel depot explosion, as they rushed to fill their cannisters with petrol they needed to evacuate their families."

Christian Solidarity International noted that it had issued a [genocide warning](#) for Nagorno Karabakh on December 19, 2022, one week after Azerbaijan's blockade began.

"We regret," the statement continues, "that in the nine months that followed, none of the powers with interests in the South Caucasus took any action to avert this act of genocide. Both Russia and the United States, competing with each other for influence in the region, sought to win Azerbaijan's favor."

CSI noted that Azerbaijan has not faced any consequences for the forced exodus of Nagorno Karabakh's Armenians. Instead, "even as [Azerbaijan demolishes](#) Armenian churches, graveyards, villages and civic sites across occupied Nagorno Karabakh, in defiance of orders from the International Court of Justice, Azerbaijan was chosen to host the United Nations' annual climate change conference, COP29, this November."

The organization also noted the regular high-level visits from American officials to Baku over the past year, and the American ambassador, Mark Libby's, decision to tour the ethnically-cleansed town of Shushi in May.

While American and European diplomats claim that Armenia and Azerbaijan have "never been closer" to a peace agreement, CSI points out that over the past year, Azerbaijan has issued a series of "escalating demands for unilateral concessions," all while its president, Ilham Aliyev, and its state institutions, promote the idea that the Republic of Armenia itself is "Western Azerbaijan."

"The ethnic cleansing of Nagorno Karabakh was just the latest phase in an Armenian Genocide process that has been ongoing since the late 19th century," CSI said. "It is increasingly clear that Azerbaijan and its ally Turkey are now preparing the next phase."

The NGO urged "all people of good will" to support the right of Artsakh Armenians to return to their homeland to live in safety and freedom, and offered its support for the work of the Committee for the Defense of the Fundamental Rights of the People of Nagorno Karabakh, led by former Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian.

The organization also pledged to "campaign for Armenian hostages held by Azerbaijan, such as Ruben Vardanyan and Vicken Euljekjian."

CSI's statement concludes with a warning that "a peace built on genocide and the threat of further genocide will never bring stability or security to the Caucasus region." It urges the international community "to build a durable peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, a peace based on trust and mutual respect for human rights. To do so, Azerbaijan's allies must do what they have consistently refused to do for the past eight years – restrain Azerbaijan's aggression, and uphold the rights of the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh."

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