

CSI urges UN Human Rights Council to appoint Special Rapporteur for Nagorno Karabakh

Azerbaijan continues to hold hostages and defy international community on Armenians' right of return, human rights group claims

GENEVA, GE, SWITZERLAND, March 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a [statement delivered](#) on the floor of the UN Human Rights Council on Thursday, Christian Solidarity International (CSI) called for the Council to appoint a special rapporteur for Nagorno Karabakh.



Joel Veldkamp delivered the statement for CSI on the floor of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

“The International Court of Justice [ruled](#) on November 17, 2023, that Azerbaijan must ‘ensure’ that the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh are able to return in a ‘safe, unimpeded and expeditious manner’,” noted Dr. Joel Veldkamp, director of public advocacy for CSI, who delivered the statement.

“Not only has Azerbaijan taken no action to comply with this order, it continues to unjustly detain 23 Armenians it has captured since 2020.”

In addition to the 23 men from Nagorno-Karabakh that Azerbaijan has confirmed holding, “80 more are considered forcibly disappeared.” The detainees were taken captive between 2020 and 2023.

In September of 2023, now 18 months ago, “the armed forces of Azerbaijan launched an attack on Nagorno Karabakh,” Veldkamp recounted. “Over the next eleven days, nearly 120,000 men, women, and children – virtually the entirety of the Armenian Christian population – were forced to flee their homeland.”

CSI has supported both the displaced ethnic Armenians and those imprisoned in Baku with advocacy and aid, while Azerbaijan prolongs detainment of the prisoners amid negotiations with

Armenia.

“It is clear that Azerbaijan has no intention of heeding court orders or statements from even the most senior UN officials,” Veldkamp remarked in the statement.

On March 5, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk affirmed that “all those arbitrarily detained in Azerbaijan, including ethnic Armenians, must be released immediately.”

“But instead of heeding this call,” Veldkamp said, “Azerbaijan has decided to force the International Committee of the Red Cross to end its operations in the country, cutting off a vital link between these detainees and the outside world.”

In the same meeting of the Human Rights Council, the delegation from Armenia warned that the expected departure of the ICRC will create an “unprecedented protection gap” for the prisoners.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) also made a statement on “the continued illegal detention of Armenian individuals by Azerbaijan.” The WCC noted that “many of them have been subjected to torture and degrading treatments, as documented by human rights organizations.” The statement emphasized that “the taking and holding of hostages violate fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, and constitute a serious breach of human rights.”

On Tuesday, CSI held a side event at the Human Rights Council focusing on the Armenian hostages held by Azerbaijan, featuring testimony from a panel of experts. The event can be viewed [online](#).

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